Chapter 2: Community Vision

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The City of Columbus will continue to be a unified city in which all work together to achieve common goals and in which individuality and diversity are embraced and respected. It will be a regional center of commerce and culture; a city in which the commitment to growth and economic development is matched by the commitment to the highest quality of life for all citizens.

Chapter 2: Community Vision

This Comprehensive Plan reflects a collaborative effort between the Columbus Consolidated Government and its citizens. The Community Vision, outlined in this section, is a manifestation of the community's hopes and dreams for the future. This information was captured during an in-depth community involvement campaign carried out during the Comprehensive Planning period.

The Community Vision provides a written and visual reflection of the community's desires for the future and is presented in the format of three key elements:

- 2.1 Community Vision Statement
- 2.2 Working with the Public to Form the Vision
- 2.3 Future Land Use (including the Future Development Map, its Defining Narrative, and Future Land Use Map)

The state's comprehensive planning requirements stipulate that the Community Agenda be "developed through a very public process of involving community leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the community." The content under "Working with the Public" (*included on the next few pages*) is designed to show how the community involvement process led to a community vision that reflects both the ambitions of community members and the City's knowledge of local conditions. This vision is laid out in the Future Land Use Plan and is reflected in the Community Vision Statement.



Community members identify areas of Columbus with unique potential.

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Community Vision Statement & Working with the Public

2.1 Community Vision Statement

The community vision statement for Columbus originates from the City's Strategic Plan and echoes the community's will, expressed during the community involvement process. It is paramount to the strategies and policies outlined in this Plan. The day-to-day decisions of the City over the next 20 years should meet the core ideals of this statement.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The City of Columbus will continue to be a unified city in which all work together to achieve common goals and in which individuality and diversity are embraced and respected. It will be a regional center of commerce and culture; a city in which the commitment to growth and economic development is matched by the commitment to the highest quality of life for all citizens.

2.2 Working with the Public to Form the Vision

The City of Columbus worked diligently to involve the public in visualizing and critically thinking about Columbus's future. This conversation extended from basic visioning discussions to raising tough questions, including topics such as fiscal impacts of growth, consequences of a revitalization-focused land use approach, and adequate provision of community facilities. A multifaceted and well-communicated community involvement program guided these efforts.¹

An important component of this program was the Community Visioning Survey, which served as a key opportunity for those that could not attend a public meeting. The survey posed multiple citywide and neighborhood level questions related to the needs and priorities of community members. *For a summary of the Visioning Survey, please see Appendix A5.*

Role of Community Leaders

Several community stakeholders and leaders, led by the two committees outlined in **Figure 2.1**, played a key role in moving the development of the Comprehensive Plan forward. These groups played an important role in assuring that the Plan is practical and implementable. The workflow of the public involvement process allowed committee members to flesh out the key issues and opportunities from those uncovered through the development of the



Members of the citizen's stakeholder and technical committee discuss community services moving forward.



Community members vote on key policy issues using keypad voting devices.

¹ The community involvement program was guided by the Community Participation Program, a state requirement of the Comprehensive Plan. It was approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in December 2007.

Community Assessment or introduced by the public throughout the visioning process.

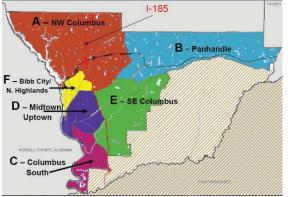
Technical Review Committee	Citizens Stakeholder Committee
This committee consisted of City	Committee members represented a
department heads and leaders.	cross-section of the Columbus
Members met regularly with project	community. This committee met on a
staff to help identify appropriate	quarterly basis to provide input on
strategies and potential conflicts with	critical issues and to be briefed on the
the Plan based upon their day-to-day	Plan's progress.
work.	

*Please see the Summary of Community Participation Activities for lists of all Technical Review Committee and Citizen's Stakeholder Committee members.

During the visioning process, the idea to establish an additional citizens' committee (referred to as Columbus Champions in this document) dedicated to Plan implementation arose. Volunteer committee members would work with other community members to help make sure the recommendations of the Plan are implemented. Chapter 4 of this document recommends that this committee be established upon Plan completion with the potential to merge the committee with other community led groups working on related endeavors.

Identifying Important Topics

Stakeholder interviews were also conducted with a broad cross-section of community leaders to gain their perspective on the top issues and opportunities facing Columbus. These interviews were held after the development of the Community Assessment and, therefore, expanded upon data gathered in the Community Assessment. This information played an important role in the discussion topics for the visioning workshops, the strategic framework workshop, and the Community Visioning Survey.²



Columbus's Six Planning Areas - Established for the 2028 Comprehensive Plan Update

Transformation of Community Input into a Community Vision

The City provided several opportunities for the general public to help shape the City's vision for the future. To initiate this process, CCG held several visioning workshops throughout the City to begin discussing core topics. These topics included coordination with Fort Benning, public safety, protection of natural and cultural resources, transportation needs, and financing of capital investments, as well as others introduced by attendees. These meetings were held in the six planning areas identified for the Comprehensive Plan.

