



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
2016-2017 Update  
Adopted October 24, 2016**



**Jefferson Mayor and City Council (2016)**

Roy Plott, Mayor  
Steve Kinney, District 1  
Malcolm Gramley, District 2  
Steve Quinn, District 3  
Mark Mobley, District 4  
Don E. Kupis, District 5

**Comprehensive Plan  
Citizen Advisory Committee (2014)**

Connie Bohanan  
Dr. Doug Cleveland  
Andy Garrison  
Thomas Healan  
Anita Jackson  
Beth Jarrett  
Linda Kirk  
Samantha Loggins  
Kristen Nations  
Mark Starnes

**Jefferson - Talmo Planning  
Commission (2016)**

Robert “Chip” McEver, III  
Faye Griffin  
Greg Laughinghouse  
Brant McMullan  
Robert Martin  
Scott Thompson

**Jefferson Historic Preservation Commission**

Beth Jarrett  
Hilda Johnson Smith  
Len Strukie  
Al Westmoreland  
Traci Bledsoe

**Jefferson Downtown  
Development Authority**

Terry Liles  
Willie Hughey  
Joel Harbin  
Shawn Watson  
Steve Quinn  
Christine Dalton  
Tracy Kerlin

**Jefferson Industrial Development Authority**

Ron Bond, Chairman  
Steve Adams  
Tommy Healan  
Gus Johnson  
Elizabeth Leigh  
Roy Stowe  
Ed Thompson

**Jefferson Heritage Tree Council**

Susan Russell  
Sally Stites  
Mary Dugan  
Joseph A. Franco, III  
Greg Pittman  
Sam Ingram  
Jean V. Ortowski  
Joe S. Ortowski

**Jefferson Park and Recreation**

**Advisory Board**

Brantley Porter  
Chad Klinck  
Tommy Knight  
Tony Webb  
Gail Thompson  
Brandy Corbett  
Kim Navas

**Jefferson Housing Authority**

Joni Patrick  
Betty Shelton  
J.T. Hughey  
Jill Southerland  
Joe Ogletree  
Lisa Sluder

**City of Jefferson Key Staff**

Jon Herschell, City Manager  
Danny Atkins, Planning and Zoning Administrator  
Amy Carlan, Jefferson Public Library  
Mark H. Duke, Fire Chief  
Michele Head, Civic Center Manager  
Jeff Killip, PE, Director of Public Works  
Beth Laughinghouse, Director, Main Street Jefferson  
Fenton Morris, Director, Parks and Recreation  
Amie Pirkle, Director, Finance Department  
Vicki Starnes, Director, Crawford Long Museum  
Joe Wirthman, Police Chief

**Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Staff**

Justin Crighton, Planner  
Kenny Gilbert, GIS Planner  
Nina Kelly, AICP, Project Manager  
Theresa Owen, Planner

**Planning Consultant**

Jerry Weitz, FAICP

**Geographic Information Systems Support**

Joel Logan, GISP  
Jackson County GIS Department

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW</b>	<b>6</b>
PLANNING HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL	6
PURPOSE	7
PLANNING REQUIREMENTS	7
Community Goals	8
Needs and Opportunities	8
Community Work Program	8
Capital Improvements Element	8
Land Use Element	8
Other Elements	8
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	9
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission’s Role	9
Public Input and Citizens Advisory Committee	9
PLANNING CONTEXT	10
<b>CHAPTER 2. NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>11</b>
DOWNTOWN	11
PARKS AND GREENSPACE	12
INFRASTRUCTURE	12
NEW DEVELOPMENT	13
INFILL DEVELOPMENT	14
ADDITIONAL NEEDS	14
<b>CHAPTER 3. VISION, GOALS, AND COMMUNITY POLICIES</b>	<b>18</b>
VISION STATEMENT	18
GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES	18
COMMUNITY POLICIES	20
Annexation	20
Natural Resources and the Environment	20
Economic Development	23
Housing	23
Community Facilities and Services	24
Transportation	25
Land Use	26
<b>CHAPTER 4. LAND USE ELEMENT</b>	<b>29</b>
SUMMARY OF EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING ALLOCATION	29
REQUIREMENTS FOR LAND USE ELEMENTS	30
FUTURE LAND USE	31
Park/ Recreation/ Conservation	31

Agriculture/ Forestry	31
Residential, Estate	33
Residential, Low Density	33
Residential, Medium Density	33
Residential, Multi-Family	33
Public Institutional	34
Office-Professional	34
Adaptive Reuse of Single-family Residence	34
Mixed-use Building	35
Commercial	35
Downtown Business District	35
Industrial	36
Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities	36
ENVIRONMENTAL OVERLAYS	36
Wetlands Protection	36
Groundwater Recharge Areas	36
Curry Creek Reservoir Protection	37
Protected River	37
OTHER OVERLAYS	37
Historic Districts	37
U.S. Highway 129 Overlay District	37
Redevelopment Subareas	40
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL AREAS	42
Proposed Parks Creek Reservoir and Watershed	42
Old Mill Village	43
Interstate 85 Exit 140 (SR 82/Dry Pond Road)	43
<b>CHAPTER 5. COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	<b>48</b>
SERVICE AREA	48
LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS	48
LEVEL OF SERVICE	49
Adopted Level of Service Standards	49
Inventory	49
Existing Levels of Service	50
PROJECTION OF NEEDS	52
SCHEDULE OF IMPROVEMENTS	53
EXEMPTIONS FROM PAYING IMPACT FEES	54

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### PLANNING HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

The City of Jefferson was incorporated in 1806. The city's original town plan consisted of thirty lots plus the square and was modeled after that of Sparta, Georgia. Early planning efforts emphasized historic preservation. Prior to the Georgia General Assembly's passage of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, in 1986 Jefferson adopted a historic preservation ordinance establishing a Historic Preservation Commission pursuant to the Georgia Historic Preservation Act. That same year, the City of Jefferson became a Certified Local Government (CLG), and in 1987 it adopted ordinances designating six local historic districts.



**Jefferson's Downtown Historic District**

One of Jefferson's first comprehensive planning initiatives after the 1989 planning act was to participate in a countywide planning effort with Jackson County and its municipalities, an effort led by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (now regional commission) and which culminated in adoption of a countywide comprehensive plan in 1992. A second iteration of the Jackson County comprehensive plan with municipalities was adopted in March 1998. As early as 2000, Jefferson began work on establishing and permitting a new water supply source: Parks Creek Reservoir in unincorporated Jackson County. A revised zoning ordinance was adopted in August 2002.

The Jefferson Historic District, encompassing the city's multiple local historic districts, was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. Also, in 2003, the city created a master plan for downtown Jefferson. In 2002, Jefferson participated in the formation of the Quad Cities Planning Commission. In 2004, the planning commission arranged for preparation of the Quad Cities Land Use Management Code (LUMC) which was adopted by the four participating cities of Arcade, Jefferson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. The planning commission continues to this day but with just the cities of Jefferson and Talmo. The LUMC replaced the city's zoning ordinance and official zoning map and other land use ordinances, including historic preservation. Additionally, the LUMC included all ordinances necessary to implement the state's environmental planning criteria with regard to water supply watersheds, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected rivers. In 2005, Jefferson prepared a capital improvements element of the comprehensive plan to support imposition of certain impact fees, and it subsequently adopted only a park and recreation development impact fee.

In 2007, Jefferson adopted a partial update of its comprehensive plan. Also in 2007, Jefferson participated in the preparation of the 2008 Countywide Roadways Plan prepared for and adopted

by Jackson County. That roadway plan represents the most updated transportation planning effort for the county as a whole, and includes projects in the city of Jefferson.

Jefferson adopted a stand-alone comprehensive plan (Community Agenda) in 2008, which established both character areas and future land use categories to guide zoning decisions. In August 2010, the future land use plan map and text was refined and readopted. Also that year, a Sustainable Community Forest Master Plan was prepared for the city. In 2012, Jefferson engaged in a “boomtown” planning effort, working with local stakeholders and staff of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to conceptualize the redevelopment of several properties. An urban redevelopment plan (URP) was prepared and adopted November 26, 2012, and an amendment to the URP was adopted on January 28, 2013. Adopting an urban redevelopment plan pursuant to applicable state law is now a threshold criterion for accessing certain state economic development incentives, and to be eligible for higher state job tax credits and more competitive scoring on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. The Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) includes three subareas: Downtown, Gateway Corridors, and Industrial Zone. Opportunity Zone (OZ) designation was then sought for eligible areas within the URA.

In 2014, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission updated Jefferson’s comprehensive plan.

## **PURPOSE**

This comprehensive plan, initially updated for the City of Jefferson by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission in 2014, serves as a guide for local government officials and community leaders for making decisions in support of the community’s stated vision. Based on input from the public and a Citizens Advisory Committee, the plan identifies needs and opportunities for the community, as well as goals for the city’s future, and policies that provide guidance and direction for achieving these goals. The plan also offers insight into what types of land use and development are appropriate in the City of Jefferson. A community work program is included that specifies a route for working towards implementation of the plan. In addition, this comprehensive plan includes a capital improvements element to qualify the City of Jefferson to continue charging parks and recreation impact fees.

This comprehensive plan should be used as a guide by the local government for assessing land development and subdivision proposals, rezoning and conditional use applications, and redevelopment plans. Residents, business owners, and developers may consult the plan as well to learn about appropriate land use, development, and the trajectory of growth for the City of Jefferson. Essentially, the plan seeks to answer the questions: *Where are we?*, *Where do we want to be?*, and, *How will we get there?*

## **PLANNING REQUIREMENTS**

The Comprehensive Plan must comply with substantive and procedural requirements specified in the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”), O.C.G.A. Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2014. The following elements of the comprehensive plan are required for the City of Jefferson:

## **Community Goals**

Through public and committee meetings, the City's vision, goals, and policies were developed to determine the community's future direction. As a part of this component, policies were identified to assist in making decisions that are consistent with community goals. Additionally, focused areas of planning with special conditions or needs were defined, which help determine those parts of the community that are to be enhanced or preserved, and how to guide zoning and land use policies in the future.

## **Needs and Opportunities**

An analysis of the community's needs and opportunities is required. This analysis assisted the community in identifying the issues that it needs to address and the opportunities on which it can capitalize.

## **Land Use Element**

A land use element is required because the City of Jefferson has adopted zoning regulations.

## **Community Work Program**

The Community Work Program provides specific actions for achieving the community's goals and implementing its plans. The work program includes a five-year (short term) work program identifying specific actions needed to implement the city's comprehensive plan.

## **Capital Improvements Element**

A capital improvements element is required for the City of Jefferson because it has adopted a park and recreation impact fee program. Accordingly, in addition to the local planning requirements as revised and made effective January 1, 2014, this comprehensive plan update is required to follow Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-2, Development Impact Fee Compliance Requirements, effective May 1, 1997.

## **Other Elements**

Although not referred to as an "element" per se, local planning requirements require that, during the process of preparing its comprehensive plan, each community must review the regional water plan(s) covering its area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (established and administered by the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) to determine if there is any need to adapt local implementation practices or development regulations to address protection of these important natural resources. The community must certify that it has considered both the regional water plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria when it transmits the plan to the Regional Commission for review.

Additional elements that may (but are not required to) be included in the comprehensive plan, at the option of the local government, are a housing element, an economic development element, and a transportation element.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Role**

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's (NEGRC's) planning and local government services division facilitated the 2014 update of Jefferson's plan. Leading community input sessions and citizen advisory committee meetings, the NEGRC team gathered feedback and guidance from the public and used that information to assemble the comprehensive plan and make recommendations that are reflective of the community's desires. The Mayor and City Council hold ultimate responsibility and authority to approve and direct the implementation of the comprehensive plan.