² Please see the Appendix for a summary of the Community Visioning Survey.

Mapping, keypad voting, and small group discussions revealed key vision themes across the City. *Please see the Appendix for summaries of the Visioning Workshops*. Discussions from these visioning workshops as well as the Community Visioning Questionnaire reflected strong support for a revitalization-focused land use plan. Controlling growth, redeveloping underused property, and reinvesting in older areas of the City were the clear priorities of the Columbus community. Community members in all parts of the city also identified the need for citywide collaboration to ensure a healthy Columbus moving forward. Ultimately the emerging land use vision for each planning area was evaluated and aggregated with visions from other planning areas to begin to form a city-wide land use vision, reflected in a preliminary Future Development Map.

The two-part Strategic Framework Workshop was cultivated from this base input along with data collected from the Community Visioning Survey. One purpose of the Strategic Framework Workshop was to solidify the city-wide vision for the future. The two-part workshop gathered additional information on the community's overall perspective on key community service and facility needs, transportation and transit priorities, and the characteristics of community revitalization as well as the preliminary Future Development Map. *Please see the Appendix for summaries of the Strategic Framework Workshop*.

Critical themes emerging from the two-part workshop included the following:

- The City has the opportunity to reap many benefits from promoting revitalization of its in-town neighborhoods;
- The City and the Muscogee County School District must plan together to ensure that school facilities and resources are allocated to areas where growth will occur;
- The Future Development Map should foster city-wide unity by linking together neighborhoods;
- Fiscal strategies must be pursued carefully to secure the City's financial sustainability;
- Improvement of all components of the city's multi-modal transportation network should be pursued with greater attention to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities; and
- Community facilities and services should be strategically located to more equitably accommodate the population.

The community's vision for Columbus is one of both change and preservation and one of both stability and innovation. Columbus has many attributes that it strives to preserve and many others that it strives to change or improve. As one community participant noted, "a shift in thinking must occur."



Meeting attendees used an aerial map of the Panhandle region to identify related land use concerns.



Citizen's stakeholder and technical committee members discuss concerns over the potential future land use approach.

The Future Land Use Plan, depicted in maps, images and defining narrative on the following pages, demonstrates this vision for the future and reflects the culmination of views presented from all public involvement channels. The Future Land Use Plan was refined by City staff, officials, and project committees based on professional expertise and institutional knowledge.

Please see the Appendix for summaries of all major community involvement events held in conjunction with this plan, including Visioning Workshops, the Community Visioning Survey, the Strategic Framework Workshop, and Open Houses. Please see the Community Participation Program for other details on how the community was engaged in the City's Comprehensive Planning efforts. The Future Land Use Plan will play a vital role in guiding future development and public improvement decisions by the City's leadership. The Future Land Use Plan includes both a Future Policy Map and a parcel-level Future Land Use Map. These maps, along with the associated policies and implementation strategies, will reflect the new vision for 2028 while providing stronger tools for implementing on-going planning efforts in the City.

2.3 Future Land Use Plan

Introduction

In working with the public to craft a future vision and land use plan for the community, it quickly became evident that Columbus already has a rich tapestry of existing neighborhoods with active organizations working with the City Planning Department to conduct on-going plans and activities. The role of the Future Land Use Plan in the Update of the City's Comprehensive Plan is to galvanize these efforts by raising up the assets, character, and unique identities that many of the city's neighborhoods already claim, and at the same time unifying and enriching them with a clearer vision, consistent policies and stronger implementation tools. The intent is to respect the underlying strengths of planning efforts already completed and underway while moving them forward towards a vision of the future that will be twenty years in the making.

One good way to mark this evolution from today to the future is by patterning the character areas of the Future Policy Map around the six Planning Areas identified from our analysis of existing community boundaries in the Community Assessment. This approach more clearly reflects the methodology used in conducting Visioning Workshops. Visioning Workshops were held for each of the six Planning Areas. Residents from each Planning Area were encouraged to express a unique vision for their part of the community. Therefore, the recommended Character Area Map and the Planning Area Map have been merged to form the Future Policy Map. This map will serve the function of the Future Development Map that is required in the state's Local Planning Requirements, the regulations that set out the required form of local Comprehensive Plans for all of Georgia's communities.

The Future Policy Map is one of two maps that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in Columbus. The role of the Future Policy Map is to help define local character and to foster



Participants in the Visioning Workshops helped identify desirable development patterns for the City moving forward.

a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies that serve as a policy guide to the Future Land Use Map.

The second map used in the Land Use Plan is the Future Land Use Map. The role of the Future Land Use Map is to distribute land use changes to specific locations of the City so that public facilities and services can be coordinated with the timing and location of development and redevelopment. The scale of this map is at the parcel level. Each Future Land Use category ties directly to an appropriate existing or proposed zoning category. In many respects the Future Land Use Plan is a shorter range tool than the Future Policy Map. It is intended to guide current rezoning decisions, and as such it more directly reflects current conditions and constraints on future development, such as the availability of supportive infrastructure like sewer and transportation.

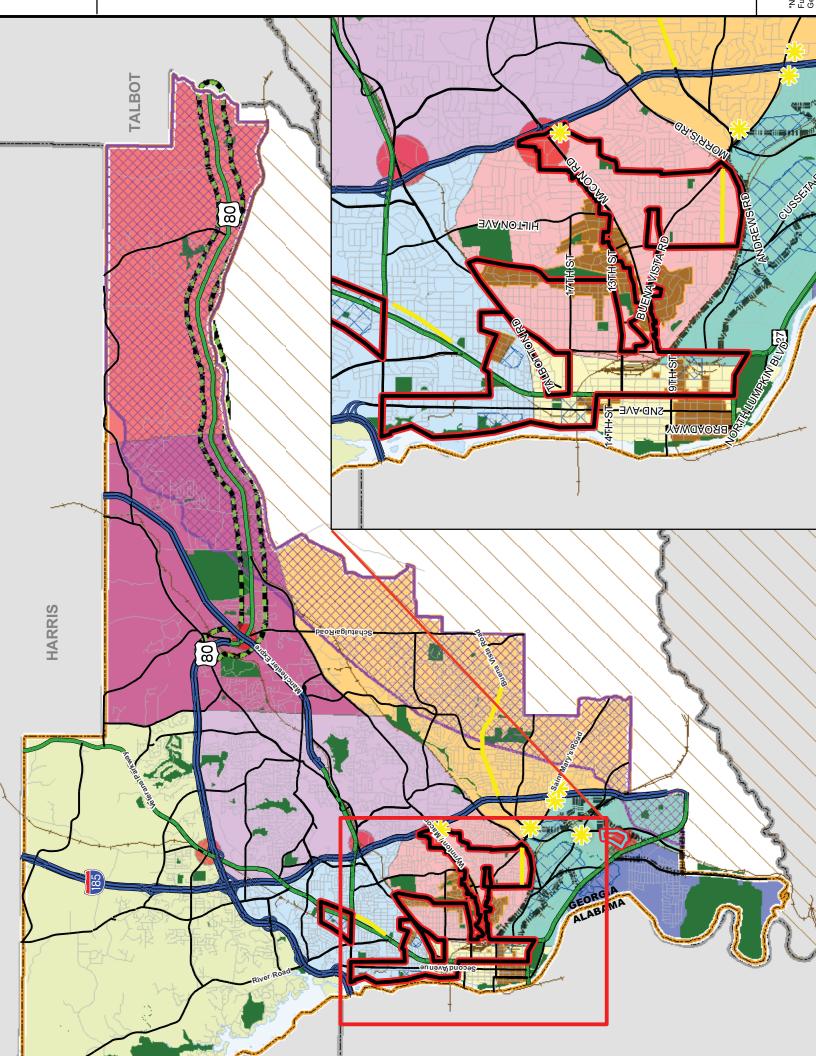
Future Policy Map

The use of character areas in land use planning acknowledges the physical and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Columbus and directs how they should change in the future. Character areas guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the county to reflect the different role that each community plays in the overall vision of the City of Columbus. These character areas identify areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves.

As just described in the Introduction, the Future Policy Map for Columbus is really a hybrid of the Character Area Map presented in the Assessment and the Planning Area Map used to frame the discussion in the Visioning Workshops. It outlines the planning efforts and policies for a group of ten areas of the community that each have their own unique vision. These areas are identified on **Map 2-1** on the following page.



Strategic Framework Workshop attendees provided input on Areas Requiring Special Attention Map – ultimately contributing to the development of the Future Policy Map.



This sheet represents the back of an 11×17 inch map for double-sided printing.

The Future Policy Map presents graphic depictions of its character areas that are associated with a set of policies that were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Supplement the role of the Future Land Use Map in guiding future rezoning and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool for encouraging and promoting quality development and redevelopment.
- Define themes that are unique to different neighborhoods and communities with the City of Columbus.
- Identify and incorporate community assets and other characteristics that are vital to the preservation and enhancement of each character area.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide guidance to the development community about the community's standards for physical development and design in each character area.
- Lay the framework for urban design guidelines and changes to zoning and development regulations.