**Public Input was facilitated by Regional Commission Staff (2014)**

### **Public Input and Citizens Advisory Committee**

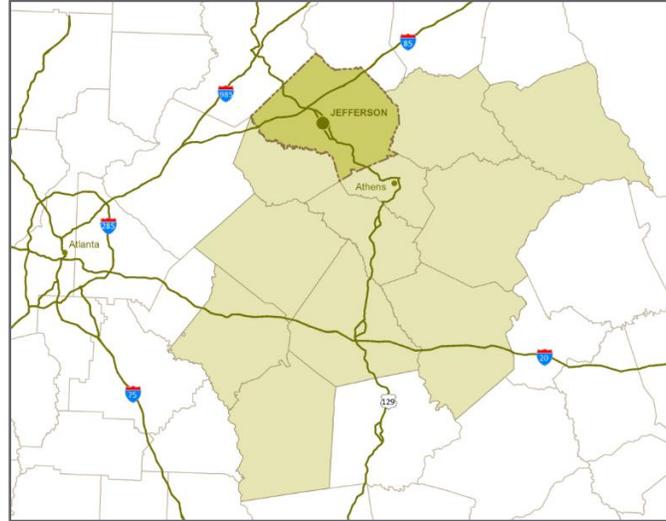


**Residents attend Meeting on Comprehensive Plan**

The 2014 update of Jefferson's comprehensive plan relied heavily on public involvement. The planning process began with a community input session where the public was invited to discuss the assets and challenges found in Jefferson, and their hopes for its future. Following the initial public meeting, several work sessions were held with a citizens advisory committee, a group of citizens representing various communities in Jefferson. This committee provided valuable feedback, guidance, and recommendations about the comprehensive plan and served the integral role of guiding the plan as a document representative of Jefferson's vision.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of Jefferson is located in northeast Georgia, about an hour north of Atlanta along Interstate 85. Located in the gently rolling hills of the piedmont region, Jefferson has a small town character, with a historic downtown and a supportive and engaged community. Jefferson, the county seat of Jackson County, has a population of 9,867 (U.S. Census estimate for 2014). One of the fastest growing counties in the region, Jackson County has a population of 61,870 (U.S. Census estimate for 2014), with projections estimating a population of almost 100,000 by the year 2040 (Source: Jackson County Comprehensive Plan).



**Jefferson's Location in Regional Context**

Residents of Jefferson identified many positive attributes of their City, including its vibrant downtown, great city school system, family-oriented and safe community, and its central location to many urban centers. Looking to the future, residents want to maintain and enhance these valuable assets of their community, while adapting to population change and encouraging commercial and industrial growth to occur in a way that complements the community's vision.



**Downtown Monument**

## CHAPTER 2 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The needs and opportunities presented in this chapter were prepared as part of the 2014 comprehensive plan update. They are divided into five categories: Downtown, Parks and Greenspace, Infrastructure, New Development, and Infill and Redevelopment. The list was compiled from needs and opportunities identified by the citizens advisory committee, during the public input session, and from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The list was also supplemented with additional needs identified in 2015 and 2016.

### DOWNTOWN

#### Needs

- a. Downtown needs a consistent design, with unifying elements that are attractive and inviting to residents and visitors.
- b. Parking, particularly for events, is needed in downtown.
- c. A pedestrian-friendly environment is needed downtown, especially in the square.
- d. An increase in walkability between downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods is needed.
- e. In order to attract people to live in downtown, housing opportunities and amenities are needed to serve these potential residents. Amenities should include basic services and businesses such as a hardware store and a drug store.
- f. Tenants are needed to fill empty stores located downtown. A business recruitment and retention strategy is needed. More variety of downtown retail options are needed.
- g. Later hours (beyond 5:00 PM) are needed for businesses in downtown in order to attract people with ongoing activity into the evening.
- h. An outdoor music venue is needed downtown.

#### Opportunities

- a. As the county seat, people are drawn to downtown Jefferson to conduct business or for administrative and personal purposes. If these people felt inclined to linger downtown, businesses would have the potential to capitalize on these visitors.
- b. The Crawford W. Long Museum has the potential to offer a space for cultural activities, events, and programs. With rotating exhibits, the museum could serve as a link to other museums across the country.
- c. The Opportunity Zone designation in downtown should be utilized as a tool for attracting businesses.
- d. Redevelopment of the old motel/post office block and 55 College Street offers an opportunity.
- e. A community event space could be developed on the lot rented by Regions Bank (one block off of the downtown square) for music events and possibly a farmers' market.
- f. Jefferson's community is supportive and engaged and there are active volunteer groups. There is an opportunity to develop community pride and activism among new and existing residents.
- g. The County is camera-ready, meaning the support for film and TV production is in place.

## **PARKS AND GREENSPACE**

### **Needs**

- a. Dog parks are needed in Jefferson.
- b. More opportunities for recreation, such as an aquatic center, are needed.
- c. A strategy for ensuring that parks are a safe environment is needed, and should include items such as surveillance and lighting.
- d. Tree canopy in downtown and throughout Jefferson for shade and aesthetic value is valued and planting of trees should continue.
- e. Connectivity between park spaces is needed.

### **Opportunities**

- a. An expansion of the park in front of the Civic Center is possible and desirable.
- b. There is space for a park near Regions Bank on Gordon Street. With its accessibility to downtown, this could be a good space for an amphitheater.
- c. The Club House Park, near the stadium, could provide a great community resource if developed.
- d. As a Tree City USA designation, Jefferson should take advantage of the incentives and benefits that come with this program.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Needs**

- a. Rehabilitation of the sewer system and stormwater system is needed.
- b. Wi-Fi is needed in downtown in order to serve the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. Jefferson's limited internet connectivity makes it difficult to attract employers in emerging sectors that require fast and reliable access. Attracting these employers is critical to diversifying employment options for residents.
- c. Jefferson needs to become "wired-in," with wireline internet connectivity and better internet speeds and capacity.
- d. Multi-use trails are needed in Jefferson.
- e. Sidewalks are needed to connect downtown and surrounding subdivisions.
- f. Bike-specific facilities are needed in Jefferson.
- g. A safe way to cross the bypass by foot is needed in Jefferson.
- h. Traffic needs to be addressed, specifically in the east-west direction downtown and around Jefferson's schools during drop-off and pick-up times.
- i. Improvement in intergovernmental coordination and communication to address jurisdictional issues is needed.
- j. People lack transportation choices for access to housing, jobs, services, goods, health care and recreation. For most residents, the automobile is the only choice in Jefferson.

## Opportunities

- a. A large cycling community is present in Jefferson.
- b. The proximity of the Jackson County airport offers an opportunity to Jefferson.
- c. While conducting utility work, Jefferson should consider a “Dig Once” policy, to encourage the simultaneous placement of conduit/dark fiber.
- d. By strengthening its technological resources, Jefferson can attract new business.

## NEW DEVELOPMENT

### Needs

- a. A cultural arts center is needed in Jefferson.
- b. A movie theatre is needed in Jefferson.
- c. Overnight accommodation is needed in Jefferson.
- d. A plan is needed for the 129 bypass that should include guidelines for development.
- e. Housing for elderly and other niche groups that is accessible to downtown and amenities is needed.
- f. Guidelines are needed to help determine where large retail stores can be located.
- g. Redevelopment at the Dry Pond Road exit is needed.
- h. There is a need to address growth through design guidelines such as sign ordinances.
- i. With new residential development impacting the rural environment and small town appeal of Jefferson, an effort to support greenspace preservation is needed. Conservation subdivisions, set-asides in new development, and other land conservation techniques can help offset the negative impacts of growth.
- j. Land use in the water supply watershed, including both the city and county, should be subject to restrictions that protect the city’s water supply.
- k. Additional growth in single family housing is expected over the next decade. It is important to ensure a balanced mix of housing types as the City grows.
- l. The City should update its design guidelines to ensure that new development is attractive, enduring, and of high quality.

### Opportunities

- a. The Dry Pond Road exit (#140 Interstate 85 interchange) is currently under-developed and offers an opportunity for new businesses. See discussion under “special areas” in Chapter 4).
- b. There is room for industrial development north of the 129 Bypass and south of downtown.
- c. Space is available for new residential development in many areas around Jefferson. With a good school system and family-oriented community present in Jefferson, new residents can be attracted.

## INFILL DEVELOPMENT

### Needs

- a. Mike’s Grill Restaurant space needs to be rehabilitated for reuse.
- b. There are multiple redevelopment needs along Highway 11 near Crow’s Lake.
- c. Areas at the intersection of Washington St. and Lee St. need to be rehabilitated and/or redeveloped.
- d. Gateway signage is needed to indicate the Jefferson City limits.
- e. Façade improvements are needed in downtown.

### Opportunities

- a. There is an opportunity for mixed-use development at the old motel site in downtown.
- b. Pendergrass House can be rehabilitated and reused.
- c. There is an opportunity for infill and redevelopment in the mill village, similar to the Boulevard neighborhood in Athens.
- d. Jefferson’s established Main Street and Downtown Development Authority programs offer an opportunity to assist with redevelopment of downtown structures.
- e. The “renovate and sell” program through the Downtown Development Authority should continue to be pursued.
- f. Financial tools, such as the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund, are available to assist with the redevelopment of downtown Jefferson.
- g. Jefferson should promote the incentives offered by the designated Opportunity Zone to attract employers in all sectors.

## ADDITIONAL NEEDS

This section summarizes additional needs identified in 2015 and 2016:

- a. **Downtown Development Plan.** The city would like to improve the economic development potential of the downtown and also encourage more housing in the downtown area. The city needs to have a professional plan put together for the downtown that will guide future development and redevelopment as well as economic development and housing strategies.
- b. **Annexation Plan.** Due in large part to the success and excellent reputation of Jefferson city schools, residential developers are seeking annexation into the city. If annexations continue to occur, the city school system may have difficulty providing school capacity. The city may get pressured to annex properties further and further away from the center, spreading other service demands over an ever-broadening service area. It is in the city’s best interest to begin to define the outer edges of what may constitute the city’s ultimate annexation area, so as to notify property owners the areas within which the city is likely or unlikely to annex. Presently, the city’s focus should be on “filling in” unincorporated

areas within the existing extent of the city limits, rather than extending out further beyond that existing extent.

- c. **Sanitary Sewer Capacity Monitoring.** As new industrial developments and residential subdivision proposals accelerate, it is becoming increasingly important for the city to monitor available capacity in its sewage treatment plant, spray irrigation field, and the collection network, especially major interceptor sewer lines. The city will need to program additional funding or engage staff in a study of these facilities and evaluate them in light of anticipated developments which generate demands on the system.
- d. **Curry Creek Water Supply Watershed Monitoring.** In 2007, the city solicited a study by the University of Georgia River Basin Center (completed in 2008) on the amount of impervious surface that may result in the Curry Creek water supply watershed under buildout conditions. Because the watershed over the longer term, at buildout conditions, is likely to meet or exceed the maximum limit of 25% impervious established by state environmental planning criteria, periodic monitoring of watershed imperviousness is needed.
- e. **Parks Creek Reservoir Management Plan.** The city has acquired land for the Parks Creek water supply reservoir in unincorporated Jackson County. Prior to operation the city will need to prepare and adopt a reservoir management plan in accordance with Georgia Administrative Rule 391-3-16-.01, Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds, Section 8.
- f. **Parks Creek Reservoir Watershed Protection.** Because the watershed of Parks Creek Reservoir lies in unincorporated Jackson County, the city should seek Jackson County’s adoption in its unified development code of watershed protection criteria as required by Georgia Administrative Rule 391-3-16-.01, Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds.
- g. **Traffic congestion.** Over the long term (by 2028), Jefferson will experience additional traffic congestion, with “failing” conditions on I-85 and nearly failing conditions on SR 11 Business, as highlighted in the table below:

Road	From	To	2018 Average Daily Traffic	2028 Average Daily Traffic	Need
Interstate 85	SR 53	U.S. 129	64,571	72,728	8 lanes
Interstate 85	U.S. 129	SR 82	61,144	68,383	6 lanes
Interstate 85	SR 82	SR 98	60,236	67,487	6 lanes
SR 11 Bus.	U.S. 129	Memorial Dr.	9,463	17,559	2 lanes
SR 11 Bus.	Memorial Dr.	Oak Ave.	16,462	19,780	2 lanes
SR 11 Bus.	Oak Ave.	Cobb St.	17,486	22,125	2 lanes

- h. **Hog Mountain Road and McClure Industrial Drive.** Industrial development prospects have increased with the improving economy. Hog Mountain Road from U.S. Highway

129 to Possum Creek Road has been improved, but there is a need to continue improvements further east along Hog Mountain Road and also McClure Industrial Drive. The city needs to pursue additional grant to ensure that this important road segment (which connects two Interstate 85 interchanges) is improved concurrent with industrial and other development in the area. The whole road segment needs to be planned for improvement in conjunction with Jackson County, since part of the road lies outside the city limits, and because Jackson County has been responsible for maintenance.