The city's character areas are described in the following Character Area Matrix, and are defined individually in the following Character Area Fact sheets. Specific questions of appropriate future land uses are described in further detail in the presentation of Future Land Use Map and its narrative.

Character Area Matrix

The Character Area Matrix (**Figure 2.2**) is intended to provide a quick reference tool to the user who wants to gain an overview of how the different Character Areas compare to one another. A more detailed description of each area is provided on the following Character Area Fact Sheets.

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Figure 2.2. Character Area Matrix	ter Area Matrix		
Character Areas	Defining Characteristics	Drivers of Change	Policy Themes
	Rural residential	Standing Boy Creek State Park, I-185, suburban	Planned unit developments, conservation subdivision
Northwest Columbus	development pattern.	growth of the City	natural resource preservation, river protection
	Suburban development		Neighborhood preservation, building multi-modal
	pattern, new commercial		transportation connections, promotion of mixed-use in
Northeast Columbus	activity	Airport, I-185, Mall area, Columbus State University	aging commercial centers
West Panhandle	Emerging suburban development pattern	Suburban growth of the City, noise abatement at Ft. Benning	Conservation subdivision, Hwy 80 Overlay, noise abatement from Ft. Benning, activity center development
	Rural and very low density	Suburban growth of the City, noise abatement at Ft.	Rural preservation, large-lot residential, Hwy 80 Overlay,
East Panhandle	residential	Benning, resident interest to maintain rural character	
Bibb	Historic mill villages and early suburbs of the City, Riverwalk, gateway to Alabama	Veterans Parkway, I-185, Manchester Expressway, local revitalization efforts	Historic preservation and adaptive reuse, neighborhood preservation, river protection, building multi-modal transportation connections, commercial revitalization, infill development
	Historic center of the City, government and employment center, Chattahoochee River, Bisevuelk	Columbus State University, rail yard redevelopment, medical center, AJ McClung Memorial Stadium,	Historic preservation and adaptive reuse, Neighborhood
Optown			
Midtown	Historic residential neighborhood, neighborhood shopping, corporate headquarters	Efforts to maintain a vibrant neighborhood with strong community character, redevelopment along Macon/Wynnton Road	Historic preservation and adaptive reuse, neighborhood preservation, commercial revitalization, redevelopment incentives, overlay districts
Southeast Columbus	Established suburban area	New industrial park, changes at Ft. Benning	Commercial revitalization, infill, neighborhood preservation, building multi-modal transportation connections, noise abatement from Ft. Benning.
the state of the s	Established industrial area,	Changes at Ft. Benning, Enterprise Zone, infill	Brownfield redevelopment, Neighborhood preservation, Commercial reviewing infill redevelopment Incontinee
Oxbow	Grattahoochee River, Columbus Waterworks, Oxbow Meadows Learning Center	Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, changes at Ft. Benning, recreational opportunities, Infantry Museum, tourism	Natural resource preservation, river protection, residential redevelopment

Future Land Use Plan

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Activity Centers and Other Future Policy Map Features

Besides the character areas outlined in the Character Area Matrix, the Future Policy Map also includes several features that relate to recommended land use policy. These features are outlined in the **Figure 2.3** below along with recommended policies associated with each.

Map Feature	Associated Policies
Areas in need of	Support appropriately designed mixed-use development through infill and
Commercial	redevelopment of existing commercial centers.
Revitalization	 Provide new and improved community facilities and services where needed to support revitalization of declining areas of the City.
Commercial Revitalization Corridors	 Initiate or support streetscape projects that improve the appearance and walkability of aging commercial corridors. Control the number, height, and size of commercial signs. Provide multi-modal transportation options along the corridor, including transit, sidewalk, and bicycle facilities. Redevelop commercial strips to form interconnected, pedestrian-scale, mixed-use developments that support needs of adjacent neighborhoods. Control the number and location of driveways along major highways and encourage shared driveways and inter-parcel access for adjacent uses. When residences are converted to commercial uses that are adjacent to other residences, maintain the residential scale and appearance of the converted structure. Limit access to the highway by requiring rear-accessed lots or a parallel access road when new residential property is developed abutting the highway. Service areas, service bays, outdoor storage areas, drive-throughs, car washes, and automobile service, including gasoline pumps, should be located
	in the rear of properties or screened so that they are not visible from public streets.
Targeted Redevelopment Areas (TRA's)	 Support the recommendations of planning studies for these areas. See detailed recommendations in the character area fact sheets, and the following discussion of Targeted Redevelopment Areas. Encourage new employers to locate in these areas. Give priority to funding needed infrastructure or community services in these areas. Encourage neighborhood clean ups and neighborhood watch programs. Replace substandard housing incapable of being economically rehabilitated with standard housing or other uses compatible with surrounding uses through public/private investment. Encourage redevelopment to provide community gathering spaces and
	 Balance residential, commercial and civic land uses in walking distance.