- i. **Jefferson East Bypass.** The 2008-2028 Countywide Roadways Plan, prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates for Jackson County, calls for a proposed Jefferson East Bypass as a potential roadway improvement to enhance connectivity. This project was mentioned in focus groups several times during preparation of the roadways plan. The plan also finds that as traffic congestion increases in Jefferson, it may be prudent to plan and construct an east by-pass around Jefferson. According to the plan, the potential route suggested by the City of Jefferson for an east by-pass was possibly beginning at Galilee Church Road at its intersection with US 129 Business/SR 15, to Canter Way, circumventing Jefferson’s wastewater treatment facility, crossing Brockton Road (SR 335) and connecting to SR 82. The length of that proposed new roadway on new location would be 2.73 miles. The estimated cost of this project in 2008 dollars was \$13.3 million. It was considered the #3 priority in the plan’s list of new roadway projects.
- j. **Jackson County Airport Connector.** Another major road project in the 2008-2028 Countywide Roadways Plan is the proposed road connecting Jackson County Airport to the Interstate 85/SR 82 interchange. The roadways plan indicates that the Jackson County Board of Commissioners established the 2008 Economic Development Bond Program which included a proposed connector road providing access between the Jackson County Airport and the existing I-85/SR 82 interchange. The two southern termini of the proposed connector route would begin at both the SR 82/Lyle Field Road intersection and the SR 82/Airport Road intersection and proceed northwesterly through the McClure Industrial Park and intersecting with Dry Pond Road (Hog Mountain Road) at a new intersection to be built just south of the current Dry Pond Road (Hog Mountain Road)/Jett Roberts Road intersection. From that new intersection, the proposed Airport Connector would continue northwesterly and tie into the existing SR 82 just south of the I-85 northbound off and on ramps. The length of the proposed Airport Connector would be 1.90 miles and with the proposed intersection and side road improvements would total 2.17 miles in length.
- k. **Implementation of the Sustainable Community Forest Master Plan.** This plan, developed in 2010, includes a detailed work program. The city needs to pursue implementation of that plan.
- l. **Firewise Plan Implementation.** Jefferson is pursuing becoming a “Firewise” community. To that end, the Georgia Forestry Commission in January 2016 prepared a Firewise Action Plan for wildfire mitigation and the protection against structural ignitability in the wildland-urban interface. The city needs to fully implement this plan,

including mitigating risks, providing public education, and establishing “defensible space” around structures.

## CHAPTER 3 VISION, GOALS, AND COMMUNITY POLICIES

Per state administrative rules, the goals or policies established in the comprehensive plan are the most important component. The community goals component of the comprehensive plan is required to incorporate at least one of the following: general vision statement; list of community goals; community policies; and character areas and defining narrative. After careful consideration of these options, it was decided that the 2016 plan update should retain the general vision statement developed for the 2008 comprehensive plan, include basic goals, and emphasize community policies as an instrument to guide land use and investment policy in Jefferson. This chapter contains a general vision statement, a set of general goals with implementation techniques, and a detailed set of community policies divided into the following categories: annexation; natural resources and the environment; economic development; housing; community facilities and services; transportation; and land use.

### VISION STATEMENT

“Jefferson aspires to maintain a strong community spirit and a vibrant downtown. Downtown will remain the social and cultural heart of the community, featuring festivals, museums, restaurants and shopping for residents and visitors. We will welcome new residents and honor our history by preserving historic structures and neighborhoods. We will preserve and enhance our quality of life through the finest schools, accessible parks and services, a sheltering tree canopy, a growing employment base, and our small town sense of hospitality and community.”



**Crawford Long Museum**

### GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

Jefferson supports the continuous pursuit of the following goals:

1. **Historic Preservation:** Protect historic resources and promote cultural resources in the city.

*Implementation techniques: National Register of Historic Places, local historic districts and regulations, design guidelines, various activities by Historic Preservation Commission.*

2. **Environment:** Protect and enhance the natural environment, with emphasis on water quality, sustainability, and tree canopy retention and enhancement.

*Implementation techniques: Environmental regulations, land development regulations, critical area plans and regulations.*

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

*Implementation techniques: Residential zoning districts, subdivision regulations, community development plans, neighborhood improvement plans and programs, housing code enforcement.*

4. **Economic Development and Redevelopment:** Grow the economy, increase local employment, increase personal incomes, and reduce poverty.

*Implementation techniques: Economic development planning, urban redevelopment planning, business recruitment and retention strategies, inventories of available properties and buildings, downtown development authority activities, main street program, community development.*

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

*Implementation techniques: Public facility master plans, capital improvement programming, facility requirements in land use regulations, monitoring of facility capacities, and development impact fees.*

6. **Transportation:** Provide mobility, safety, and connectivity via a multi-modal transportation system, with emphasis on improving the pedestrian network, adding bike lanes to the existing network, and developing multi-use trails.

*Implementation techniques: Transportation planning, capital improvement programming, access control and other transportation requirements in land use regulations.*

7. **Land Use:** Promote and ensure efficient, functional and compatible land use patterns.

*Implementation techniques: Zoning, subdivision, land development and other land use controls, small area refinement plans, design guidelines.*

8. **Urban Design and Livability:** Improve the functionality and attractiveness of downtown, gateway corridors, and neighborhoods in the city.

*Implementation techniques: Land use controls, small area refinement plans, design guidelines.*

9. **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Cooperate with all other levels of government in the pursuit of shared goals, policies and objectives.

*Implementation techniques: Countywide service delivery strategy; annexation and land use dispute resolution processes, intergovernmental agreements.*

## COMMUNITY POLICIES

### Annexation

The following annexation policies should be evaluated and considered when the city receives an annexation request:

- 1. City and county plan consistency.** Annexation and subsequent development should be in compliance with the county's comprehensive plan and, to the extent it may be addressed, the city's comprehensive plan.
- 2. Development compliance.** The land uses (existing or proposed) of the area to be annexed should comply with the city's land use management code. Existing and proposed uses and development standards for areas considered for annexation should be consistent with adopted city standards.
- 3. Facilities and services.** The city should have the capacity to provide the full range of urban services (public safety, water, sewer, schools, etc.) to newly annexed areas in a timely and efficient manner without reducing the level of those services to other city residents and businesses. This includes consideration of whether the area to be annexed is within the city's recognized water and sewer service area or is a logical, reasonable, and efficient extension thereof. Consideration should be given to the availability of land within the city for the uses which would be developed upon annexation, encouraging infilling of existing undeveloped areas before extending services which allow similar development in peripheral areas unless there is a benefit to the community at large. The city should also consider the relative gain or cost to the city, if annexed, balanced in the context of the gain to the property owner.
- 4. County requests denied.** The request should not be the result of an applicant seeking relief by the city due to the filing of a request with Jackson County which was denied by the county.

### Natural Resources and the Environment

- 1. Wetland Preservation and Mitigation.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).
- 2. Wetland buffers.** When a development proposal is located close to a wetland, it should establish and maintain a minimum 50-foot wide protective buffer around the wetland.

- 3. Wetlands – Review for Development Impacts.** Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):

  - Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
  - Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
  - Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
  - Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
  - Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
  - Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as “Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.”
  - Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
  - Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.
- 4. Environmental Planning Criteria.** Adopt and maintain zoning and land development regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors.
- 5. Floodways and Floodplains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters. Consider future conditions floodplain data, where available or where it can be generated.
- 6. National Flood Insurance Program.** Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- 7. Minimize Water Quality Impacts.** The location and intensity of development should be arranged so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality, both during and after construction. Major considerations concerning water quality should include: organic pollution from infiltration and surface runoff; erosion and sedimentation; water temperature elevation; nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous; and toxic materials.
- 8. Stormwater Management and Best Management Practices.** The Georgia Stormwater Management Manual is adopted to implement best practices for water pollution control and stormwater management, including but not limited to “low impact development”

techniques such as biofilters (vegetated swales/strips), wet ponds, and constructed wetlands. Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and which will serve as amenities for the development. Sites should be designed where possible to drain to the rear or side, where detention ponds are more appropriately located. Fenced detention ponds in front yards are strongly discouraged if not prohibited altogether. When stormwater detention or drainage is placed adjacent to the right-of-way, slopes should be gentle enough to avoid fencing requirements, and the area should be attractively landscaped. New, major residential subdivisions should be required to ensure that adequate funding is available for maintenance of any non-public on-site stormwater detention facilities.

- 9. Steep Slopes.** Steep slopes (25% or more) should be set aside as conservation areas. No lot should be created with more than 50 percent of its area containing steep slopes, and lot subdividers should demonstrate that each lot has a suitable building envelope outside steeply sloping areas. If a building site must be created with steep slopes, all buildings and structures on such building sites should have foundations which have been designed by a civil engineer or other qualified professional. When development must occur within steeply sloping areas, site designers are also encouraged to propose and apply innovative concepts for slope and soil stabilization, and limitations on grading.
- 10. Landscape Ecology and Habitat Protection.** Consider habitat information in the review of large land developments and major subdivisions, including but not limited to the database of the DNR Natural Heritage Program, USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species, and the DNR Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities. Promote and pursue principles of landscape ecology when reviewing large developments and major subdivisions.
- 11. Tree Protection.** Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments. Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees with trees of like species and value, or apply a tree canopy replacement strategy in lieu of conventional tree replacement regulations.
- 12. Water Conservation.** Promote the conservation of water by residents, businesses, industries, and institutions, to meet local, regional, and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.
- 13. Energy Efficiency.** Reduce energy consumption through comprehensive planning and urban design, and promote energy-efficient development. Support programs to increase energy efficiency and reduce life-cycle costs of all construction projects, including public and institutional projects. Develop and encourage appropriate applications of renewable energy. Encourage LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings.
- 14. Historic and Cultural Resources.** The traditional character of the city should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community,

encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the city's character.

- 15. Land Conservation Methods.** Preferred methods for the permanent protection of conservation lands as open space include dedication to a public entity (if dedication is acceptable locally) and/or a conservation easement with management by an approved land trust.

## **Economic Development**

- 1. Generally.** Expand the city's economic base and increase employment opportunities while protecting environmental, historic, and community character.
- 2. Comprehensiveness.** Prepare economic development strategies and plans that are comprehensive in nature, such that all economic activities are addressed, including but not limited to agriculture and agribusiness, tourism, heritage tourism, health care, retail, services, material moving and warehousing, biotechnology, industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and small business/home occupations.
- 3. Infrastructure readiness.** Provide and maintain sanitary sewer capacity and road capacity in order to attract new industry and manufacturing and commercial activities. Reserve such capacity for the types of industries and businesses that need the infrastructure.
- 4. Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the city.
- 5. Balance of Interests.** Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.

## **Housing**

- 1. Housing Opportunities.** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the city.
- 2. Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities.** Encourage "life cycle" or "mixed generation" communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.
- 3. Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.
- 4. Design and Location of Senior and Disabled Housing.** Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step

entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity or with appropriate access to health care services.

5. **Substandard Housing.** Require that substandard or dilapidated housing be brought up to applicable codes or demolished if code compliance is not feasible.
6. **Housing and Property Standards Codes.** Allocate appropriate resources to enforce housing and property maintenance codes.
7. **State and Federal Housing and Community Development Programs.** Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs to improve areas of substandard housing and improve low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

### Community Facilities and Services

1. **Level of Service Standards.** Establish and maintain level-of-service and/or performance standards for the major community facilities and services provided by the county. Unless specified by facility-specific master plans and adopted as superseding policy, the city should strive to maintain the minimum level of service standards in Jackson County's 2015 Comprehensive Plan, as adopted and as may be amended.
2. **Long-term Water Supply.** Continue to pursue plans for additional long-term sources of water supplies, including the Parks Creek reservoir.
3. **Contingency Plans for Water System.** Contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding.
4. **Sanitary Sewer.** Manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment. Convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant or site without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.
5. **Water and Sewer Service Areas.** Delineate and adopt, and revise periodically as appropriate as a part of the county's service delivery strategy, water and sewer service areas for the city as a municipal service provider. Revise service area boundaries when necessary to account for municipal annexations.
6. **Standard Construction Details and Specifications.** Maintain and periodically update standard construction specifications and standard drawings for water and sewer systems.
7. **Emergency Preparedness.** Periodically conduct, or participate in countywide efforts to complete, community hazard vulnerability analyses to identify the types of environmental extremes (e.g., floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes), technological accidents (e.g., toxic chemical releases,), and deliberate incidents (e.g., sabotage or terrorist attack

involving chemical, biological, radiological/ nuclear, or explosive/flammable materials) to which the city may be exposed. Periodically review and revise the disaster preparedness and emergency management plans based on such vulnerability analyses and update them as appropriate. Seek improvements and pursue programs that will make the city more resilient to natural and man-made disasters.

- 8. Schools.** Consider the impacts of residential development on the city school system. Where impacts are evident, seek to mitigate the impact of residential development on the public school system.

## Transportation

- 1. Modes.** Promote development that serves the long-term cycling and walking needs of residents of the city and that provides an appropriate amount of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Strong consideration will be given to proposals that provide integrated and connected multi-modal transportation facilities.
- 2. Funding.** Secure federal and state funding for transportation, where available, and maximize the use of available financial resources to fund needed transportation improvements.
- 3. Connectivity.** All new roadways except low volume, local residential subdivision streets, should connect at both termini with the existing road network. Local streets should be planned where possible with more than one connection to the existing public road network. Street stubs should be provided to ensure connectivity with future subdivisions on abutting lands.
- 4. Context Sensitivity.** Design planned roadway improvements in a way that is context sensitive, preserves or creates a sense of place for the areas in vicinity of the improvements, and that enhances community aesthetics. Add dedicated bike lanes to road improvements where possible.
- 5. Traffic Routing.** Ensure that vehicular traffic, especially truck traffic, will not be routed into residential neighborhoods, so as to preserve the peace and quiet of residential neighborhoods.
- 6. Access Management.** Adopt and apply access management standards to control the connections and access points of driveways and roads to public roadways.
- 7. Encroachment Prevention.** Protect existing and future rights-of-way from building encroachment.
- 8. Speed Limits.** Establish posted speed limits for all city roadways and periodically reevaluate and revise speed limits as may be needed based on existing road conditions, such as functional classification, shoulder condition, road grade, adjacent land uses,

frequency of driveway accesses, building setbacks, sight distances, geometric features of the roadway, pedestrian activity, and historical crash data.

9. **Land Development and Transportation.** When development occurs it should be the responsibility of developer to improve road and multi-modal transportation facilities along the public street frontages and internal to the development.
10. **Sidewalk Installation.** New subdivisions need to provide sidewalks along streets internal to the subdivision, and all subdivisions and land developments should provide sidewalks within the right-of-way of public roadways abutting or fronting the subdivision or land development.
11. **On-site Circulation.** Adopt and apply standards that ensure the safe and convenient flow of vehicles, pedestrians, and where appropriate bicyclists, on development sites.
12. **Commercial Development.** New commercial areas need to have public road access at the proper functional classification. Big box businesses should be required to study traffic impacts and prior to land development approval propose mitigation measures that will minimize capacity and safety issues and to reduce conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and trucks. Encourage the installation of grid street patterns in commercial nodes. Require parcel-to-parcel connectivity in non-residential areas (where compatible) using cross-access easements, to ensure that drivers can directly access abutting non-residential uses without having to use the road or street.

## Land Use

1. **Residential Neighborhoods.** Maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of residences at low (or current) densities. Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods. Protect residential areas (whether rural, suburban, or urban) from nuisances (e.g., excessive noise, odor, traffic and lighting) and from encroachment by incompatible land uses. The consideration of the preservation of the integrity of residential neighborhoods shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.
2. **Compatibility and Transitions in Land Use.** Rezoning and planned community developments, if approved, should result in land development that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property. Development should not adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property. Avoid harsh or abrupt changes of land use, by encouraging a logical and compatible relationship of land use, transitioning from one property development to another. The ideal progression of land use compatibility is from residential (with gradations of density) to public-institutional (including private office), to commercial, to industrial. If harsh or abrupt changes in land use cannot be avoided, the transition should be better facilitated with special design techniques, step downs in intensity or density, and/or conditions of approval relating to building height, building setbacks, buffers, and limitations on incompatible operating characteristics.

3. **Access to Conservation Lands.** Residential subdivisions are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties. Conservation lands should be accessible in multiple locations.
4. **Conservation Subdivisions.** Subdivisions are encouraged but not required, where opportunities exist, to follow principles of conservation subdivision design.
5. **Adequate Public Facilities.** Development should not occur or be approved which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, schools, or other publicly-provided facilities and services. As a condition of approval, major subdivisions (6 or more lots) and major land developments should be required to demonstrate availability of public water, sanitary sewer, fire protection, law enforcement, roads, stormwater management, and public school facilities. Residential development will continue to be charged a park and recreation impact fee to ensure adequate park and recreation facilities. Major subdivisions and major land developments that cannot demonstrate all such facilities are available or planned at the time of development or within a reasonable period of time thereafter may gain approval only if they mitigate the lack of such facilities, through the dedication of land in the subdivision or off-site, on-site and/or off-site improvements, payment of impact fees if imposed by the city, or payment of in-lieu fees or other acceptable arrangements via development agreements.
6. **U.S. Highway 129 Corridor.** As the Damon Gause Parkway corridor develops, the preferred strategy is to concentrate commercial development in “activity centers” at the following key intersections of U.S. Highway 129 with: Old Pendergrass Road; SR 11/Winder Highway/ Lee Street; Galilee Church Road; and U.S. Highway 129 Business (currently outside the city limits). Access points (new project entrances) onto U.S. Highway 129 corridor are restricted by overlay district. When land development projects occur within the corridor, they should show interparcel or new road access organized to one or more of these key intersections. In addition, frontage roads paralleling the highway should be planned and developed. Further, developments should facility multi-use trail connections between the activity centers and surrounding neighborhoods.
7. **Big-box Retail Development.** Any development including or proposed to include a single retail establishment with a gross floor area of 60,000 square feet or more should incorporate the following design characteristics: a public amenity, such as an outdoor plaza, patio seating area, water feature, clock tower, and/or other amenity that will enhance the character of the area, scaled in proportion to the size of the proposed store; exterior pedestrian furniture in appropriate locations at a minimum rate of one standard size bench for every 20,000 square feet of gross floor area; and coordinated signage and design plans for any outparcels to be developed in conjunction with the big box store or shopping center.

8. **Commercial Corridor and Downtown Redevelopment.** Per its adopted redevelopment plan, the City of Jefferson encourages the upgrading and redevelopment for commercial use of properties along identified gateway corridors and in the downtown. To ensure redevelopment, the city recognizes the need for and is receptive to considering modifications and variances to zoning and development requirements that will facilitate the desired commercial redevelopment.
9. **Manufactured Housing.** Except in rural and agricultural areas or zoning districts, manufactured home parks, manufactured home subdivisions, and manufactured homes on individual lots are strongly discouraged if not prohibited by city regulation.
10. **Sewer.** Land development and land subdivisions in urban and suburban parts of the city should be connected to public sanitary sewer as a condition or prerequisite of development approval.
11. **Buffers and Screening.** Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices. Utilize buffers to separate potentially conflicting or incompatible land uses.
12. **Non-residential and Multi-Family Residential Site Plan Review.** All non-residential and multi-family residential developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, architectural characteristics of buildings, and signage.
13. **Industrial Land Use.** Industrial developments serving more than one industry are strongly encouraged to be developed within planned industrial parks which are designed with campus-style layouts including generous building setbacks from exterior roads and landscaping. New industrial operations should be limited to those that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions. However, in areas designated for industry which are clearly removed from residential areas, heavy manufacturing and heavy industrial uses, including those creating objectionable conditions, may be considered appropriate depending on specific conditions.
14. **Mixed Use.** Within planned community developments, the vertical mixing of residential with office and commercial land uses is desirable. Horizontal mixed use is also encouraged.

## CHAPTER 4 LAND USE ELEMENT

This chapter summarizes existing land use patterns and provides descriptions of future land use categories.

### **SUMMARY OF EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING ALLOCATION**

As of 2016 the city limits of Jefferson encompass more than 22 square miles, stretching generally from north of Interstate 85 at two interchanges (U.S. Highway 129 and SR 82/Dry Pond Road), to the North Oconee River and beyond on the west, to the City of Arcade on the south, and to rural areas and farmland in unincorporated Jackson County on the east.

Commercial land uses exist in the historic downtown and along highways entering/exiting the downtown: U.S. Highway 129 Business, Lee Street (SR 11), and Athens Street (U.S. Highway 129 Business). Commercial uses totaled approximately 365 acres in 2014, or 2.6% of total city land area. The aging highway commercial corridors have been identified in the urban redevelopment plan as having redevelopment potential. A highway-oriented commercial activity center exists at U.S. Highway 129 and Interstate 85. The Damon Gause Parkway (U.S. Highway 129) is mostly undeveloped but also contains more recently developed commercial land uses at Old Pendergrass Road, Panther Drive, and Winder Highway (SR 11). Commercial development potential exists along Concord Road north of Interstate 85 and along portions of the U.S. Highway 129 (Gause Parkway also referred to as “bypass”). Commercial zoning, especially the highway commercial zoning category, encompasses more than 1,000 acres and approximately 8% of the city’s land area. There is therefore some undeveloped, commercially zoned land, with more possible during the planning horizon in planned locations along Damon Gause Parkway (U.S. Highway 129 Bypass), U.S. Highway 129 Business, and Interstate 85 Exit 140 (SR 82/Dry Pond Road)

Industrial land use as of 2014 consists of approximately 1,080 acres and is concentrated predominantly in the following locations: in the southern part of the city east and west of U.S. Highway 129 Business; surrounding the commercial activity node at Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 129; surrounding (mostly south of) the Interstate 85 and SR 82/Dry Pond Road interchange; and in the Apex Industrial Park near the Jackson County airport. Extensive vacant land is available for light industrial development in Jefferson; approximately 3,750 acres or about 27% of the city land area is zoned for light industry. Several large industrial sites are available within McClure Industrial Park.

Jefferson is home to a number of institutional uses, especially county and city government buildings, school facilities operated by the Jackson County and City of Jefferson Boards of Education, Jackson Electric Membership Corporation, and numerous churches and institutions. As the county seat, Jefferson hosts the County Government complex northeast of downtown along Jackson Parkway. Office and institutional uses encompass approximately 430 acres or 3% of total city land area. Office and institutional zoning encompasses more than 700 acres of land and constitutes approximately 5% of the city’s land area.