Figure 2.3: Future Policy Map – Map Features

Map Feature	Associated Policies
Areas with	Work with local real estate interests and developers to determine the real
significant infill	estate market needs for these areas.
opportunities	• Encourage residential infill development within areas that are accessible to
	existing public utilities and services.
	• The density of residential subdivisions should be in accordance with the level
	of transportation access, environmental suitability, availability of public water
	and sewer, and other public facilities.
	• Residential developments should be planned in a compact, walkable pattern that integrates them with open space, schools, parks, recreation, retail services, and other amenities.
	 Residential developments should be connected with adjacent neighborhoods by streets and pathways designed for pedestrians, and bikes.
	Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Developments in appropriate locations
	that are compatible with existing neighborhoods in density and design.
Enterprise Zone	 Encourage mixed income housing, providing a range of housing options for
	various household incomes.
	Create incentives for development styles that facilitate walkability and
	community interaction.
	Support rezoning applications that would increase the number of professional
	uses.
	Develop an integrated communications system for informing potential in-town
	developers of the tax benefits and incentives for locating in the Enterprise
	Zone.
	Encourage employer-assisted housing initiatives within the Enterprise Zone to
	create a positive live/work environment.
	 Expedite the land development process for companies improving property within this area.
	Identify and pursue opportunities for public investment in park space or other
	public facilities that would make the area more appealing for private
	investment.
Noise Impacted	Discourage the location of new noise-sensitive uses, such as housing,
Areas	schools, medical facilities or places of worship.
	Discourage uses that tend to concentrate people such as multi-family
	residential, hospitals, auditoriums.
	 Support low-intensity land uses and the permanent conservation or
	acquisition of open space in these areas.
Activity Centers	• The core of the activity center should be a mixture of commercial, residential,
	and institutional uses within a ¼-mile radius, providing a walkable scale.
	• Within a 1-mile radius, the core should be surrounded with interconnected
	residential neighborhoods offering a variety of housing types and prices.
	Use public investment in sewer, roads, schools, public safety, parks and open
	space to encourage private reinvestment in activity centers.
	Each activity center should have a unified and distinctive architectural style.
	 Encourage the development of a block system of interconnecting streets, aidowalka and bika traila. Black faces about the na langer than 600 fact in
	sidewalks and bike trails. Block faces should be no longer than 600 feet in
	length.
Highway 90	See the following discussion of Activity Centers.
Highway 80	Follow the guidelines of the Highway 80 Overlay District as defined in the Columbus Unified Development Ordinance
Overlay District	Columbus Unified Development Ordinance

Map Feature	Associated Policies
Historic District/ Neighborhood	 Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures to promote a sense of place related to the established historic theme. Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall theme and enhance economic vitality. Developments adjacent to or within a ¼ mile of a historic district should continue the traditional street grid, lot size, and traditional architecture. Encourage compatible architectural style that maintains the historic character and does not include "franchise" or "corporate" architecture. Encourage pedestrian access within historic districts. Screen parking areas.
Parks/Recreation/ Conservation	 Plan pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting park entrances to schools, neighborhoods and other park sites that are within a 1/4 mile radius.

Activity Centers

A primary implementation strategy of this Comprehensive Plan is to encourage new development, as well as the infill and redevelopment of the already established urban areas of the city to be focused within compact, walkable- scaled activity centers as identified in the Future Policy Map. Through the public involvement process there was general support for continuing the traditional mixed-use land use patterns that are seen in the older in-town neighborhoods of the City and in the revitalization of aging commercial centers by promoting this pattern of development. This approach can become the cornerstone for revitalization of the city's diverse neighborhoods and will help to build a sense of identity for these areas.

The central element of an activity center is a core comprised of one or more civic uses, such as a public park, school, church or library, and surrounded by shops and businesses that serve the commercial needs of the community. The center is surrounded by a series of small, compact neighborhoods that contain a wide variety of housing designed to serve the needs of households of all sizes, incomes, and stages of life. The scale of the activity center core should be established by the range of the pedestrian – approximately a quarter mile radius. The residential fringe may extend up to an additional quarter mile. The entire community should be designed around an interconnected grid network of two-lane streets and sidewalks. The distinctions between homes and businesses within the activity center can be loosely defined. Shops and residences could be intermingled and located in similar size buildings. By contrast, the activity center should have a relatively distinct edge and buffers separating it from the adjacent low density areas.



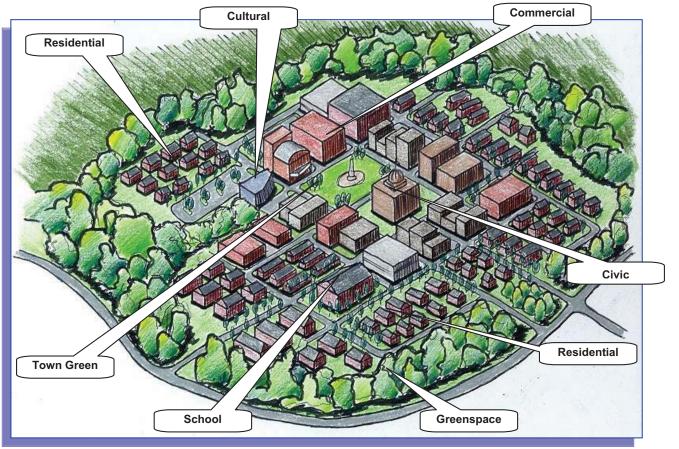
Mixed-use development in Uptown Columbus.



Smyrna Town Center in Smyrna, Georgia reflects the attributes of a village, reducing dependency on cars.

The re-emergence of these traditional forms in the neighborhoods of Columbus will play a pivotal role in the implementation of a sound growth management program for the city's future development. Designing activity centers in a traditional form will offer the following advantages:

- Community character A sense of place with a central focus and a unified design theme gives the community a distinctive identity and sense of place that typical suburban subdivision development lacks.
- More efficient use of land Clustering daily activities in the activity centers creates a mixture and arrangement of land uses that makes more efficient use of land than the typical suburban subdivision. A traditional neighborhood center of 3,000 persons can easily be accommodated on as little as 400 acres, compared to over 1,500 acres for a conventional subdivision comprised of 1 acre lots with the same population. Therefore each activity center of 3,000 persons saves over 1,000 acres that can remain in greenspace, forest, parks and other natural uses that require little or no additional infrastructure investment or public expense.



Village Center Example

- More efficient use of infrastructure An activity center brings development and infrastructure together in a balanced way. The capacity of the basic urban services of water, sewer, public safety, and transportation are matched efficiently with the arrangement of homes, schools, shops and offices. It also makes it possible to reduce the total amount of land area that will require urban services. By contrast, unplanned growth leads to a widely scattered pattern of low-density development that spreads county infrastructure over large sectors of the county but does not make efficient use of what is built. This pattern of growth can be extremely expensive to serve, especially as systems require more maintenance with age.
- Less vehicular traffic The neighborhood activity center clusters the daily activities of home, school, shopping and play and orients them around a walkable network of streets, sidewalks, trails and greenways. This form is designed to shorten trip distances, encourage walking and cycling and reduce the dependency of people on their cars.
- Public support Public workshops concerning Columbus' future found strong support for the activity center concept as an alternative to the continuation of current trends of dispersed development.
 People understood that using activity centers, Columbus can accommodate growth while creating a sense of place, reducing traffic, conserving open space, and cutting public service costs.

Targeted Redevelopment Areas

One of the key features of the Future Policy Map is identification of Targeted Redevelopment Areas (TRA). Because of their close proximity to each other and some overlap in boundaries, the map on the following page highlights the location of these individual areas. The community has identified these Targeted Redevelopment Areas through Visioning Workshops and previous planning efforts. They are the focus of preferred economic development attention and the priority location for new community facilities and services.

Implementation Strategies for TRAs and Activity Centers

Specific implementation strategies for the activity centers and TRAs can be found in Chapter 4; however, it should be noted here that the concept of creating activity centers and viable redevelopment areas cuts across all the principal policy areas of the Comprehensive Plan. The TRAs and Activity Centers need to be the central organizing feature for the plan's future private and public investments. In particular, the cost-effectiveness of community facilities outlined in this plan depend in large measure on achieving the arrangements of land use and development shown on the Future Land Use Map and Future Policy Map so that service delivery can be fitted to predictable land use patterns that emerge as the City grows.

Most of the redeveloped housing and much of the newly constructed housing in Columbus should occur in and around the urbanized core of the City, such as the Central Business District, the TRAs and Activity Centers. The Activity Center concept transforms subdivisions into diverse, life-cycle neighborhoods. Achieving the proper character of the Activity Center as a social unit requires a broad diversity of housing – providing housing of all types, sizes and price ranges in order to accommodate all types of households in different stages of life and incomes.