A wide variety of residential neighborhoods exist in Jefferson. At the lowest intensity, there are rural-style, large-lot (“estate”) subdivisions of single-family homes, mostly at peripheral locations. Suburban, single-family, detached neighborhoods exist in many locations in all directions throughout the city limits, especially west of U.S. Highway 129 and east of the North Oconee River. Total area developed as single-family residential is estimated in 2014 to be 3,300 acres, or approximately 23% of total city land area. The primary single-family zoning districts, R-1, R-2, and PCD (Planned Community Development) encompass approximately 6,000 acres, or approximately 44% of the total city land area. That figure generally includes the more established, in-town residential neighborhoods that exist west, south, and north of downtown. Extensive vacant land is available for single-family residential development in Greenfield locations. Multi-family development is limited to a few locations (encompassing only about 66 acres), the principal concentration being along Gordon Street south of downtown. Total multi-family zoning encompasses less than 200 acres and less than 2% of total city land area. Road rights of ways encompass more than 1,000 acres and constitute approximately 7.5% of total city land area. Parks, recreation, and conservation land uses constitute approximately 250 acres or less than 2% of the total city land area. An estimated 1,424 acres of land in Jefferson are vacant/undeveloped (10% of total city land area) and another roughly 40% of the city land area is in agricultural/forestry uses.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR LAND USE ELEMENTS**

The state administrative rules for local comprehensive plans require that a local government which implements zoning must adopt either character areas or a future land use map. The local government is not precluded from adopting *both* character areas and a future land use plan map. This 2016 update of the comprehensive plan utilizes the future land use plan map and does not include a character map like the previous comprehensive plans. The reasons for that decision are explained below.

A map of character areas was established as part of the 2014 plan update. The character areas in 2014 were based largely on those already identified in the 2008 comprehensive plan. To a large extent, the established character areas (suburban residential, industrial, commercial activity center, conservation area, etc.) resembled and overlapped with future land use categories. Other character areas were based on the city’s historic districts, and yet others applied to property outside the city limits (e.g., airport area). The character area map potentially conflicted with the city’s own future land use map (providing potentially two different interpretations of appropriate zoning). Further, the city’s map of character areas included in the 2014 plan update therefore potentially conflicted with the county’s character area and future land use plan maps, and the city does not have land use jurisdiction over those unincorporated areas.

Yet another reason to reconsider the utility of the character area approach is that the implementation measures suggested for the character areas, such as historic district guidelines, shared parking, access control, and additional design guidelines, have largely been accomplished as part of the city’s adopted land use management code. For instance, the special implementation measures needed for historic districts are already established via an overlay district which requires review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission of exterior material

changes in appearance of developments. As another example, the U.S. Highway 129 bypass corridor also has an overlay district established in the land use management code.

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

A future land use plan map is included in this comprehensive plan. It is based on the plan map amended in 2010, with selected additional updates including properties added via annexation. The land use categories chosen by the city must be able to be grouped into the standard land use categories described in the state’s administrative rules for local planning. For instance, the general “residential” land use category in the state rules is further divided in the Jefferson land use plan into four residential categories. The future land use plan map categories are described in below, which helps to explain how to interpret the map and each land use category. The city does not utilize a separate vacant/undeveloped category in the future land use plan map, since all properties should be assigned a reasonable economic use.

### **Park/ Recreation/ Conservation**

This category includes lands dedicated to both active and passive recreational uses, either publicly or privately owned, including playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, forest preserves, golf courses, recreation centers, and similar uses. It can be implemented with virtually any of the established zoning districts.



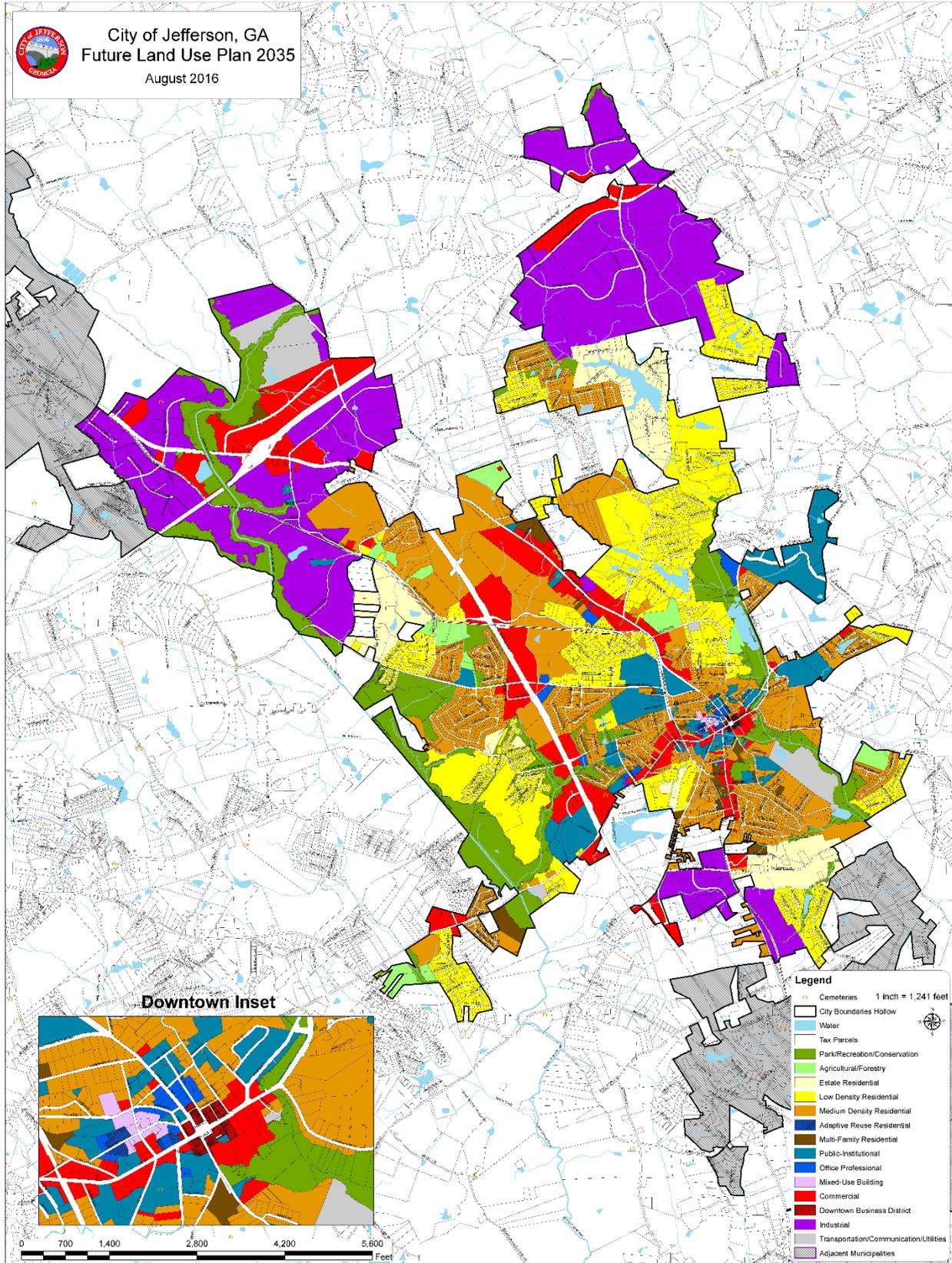
**Ball Field at Jim Joiner  
Recreational Complex**

### **Agriculture/ Forestry**

Much of the land in this category is simply vacant or undeveloped, but other tracts are forested and there may be some raising of livestock or cultivation of crops in this future land use category. Single-family, detached, residential land uses are allowed. The principal zoning district to implement the agricultural/forestry category is the AG, Agricultural zoning district. There is also a Planned Commercial Farm District which is appropriate for implementing farmland protection on larger parcels.



**Agricultural Land Use in Jefferson**



### **Residential, Estate**

This category accommodates detached, single-family homes on large (5+ acre) lots and also includes limited agricultural activities. This category is implemented with the AG-R, Agricultural Residential zoning district established in the land use management code.



**Estate Residential**

### **Residential, Low Density**

This category provides areas for detached, single-family homes on lots of 0.75 acre or more. The R-1, Single-Family Residential Districts is zoning category that implements this future land use plan map category.



**Low to Medium Density Residential**

### **Residential, Medium Density**

This category provides areas for detached, single-family homes on lots ranging in size from 0.25 to 0.75 acre. This future land use plan map category is implemented with the following three residential zoning districts: R-2, Medium Density Residential; R-3, Two-Family Residential; and R-4 Medium-High Density Residential.



**Multi-Family Residential**

### **Residential, Multi-Family**

This category provides for attached dwellings with a maximum density of up to 8 units per acre. It is implemented with the MFR, Multi-Family Residential zoning district.

### **Public Institutional**

This category applies to federal, state, or local government uses (except those included under the transportation/ communication/ utilities category described below), and a wide variety of institutional land uses. Government uses include county-owned facilities, fire stations, post offices, and schools. Private institutional uses include schools, colleges, churches, cemeteries, and private non-profit meeting halls, among others. It is implemented primarily with the O-I, Office-Institutional, zoning district, although such uses can be located in most other established zoning districts.



**Historic County Courthouse  
(Now a Visitor's Center)**

### **Office-Professional**

This category applies to individual offices (which are sometimes adaptively reused residential structures) and planned, campus-style office parks. This category is implemented primarily with the O-I, Office-Institutional zoning district, although offices can also be located in commercial zoning districts.



**Medical Office in Existing  
Historic Residence**

### **Adaptive Reuse of Single-family Residence**

This future land use category was added in 2016 as a measure to implement the evolving downtown master plan. West of downtown are single-family homes which are outside of the city's designated local historic districts but which have some historic significance. These homes are also located in an area the city foresees as eventually transitioning to nonresidential uses, in particular near properties expected to witness redevelopment for mixed-use buildings. This category therefore recognizes the potential to eventually convert these single-family homes to office and possibly neighborhood commercial land uses but without significant change to the structure. This future land use plan category can be implemented by Office-Institutional (O-I) and possibly Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) zoning districts, conditioned to use of the existing dwelling.

### **Mixed-Use Building**

This future land use category is another one added in 2016 as a measure to implement the evolving downtown master plan. West of downtown and north of Lee Street (SR 11 Business) are properties that are increasingly ripe for redevelopment or new development. The preferred land use of these properties is mixed-use buildings, where the ground floor (and possibly second floor) is occupied by an office or commercial use and the remaining floors are residential. This future land use category can be implemented with existing O-I and C-1 zoning districts and following newly adopted (2016) regulations and design guidelines for mixed-use buildings as specified in the Land Use Management Code.

### **Commercial**

This category accommodates non-industrial business uses including retail sales, services, and related commercial uses including offices, in individual freestanding buildings or within planned shopping centers. When located closer to neighborhoods where scale should be moderated and uses limited, the C-1, Neighborhood Commercial zoning district is the appropriate zoning district. When located along most highways, the C-2, Highway Commercial zoning district is appropriate.



**Kroger Shopping Center, Old Pendergrass Road and U.S. Highway 129**

### **Downtown Business District**

This category accommodates a wide variety of commercial, office, civic, and residential uses in a compact area of downtown Jefferson; mixed uses are encouraged in this future land use plan map category. The Downtown Business District zoning district implements this category.



**Historic Downtown Business**

## **Industrial**

This category accommodates warehouses, distribution centers, research and development centers, wholesale trade, manufacturing, processing plants, and factories. Also, with conditional use, mining activities may be permitted. In most cases, the LI, Light Industrial zoning district is the most appropriate category. Certain heavy industrial uses are allowed with conditional use in the HI, Heavy Industrial category.



**Kubota Building Addition**

## **Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities**

This future land use category includes water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants and spray irrigation sites, and electric facilities like power substations. In most instances the LI, Light Industrial zoning district implements this category.



**Electric Utility Substation**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL OVERLAYS**

As a part of the its adopted Land Use Management Code, Jefferson has adopted the following environmental overlay districts:

### **Wetlands Protection**

This map delineates wetlands from the National Wetland Inventory. Developments in wetlands are regulated by the land use management code and may also be subject to Section 404 federal permitting requirements.