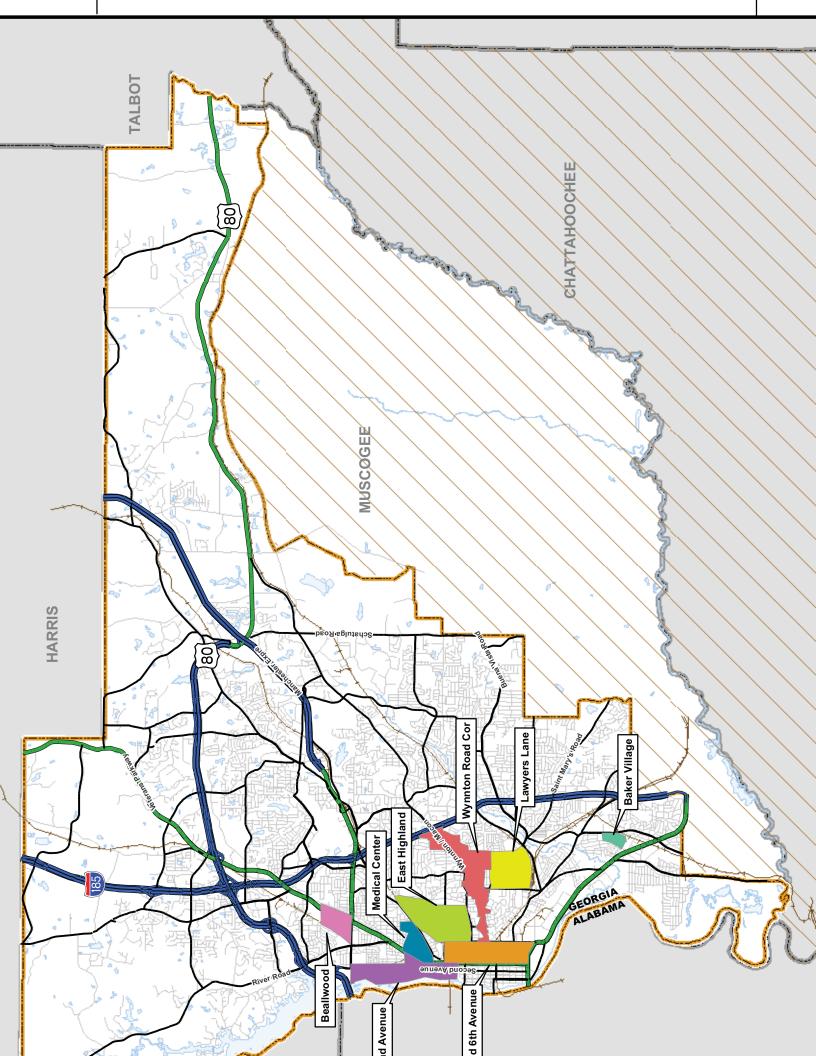
The successful implementation of TRAs and Activity Centers as a land use policy depends on the coordination of the location, timing, capacity, and design of the city's infrastructure and community facilities to support development. Readiness of the infrastructure system – especially roads and sewer - will serve as an incentive that guides growth to Activity Centers. At the same time, adopting a land use strategy of focusing growth in TRAs and Activity Centers at locations with existing infrastructure improves the efficient operation of the infrastructure. The same is true of community facilities, especially parks, libraries, schools, fire stations and other community service facilities. They perform best when they are sited where the population and needs are concentrated with good transportation access.

There is a strong and important relationship between the land use goal of promoting the growth of TRAs and Activity Centers and the transportation goal of improving the mobility of future residents. Forming well-designed clusters of housing, employment, commercial services and community facilities reduces travel demand by improving connectivity, walkability, and the greater potential use of transit. It also improves transportation effectiveness, reduces energy consumption, and improves air quality.

The success of TRAs and activity centers in the Comprehensive Plan will require close coordination of all the public agencies in the City, in addition to coordination with other agencies that provide or fund public facilities and services, such as the Columbus Water Works and the Muscogee County School District. In particular, the siting of new schools and other community facilities are important building blocks to neighborhood identity and character. They should be designed to be attractive, well landscaped and interconnected with surrounding residential areas with direct and convenient access for both vehicles and pedestrians. Wherever possible, new schools should be sited along with parks and libraries to form community service clusters oriented to be functional and convenient for families with children. These help reinforce the sense of place that residents seek.

Character Area Fact Sheets

Following Map 2-2, there are several facts sheets describing the existing character, predominant land uses, future vision, implementation strategies, and Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in each of the ten character areas.