### **Groundwater Recharge Areas**

Significant groundwater recharge areas are mapped and regulated in the city's land use regulations.

### **Curry Creek Reservoir Protection**

Curry Creek Reservoir is a “small” water supply watershed which has regulations establishing buffers, impervious surface setbacks, and maximum percentages of impervious surface, in order to protect this public drinking water supply.



**Curry Creek Reservoir**

### **Protected River**

This environmental overlay applies the Middle Oconee River which runs generally northwest to southeast on the west side of Jefferson. The overlay establishes a 100-foot wide buffer and certain other development regulations pertaining to the corridor.

### **OTHER OVERLAYS**

#### **Historic Districts**

All six of Jefferson’s historic districts are recognized as one zoning overlay in the city’s land use management code. Each property within a locally designated historic district is subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission if any exterior material changes in appearance are proposed, or in the case a historic structure is proposed to be demolished.



**Washington Street Looking North**

#### **U.S. Highway 129 Overlay District**

This zoning overlay is established in the city’s land use management code for the Damon Gause Parkway (U.S. Highway 129) corridor. The two primary purposes of the overlay district are to limit access to that which existed or was approved when the highway was constructed in 2002, and to establish a buffer along the right of way.



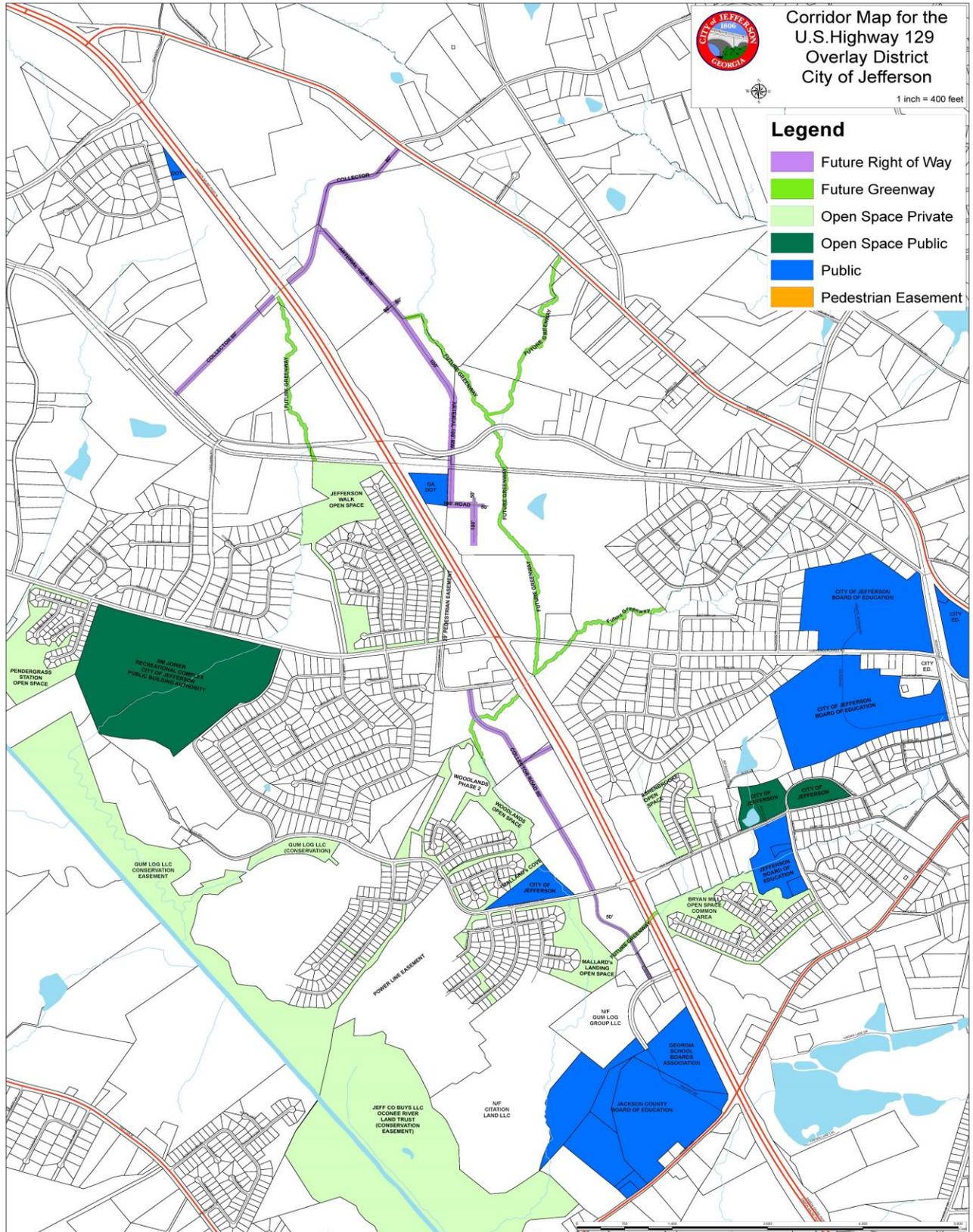
**Commercial Development at Old Pendergrass Road and U.S. Highway 129**

As development occurs in the corridor, additional road and pedestrian infrastructure will be needed that ensures properties are connected with one another. It is important for the city to ensure that as development occurs the right of way needed for new access roads or pedestrian way is reserved. The land use management code anticipated this need (Chapter 26.5) and provides a tool, called a “corridor map,” whereby the city can plan out future transportation corridors and set forth a code requirement that prevents buildings and development that encroach on those corridors. Adoption of the following corridor map was the first step toward that end; it was followed by adoption of an amendment to the land use management code to formally adopt the corridor map on July 25, 2016.

The corridor map provides for reservation of the following future road corridors from north to south:

1. An 80-foot wide collector right of way on the southwest side of U.S. Highway 129 connecting U.S. Highway 129 to Holders Siding Road.
2. An 80-foot wide collector right of way on the northeast side of U.S. Highway 129 connecting U.S. Highway 129 to U.S. Highway 129 Business across from Blackstock Road.
3. A 100-foot wide arterial right of way connecting Holders Siding Road to the proposed collector right-of-way on the northeast side of U.S. Highway 129.
4. A 100-foot wide arterial right of way extending approximately 1,400 feet south of Holders Siding Road on the east side of U.S. Highway 129.
5. An 80-foot wide collector right of way on the southwest side of U.S. Highway 129 connecting Old Swimming Pool Code to existing curb cuts on Faith Drive and U.S. Highway 129.
6. A 50-foot wide local service road on the southwest side of U.S. Highway 129 connecting Panther Drive to Old Swimming Pool Road.

In addition to these future roadways, the corridor map shows future greenways (pedestrian or multi-use trails along stream corridors) on both sides of U.S. Highway 129 within the overlay district.

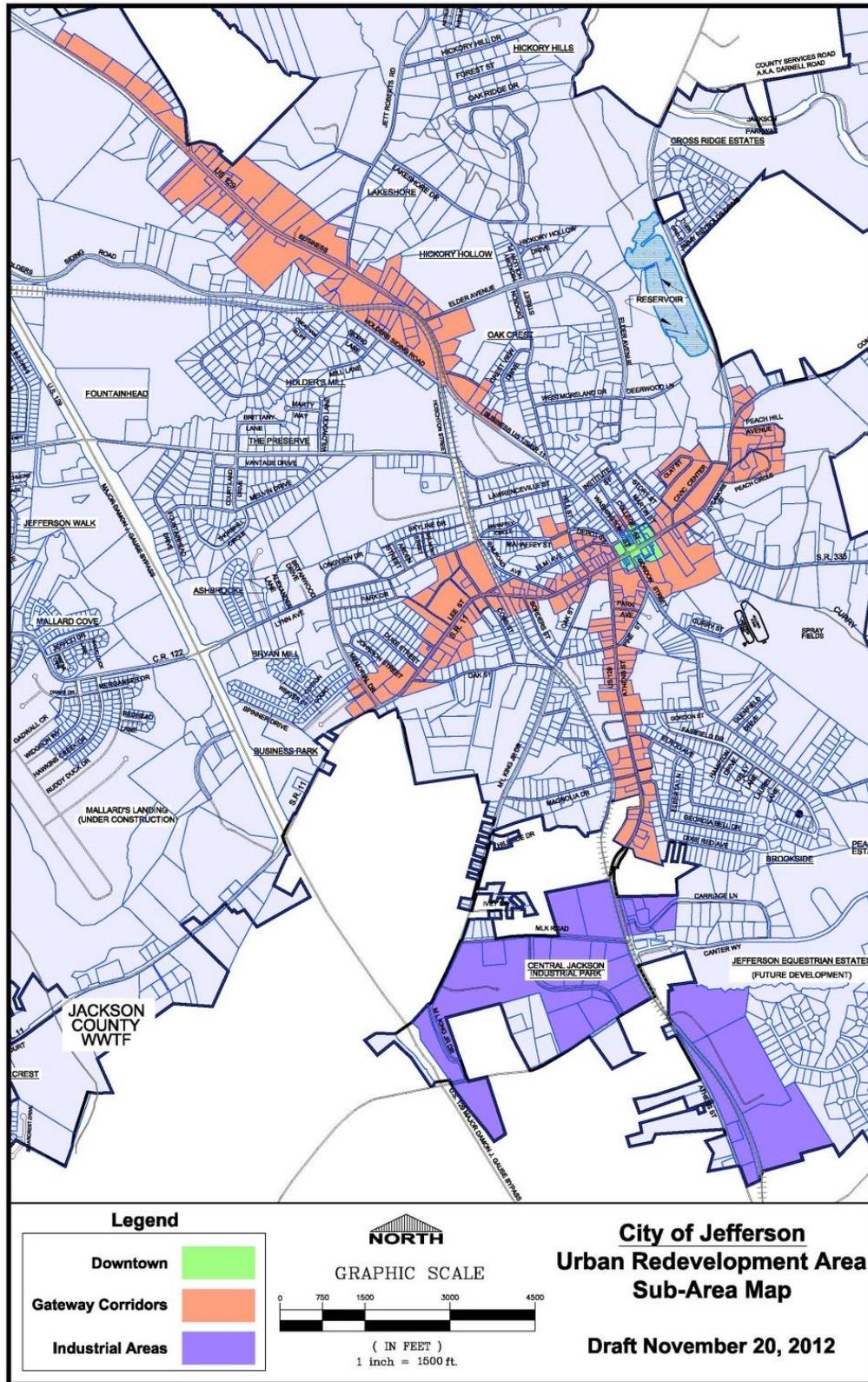


### Redevelopment Subareas

The three redevelopment subareas are established in the city's adopted redevelopment plan: downtown, gateway corridors, and south industrial areas (Central Jackson Industrial Park and adjacent industrial tracts). Each of these are high priority for redevelopment activities and/or special economic development incentives (see the following map of redevelopment subareas).



**U.S. Highway 129 Business  
looking eastbound**



## ADDITIONAL SPECIAL AREAS

The city also recognizes the following special areas in the comprehensive plan:

### Proposed Parks Creek Reservoir and Watershed

Parks Creek is in unincorporated Jackson County northeast of Jefferson between Lyle Field Road and Apple Valley Road. This will be a water supply reservoir serving the city and county.

Ultimately, Jackson County will need to adopt the water supply watershed protection provisions specified in the state's environmental planning criteria adopted pursuant to the 1989 Georgia Planning Act. The city will also need to prepare a reservoir management plan as required by state administrative rules.



**Aerial View of Proposed Parks Creek Reservoir Site**

## Old Mill Village

The Old Mill Village is situated on either side of Lee Street just west of downtown, and contains small lot single family homes and a mix of small and large businesses, anchored by Real Deals in the historic Old Jefferson Cotton Mill. The City envisions this area as a vibrant center for retail surrounded by a variety of housing types and income levels. Though not designated as a local historic district, historically appropriate design should be encouraged for new developments and redevelopment.



**View of Part of Old Mill Village**

Specific redevelopment opportunities include the Jefferson Mill, the area surrounding the Jefferson Civic Center, and the area surrounding the train depot.

## Interstate 85 Exit 140 (SR 82/Dry Pond Road)

As noted in Chapter 2, there is an opportunity for additional development and redevelopment at Exit 140 (SR 82/Dry Pond Road) of Interstate 85. Much of the land surrounding this interchange is within the city limits of Jefferson and is zoned for light industrial development, while other portions are in unincorporated Jackson County and other portions around the interchange are zoned for commercial development within the City of Jefferson. More specific land use recommendations are needed for this area, and coordination between Jackson County and the City of Jefferson is needed to fully develop this interchange while ensuring proper transportation access.

This interchange will be dominated in the future by commercial truck traffic, particularly as additional industrial park sites are developed. Subject to more refinement and greater specifics, the city envisions this area to serve trucks, with perhaps a new truck stop, lodging and accommodations, restaurants and other support commercial services, and aesthetic improvements. In particular, the area around the Exit 140 interchange needs to be carefully planned in terms of truck and auto access so as to avoid traffic congestion issues similar to those which have plagued the Interstate 85/SR 53 interchange in Braselton and which have only recently been mitigated with traffic signalization improvements.

## **CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**

As required by the state’s rules, Jefferson’s “community work program” must be revised annually because it has a development impact fee program for parks and recreation. This chapter presents the city’s community work program, updated in August 2016. In order to provide a more formalized capital improvement program, the city decided to divide its community work program into non-capital (program) (Table 5-1) and capital (Table 5-2) items. The capital component of the community work program (Table 5-1) is separate and distinct from the “schedule of improvements” (Table 6-7) provided in the “capital improvement element” for parks and recreation impact fees (see Chapter 6). Further, any “long range” projects have been separated into a table titled “long range projects” (Table 5-3).

**Table 5-1  
Community Work Program  
(Programmatic, Non-Capital, Non-Impact Fee Items)  
City of Jefferson, 2017-2021**

Department	Description	Year to Be Implemented					Estimated Cost (\$)	Funding Source
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Main Street	Develop downtown development recruitment strategies and incentive package	X					Staff function	Operating Budget
Main Street	Develop a plan for providing Wi-Fi in Downtown	X						Operating Budget
Main Street	Initiate/revive “renovate and sell” program through the Downtown Development Authority		X				Staff function	DDA
Main Street	Implement downtown master plan	X	X				TBD	Operating and Capital Budget
Civic Center	Initiate development of a master plan for the city’s civic center		X				\$20,000	Operating Budget
Public Works	Draft and adopt a “dig once” requirement (Land Use Management Code) for data infrastructure	X					\$2,500	Planning Budget
Public Works	Monitor sanitary sewer capacity	X	X	X	X	X	Staff function	Operating Budget
Public Works	Update engineering report for improvements to water and sanitary sewer systems	In process					\$20,000	Water and Sewer Fund
Public Works	Establish system development charge or impact fee for Westside sewer	X					\$5,000	Water and Sewer Fund
Streets	Seek grant funding to design and construct improvements to Hog Mountain Road/ McClure Industrial Drive	In process					Per Grant Consultant	Operating Budget
Historic Preservation	Amend historic preservation ordinance (LUMC) to address demolition by neglect	X					\$1,000	Planning Budget
Administration	Participate in creating strategy for city/county-wide public involvement in economic development matters	X					Staff function	Operating Budget
Administration	Develop and implement a blight remediation program focused on gateway corridors		X				Staff function	Operating Budget
Administration	Continue work with partnering agencies to redevelop potential projects identified in the Urban Redevelopment Plan and BoomTown planning processes	X	X	X	X	X	Staff function	Operating Budget
Planning	Develop annexation boundary; consider economic development annexations	X					\$5,000	Planning Budget
Planning	Prepare bicycle and pedestrian system master plan, including multi-use trails	X					\$20,000	Planning Budget
Planning	Seek Jackson County’s approval of water supply watershed protection measures for Parks Creek Reservoir	X					\$2,500	Planning Budget
Communication	Update website at frequent intervals		X	X	X	X	Staff time	Operating Budget
City Clerk	Update code of ordinances including MuniCode	X	X	X	X	X	Staff time	Operating Budget
Communication	Explore the utilization of social media options like Facebook and Twitter		X				Staff time	Operating Budget
Communication	Explore potential publication of City Newsletter		X				Staff time	Operating Budget
Building	Update technical codes (odd numbered years)	X		X		X	Staff time	Operating Budget

**Table 5-2  
Capital Improvement Program  
(Non-Impact Fee Capital Items)  
(Component of Community Work Program)  
City of Jefferson, 2017-2021**

Department	Description	Thousands of Dollars (\$)						Funding Source
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total	
Museum	Repair HVAC system	15					15	Capital Budget
Museum	Replace/refurbish 22 windows in and repaint interior and exterior of the Pendergrass store building		50				50	Capital Budget
Museum	Build out basement of Stovall building for vault storage				20		20	Capital Budget
Main Street	Install gateway signage downtown		50	50			100	Capital Budget
Main Street	Install wayfinding signs, outside of downtown			75	75		150	Capital Budget
Main Street	Plan for and install Wi-Fi downtown		25				25	Capital Budget
Civic Center	Roof repair (current leaks, life of 5-6 years)		50	50	50	50	200	Capital Budget
Civic Center	Sidewalks from parking area to porch area, and from parking area to kitchen	8					8	Capital Budget
Streets	Street system maintenance and repair projects (including drainage structures, ditches, patching and street signs)	250	250	250	250	250	1,250	Capital Budget
Streets	Resurfacing program (all city streets)	445	903	1,039	772	914	4,073	Capital Budget
Streets	Pave Old Swimming Pool Road (unpaved portion adjacent to recreational complex)	900					900	Capital Budget
Streets	Sidewalk improvement and extension program (following completion of pedestrian plan)		200	200	200	200	800	Capital Budget
Water	Water line improvements: Cobb Street, Epps Street, Oak Street and Oak Avenue	300					300	CDBG & Capital Budget
Water	Academy Church Road 12" Water Line Loop (8,500 linear feet)			637			637	Capital Budget
Water	Possum Creek Road 12" Water Line Loop (3,100 linear feet)				247		247	Capital Budget
Water	Vandiver Road 12" Water Line Loop (1,100 linear feet)				132		132	Capital Budget
Water	MLK Avenue 12" Water Line Loop (10,800 linear feet)			755			755	Capital Budget
Water	U.S. Highway 129 (Bypass) 12' Water Line Loop (7,250 linear feet)	702					702	Capital Budget
Water	Construct water storage tank @ ML King Jr. Drive (500,000 gallons)	1,000					1,000	Capital Budget
Water	Construct water storage tank @ County Farm Road (500,000 gallons)		1,100				1,100	Capital Budget
Water	Parks Creek Reservoir – land acquisition	412					412	Capital Budget
Water	Parks Creek Reservoir – dam design	20					20	Capital Budget
Water	Maysville Road booster pump	25					25	Capital Budget
Water	Raw water pumps	50					50	GEFA
Water	Water system maintenance and repair projects (fire hydrant and service line leak repairs, etc.),	50	50	50	50	50	250	Capital Budget
Water	Storey Lane water main replacement		300				300	Capital Budget
Water	Water meter replacement program	50	50	50	50	50	250	Capital Budget
Sewer	Sewer system maintenance and repair projects	50	50	50	50	50	250	Capital Budget
Sewer	Dickson Drive sanitary sewer line upgrade (12" @ 4,500 linear feet)	1,200					1,200	Capital Budget
Sewer	Westside pump station upgrade and force main (18" @ 18,000 linear feet)		939				939	Capital Budget
Sewer	New lift station @ U.S. Highway 129; 2,900 linear feet of 6" force main; upgrade lift station 12; relocate 550 feet of 12" gravity sewer (I-85 area)		939				939	Capital Budget
Sewer	Replace 3,000 linear feet of 10" and 12" gravity sewer with 24" gravity sewer (U.S. 129/I-85 area)			550			550	Capital Budget
Sewer	3,000 linear feet of 12" gravity sewer along Jett Roberts Road		454				454	Capital Budget
Sewer	I-85 wastewater treatment plant			2,000	4,000	4,000	10,000	GEFA
Rec. and Parks	New HVAC system at recreational complex			75			75	Capital Budget
Rec. and Parks	Replace three tennis courts		180				180	Capital Budget

**City of Jefferson, Comprehensive Plan, 2016-17 Update**

Department	Description	Thousands of Dollars (\$)						Funding Source
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total	
Rec. and Parks	Swimming pool repairs (shell, deck, pool pack)		150				150	Capital Budget
Rec. and Parks	Light one soccer field at recreational complex			50			50	Capital Budget
Rec. and Parks	Upgrade playgrounds at existing city parks			50			50	Grants
Rec. and Parks	Design and construct trail at McKinney Hill (approximately 1/2 mile)		15	65			80	Capital Budget
Rec. and Parks	Design and construct additional parking at Clubhouse (approximately 18,000 square feet)		20	380			400	Capital Budget
	Total, All Capital Improvements	5,477	5,775	6,376	5,896	5,564	29,088	

**Table 5-3  
Long-Range Capital Projects  
City of Jefferson**

Department	Description	Cost Estimate (Thousands of Dollars)	Funding Source
Streets	East Jefferson Bypass	\$13,300	SPLOST
Streets	Interstate 85 at Dry Pond Road to Jackson County Airport (connector)	\$6,000	SPLOST; private
Streets	Widening of Hog Mountain Road/McClure Industrial Drive	\$2,800 (city share)	Grant; SPLOST; private
Water	Expand and/or replace existing water mains (entire service area)	1,000	
Water	Expand existing water plant to increase filter capacity to 3.8 mgd	9,770	
Water	Parks Creek Reservoir – construction	4,200	SPLOST; Bond
Water	Raw water pumping facility and line from river to reservoir	1,800	
Water	Raw water pumping facility and line from reservoir to plant	3,300	
Rec. and Parks	Gymnastics center at recreation complex; w/ attached walkway	1,000,000	
Rec. and Parks	Countywide aquatic facility	TBD	
Rec. and Parks	Dog park	TBD	
Rec. and Parks	Multi-use path construction per adopted plans	TBD	

TBD = To be determined

## CHAPTER 6 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

A capital improvements element is defined by state rules as “a component of a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A § 50-8-1 *et seq.* which sets out projected needs for system improvements during a planning horizon established in the comprehensive plan, a schedule of capital improvements that will meet the anticipated need for system improvements, and a description of anticipated funding sources for each required improvement.” The capital improvement element must also establish service areas and a level of service standard on which a development impact fee program can be established.

This capital improvements element is written to support the continued charge of development impact fees for parks and recreation facilities. Although the City of Jefferson’s CIE has been updated annually since its inception in 2005, the projections of needs and the land use assumptions have not been comprehensively revisited.

### SERVICE AREA

The service area for parks and recreation is citywide. There is no change to the service area established in the 2005 parks and recreation development impact fee program.

### LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS

The initial CIE, prepared and adopted in 2005, was based on an impact fee methodology report which provided the following projections:

**Table 6-1  
Initial CIE Forecasts of Population, Households and Housing Units  
City of Jefferson, 2004 to 2025**

<b>Forecasts</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Population	5,610	9,640	13,656	17,755	21,551
Households	2,096	3,629	5,129	6,602	7,903
Housing Units	2,254	3,903	5,516	7,099	8,498

Source: Ross + Associates, October 5, 2004. Impact Fee Methodology Report for the City of Jefferson Impact Fee Program, Table P-1, Forecasts 2004 – 2025, City of Jefferson.

The 2010 Census serves as an accurate base on which to provide current estimates in the year 2015. From 2010 to December 2015, the city has issued 320 new housing unit permits. Year 2015 data are generated by assuming 90% occupancy of housing units, and an overall household size of 2.83 persons per unit (the 2010 figure). Subsequent-year forecasts are based on review of building permit activity (trends in single-family housing starts), knowledge of vacant residential lands in the city and likely housing density yields, and the assumption of modest annexation. In addition, the 2008-2028 Countywide Roadways Plan (prepared by Moreland Altobelli) indicates

that the City of Jefferson’s total city population would reach 13,251 residents in 2028, which is largely consistent with the revised forecasts in Table 6-2.

**Table 6-2  
Revised Forecasts of Population, Households, and Dwelling Units  
City of Jefferson, 2010 to 2035**

<b>Forecasts</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>
Population	9,432	10,247	11,500	12,850	14,190	15,540
Households	3,328	3,616	4,063	4,540	5,015	5,491
Housing Units	3,666	3,986	4,515	5,044	5,573	6,101

Source: 2010 figures from American Factfinder (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Summary File 1. 2015 data based on new housing unit permit data, 2010 to 2015, from Jefferson Planning and Development. Forecasts by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., December 2015.

Based on the forecasts in Table 6-2, the city needs to plan to accommodate additional park and recreation needs for 5,293 persons (2,115 net new housing units) during the 20-year planning horizon (2016-2035).

## **LEVEL OF SERVICE**

### **Adopted Level of Service Standards**

Level of service standards adopted by the city for parks and recreation are provided in Table 6-3. These are reconfirmed with no need to change the standards.

**Table 6-3  
Level of Service Standards  
For Parks and Recreation  
Adopted by the City of Jefferson in 2005**

<b>Park and Recreation Facility</b>	<b>Adopted Level of Service Standard</b>
Park land	0.0126 park acres per dwelling unit
Community Center	3.2361 square feet per dwelling unit
Ball fields (baseball/softball)	0.6960 per 1,000 resident population
Tennis courts	0.5568 per 1,000 resident population
Football, soccer, multi-purpose fields	0.1856 per 1,000 resident population
Pools	0.0928 per 1,000 resident population
Playgrounds	0.2320 per 1,000 resident population
Shelters/Pavilions	0.3248 per 1,000 resident population

Source: City of Jefferson Capital Improvements Element (2005), Table PR-1.

## **Inventory**

Table 6-4 shows a current inventory of park and recreation land in the city.

**Table 6-4  
Inventory of Park and Recreation Land  
City of Jefferson (2015)**

<b>Parcel Number</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
053 002	Hawk’s Ridge Greenspace (undeveloped)	17.82
J10 013	Hwy 82 North lake, park, water treatment plant	[excluded]
J08 061A	Hughey Park, 159 Gordon Street	2.03
J02 024	Longview Drive (“McKinny Hill”)	5.92
068 054C	Boy Scout Lane/Old Swimming Pool Road (“City Park”)	5.22
081 042	Community Center tract Old Pendergrass Road (1 of 2)	42.91
081 043	Community Center tract Old Pendergrass Road (2 of 2)	53.24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>127.14</b>

Source: Compiled by Jefferson planning based on review of Jackson County Tax Assessor’s data.

As to facilities inventories, the community center tract consists of 21,000 square feet of building space, two baseball fields, three multi-purpose fields, and one shelter. City park has three tennis courts, four t-ball fields, three playgrounds, and 3,700 square feet of community center space.

From this inventory and the 2015 estimates of housing units and population, existing levels of service (year 2015) can be calculated.



**Jim Jonier Recreational Complex**

**Existing Levels of Service**

Table 6-5 shows the existing levels of service for Jefferson’s parks and recreation facilities in 2015, based on the adopted level of service standards.

**Table 6-4  
Existing Levels of Service, 2015  
Jefferson Parks and Recreation**

<b>Park and Recreation Facility</b>	<b>Inventory (2015)</b>	<b>Existing Level of Service (2015)</b>
Park land (acres)	127.14	0.0318 park acres per dwelling unit
Community Center (square feet)	24,700 sq. ft.	6.20 square feet per dwelling unit
Ball fields (baseball/softball)	6	0.5855 per 1,000 resident population
Tennis courts	3	0.2927 per 1,000 resident population
Football, soccer, multi-purpose fields	3	0.2927 per 1,000 resident population
Pools	1	0.0975 per 1,000 resident population
Playgrounds	3	0.2927 per 1,000 resident population
Shelters/Pavilions	1	0.0975 per 1,000 resident population

Source: Compiled by the City of Jefferson. Revised August 8, 2016.

The next step in the analysis is to determine how the city’s existing park and recreation land and facilities compare with the adopted level of service standards. That analysis is done in Table 6-5.

**Table 6-5  
Comparison of Existing LOS and Adopted LOS Standard, 2015  
Jefferson Parks and Recreation**

<b>Park and Recreation Facility</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Park land (acres)	0.0318 park acres per dwelling unit	0.0126 park acres per dwelling unit	Excess parkland – standard met
Community Center (square feet)	6.20 square feet per dwelling unit	3.2361 square feet per dwelling unit	Excess space – standard met
Ball fields (baseball/softball)	0.5855 per 1,000 resident population	0.6960 per 1,000 resident population	7.13 needed; 6 provided; deficiency of 1.13
Tennis courts	0.2927 per 1,000 resident population	0.5568 per 1,000 resident population	5.71 needed; 3 provided; deficiency of 2.71
Football, soccer, multi-purpose fields	0.2927 per 1,000 resident population	0.1856 per 1,000 resident population	Excess facility – standard met
Pools	0.0975 per 1,000 resident population	0.0928 per 1,000 resident population	Excess facility – standard met
Playgrounds	0.2927 per 1,000 resident population	0.2320 per 1,000 resident population	Excess facility – standard met
Shelters/Pavilions	0.0975 per 1,000 resident population	0.3248 per 1,000 resident population	3.33 needed; 1 provided; deficiency of 2.3

In terms of meeting the level of service standards as of 2015, the city has a current excess of parkland, community center space, football/soccer/ multi-purpose fields, playgrounds, and has a

slight excess capacity with its swimming pool. It has deficiencies with regard to baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, and shelters/pavilions.

**PROJECTION OF NEEDS**

Given the adopted level of service standards, Table 6-6 indicates a projection of needs for the next five years as well as the next 20 years, consistent with requirements of the administrative rules for capital improvements elements. It is important to note that the analysis must cover 20 years, but for purposes of scheduling improvements, only the next five years is considered. As indicated in Table 6-6, even with significant residential growth forecasted for the next 20 years in Jefferson, the city will have more than enough park and recreation acreage to meet its level of service standard through the year 2035. Similarly, community center space is also more than adequate through the year 2035 at the adopted level of service standard, and the city’s three multi-purpose ball fields are adequate to meet the city’s adopted level of service standard through the year 2035.

**Table 6-6  
Projection of Park and Recreation Facility Needs, 2020 to 2035  
City of Jefferson**

<b>Park and Recreation Facility</b>	<b>2020 Need</b>	<b>2025 Need</b>	<b>2030 Need</b>	<b>2035 Need</b>	<b>Additional 5-Year Total Need</b>	<b>Additional 20-Year Total Need</b>
Park land (acres)	56.89	63.55	70.21	76.87	none	none
Community Center (sq. ft.)	14,610	16,323	18,035	19,743	none	none
Ball fields (baseball/ softball)	8.00	8.94	9.87	10.81	1.13 current deficiency; 0.87 impact fee eligible	5
Tennis courts	6.40	7.15	7.90	8.65	2.71 current deficiency; 0.69 impact fee eligible	5.65
Football, soccer, multi-purpose fields	2.13	2.38	2.63	2.88	none	none
Pools	1.06	1.19	1.31	1.44	0.06 (negligible)	0.44
Playgrounds	2.67	2.98	3.29	3.60	none	0.6
Shelters/Pavilions	3.73	4.17	4.60	5.03	2.3 current deficiency; 0.43 impact fee eligible	4.03

As noted above, however, the city is deficient with regard to baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, and shelters/pavilions. Table 6-6 shows how needs for facilities will continue to increase. The calculations in the column titled “additional 5-year total need” in Table 6-6 are important

because they form the basis for what improvements constitute “existing deficiencies” and what improvements are eligible to be funded with impact fees. The needs are more particularly described below.

Jefferson’s impact fee program for parks and recreation includes multiple level of service standards covering not only park land acreage and community center space but also specific facilities (tennis courts, etc.). It is important to consider the extent to which the city is meeting those facility-specific standards.

**Ball Fields (2).** The foregoing analysis shows that, as of today, the city needs 1.13 ballfields to meets its established level of service standard. By 2020, the city will need two additional fields. The cost of 0.87 ball fields can be paid for with impact fee proceeds, but the 1.13-ballfield deficiency needs to be paid for with funds other than impact fees since it is a current deficiency (i.e., impact fees need to serve new development, not the needs of existing or prior residents). The estimated cost of a ballfield is \$500,000. Excluding land acquisition if necessary.

**Tennis Courts (4).** The city only has three tennis courts but its adopted level of service standard translates to a current need for 5.71 courts, leaving a deficiency of 2.71 courts; by 2020, the city will need 6.4 and by 2025 it will need 7.15 courts. The estimated cost of each tennis court is \$60,000.

**Shelters/pavilions (3).** With only one shelter/pavilion, the city is deficient according to its adopted level of service standards. By 2020, the city will need 3.73 shelters/pavilions and by 2025 it will need 4.17 shelters/pavilions. The estimated cost of a picnic shelter/pavilion is \$10,000.

## **SCHEDULE OF IMPROVEMENTS**

Jefferson’s park and recreation impact fee program was deliberately set up to correspond with prior plans for the community center property (Jim Joiner Recreational Complex). The city via its Public Development Authority borrowed funds, purchased land, and constructed facilities intended to meet many of the long-term needs for parks and recreation in the city. It is entirely appropriate for the city to adopt a “recoupment” strategy in an impact fee program, which is what the city did. In other words, the city borrowed money, purchased land, and constructed facilities that will meet the long-term needs of the city, and then has paid for that debt in part with impact fee proceeds during the last decade. Because the city will continue to have an excess acreage and community center space, as well as certain park facilities, a continuation of that strategy is also appropriate.

As of August 2016, the city is continuing to consider potential modifications to the level of service standards but has elected not to make changes at this time. Factors that support a change in the future include the following:

- The city’s priorities for parks and recreation improvements have changed since the impact fee program was adopted in 2005;

- The city’s land at active park sites may not be sufficient to provide space outside of floodplains and wetlands for new fields;
- Adding lighting to existing ballfields is viewed as a better way to serve increasing and anticipated demands; and

At this time, the city elects to continue its prior longstanding practice of using impact fee funds to pay a portion of the existing debt on parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the only improvement included in Jefferson’s schedule of improvement for parks and recreation impact fees is to pay the debt owed on the recreation complex. See Table 6-7.

**Table 6-7**  
**Schedule of Improvements, 2017-2021**  
**Parks and Recreation, City of Jefferson**

Facility	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total, 2017-2021	Impact Fee Eligible	Other Sources
Payment on bond debt	\$402,589	\$396,568	\$522,574	\$422,540	\$419,951	\$2,164,222	100%	SPLOST; General Fund
Total	\$402,589	\$396,568	\$522,574	\$422,540	\$419,951	\$2,164,222		

The impact fees collected by the city for parks and recreation have historically not been enough to cover the full cost of the recreation complex improvements. Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) proceeds of the city have been used to pay for part of the recreation bond debt, along with impact fees. Any remaining funding shortfall for the bond debt payments, after considering SPLOST and impact fees, will be paid for via the general fund.

**EXEMPTIONS FROM PAYING IMPACT FEES**

The City of Jefferson does not desire or intend to grant any exemptions to the payment of development impact fees. Therefore, there is no established exemption policy other than that no exemptions will be made.