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Northwest Columbus

Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage planned residential communities through the use of planned unit developments and conservation subdivisions to maintain rural character and open space.
- Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and greenspace where possible as per the recommendations of the Columbus Community Greenspace Report.
- Support protection of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries by requiring adequate riparian buffers to control runoff and sedimentation from new development. Prohibit incompatible uses such as new sanitary landfills, junkyards, heavy industry and the use of toxic substances to protect water quality.
- Restrict development in floodplain areas to protect sensitive wetlands and private property from the impact of seasonal flooding. Use floodplains as possible sites for pervious trails and passive recreational uses.
- Provide Best Management Practices for stormwater management and meet or exceed all state and local standards for protection of wetlands, streams, lakes, ponds, and aquifer recharge areas.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Open Space Preservation</u>. Utilizing planned residential communities and conservation subdivisions in this area would set aside land in new developments to be preserved as protected greenspace.
- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area. These include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multi-use greenway trails.
- <u>Regional Cooperation</u>. By taking measures to protect the water quality of the Chattahoochee River, Columbus is supporting regional efforts to protect this valuable water resource.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Implementing a theme of natural resource preservation and complementing the construction of the new Standing Boy Creek State Park will help establish a unique sense of place and set it apart from other areas of the City.
- <u>Environmental Protection</u>. Preserving green space along major tributaries of the Chattahoochee and linking the local parks by a system of greenways and trails will help to protect the natural environment of future generations.





Existing Character Description: Rural residential with a close tie to the natural environment.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Conservation subdivisions, single family residential and neighborhood level commercial. See Future Land Use map for appropriate list of uses and recommended zoning classifications.

Vision for the Future: A well planned residential area with a rural character that complements and protects the natural environment.





Existing Character

Description: Suburban development pattern, exemplified by several local landmarks including the Airport, the main campus of Columbus State University, and Peachtree Mall.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Single-family and multi-family residential, general commercial, mixed-use, industrial, and office/professional uses.

Vision for the Future: A regional educational and commercial activity center that provides services to all ages.

Northeast Columbus

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop pedestrian friendly mixed-use activity centers at major intersections. Limiting the scale of mixed-use development to 2-3 stories would be in keeping with the character of neighboring low-rise residential areas. Give these activity centers priority in the funding and location of new public facilities.
- Require shared driveways and inter-parcel access for adjacent commercial uses.
- Create, safe convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhoods, commercial services, and parks.
- When a residential conversion to a commercial or office use is permitted next to other residences the scale and appearance of the residence should be maintained.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Supporting new mixed-use development and the future re-development of commercial properties, as well as implementing the recommendations of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will contribute to making the area more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- <u>Employment Opportunities</u>. The development of this area as a regional educational center will greatly improve the career options available for Columbus residents.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Implementing a theme of natural resource preservation and complementing the construction of the new Standing Boy Creek State Park will help establish a unique sense of place and set it apart from other areas of the City.

West Panhandle

Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage planned residential communities through the use of planned unit developments and conservation subdivisions to avoid developing steep slopes and unsuitable soils and to maintain rural character and open space.
- Noise abatement from Fort Benning carefully review construction of noise sensitive land uses, such as single family subdivisions, churches, hospitals, and schools in noise-impacted areas.
- Control the quality and type of development along Highway 80 by adhering to the requirements of the Hwy 80 Overlay District.
- Develop pedestrian friendly mixed-use activity centers at selected intersections. Limiting the scale of mixed-use development to 2-3 stories would be in keeping with the character of neighboring lowrise residential areas. Give these activity centers priority in the funding and location of new public facilities.
- Encourage the construction of separate pedestrian and bike trail systems in new residential subdivisions.
- Encourage the development of a secondary road system that links adjacent developments and provides alternative routes for residents to the primary arterial road system where practical. Require stub streets in adjacent developments, where practical, to link to the proposed road system in new surrounding developments.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area including sidewalks, bicycle trails, and multi-use trails. By providing these connections between residential and commercial areas, residents can access these uses by foot.
- <u>Open Space Preservation</u>. Utilizing planned residential communities and conservation subdivisions in this area would set aside land in new developments to be preserved as protected green space.
- <u>Regional Cooperation</u>. Following the guidelines of the Fort Benning Joint Land Use Study in discouraging noise sensitive land uses will help support the regional interest in maintaining the viability of Fort Benning.





Existing Character Description: Emerging suburban development pattern, dominated by new single-family subdivisions.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Large lot residential, planned single family residential, neighborhood commercial, mixed use at major intersections

Vision for the Future: A growing family-oriented community focused around quality residential homes and businesses





Existing Character Description: Rural and large-lot residential

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Agriculture, rural residential, conservation and natural areas

Vision for the Future: A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its rural and natural character.

East Panhandle

Implementation Strategies:

- Noise Abatement from Fort Benning carefully review the noisesensitive land uses, such as single family subdivisions, churches, hospitals, and schools in noise impacted areas.
- Control the quality and type of development along Highway 80 by adhering to the requirements of the Hwy 80 Overlay District.
- Discourage extension of public utilities in this area to preserve rural character.
- Encourage conservation subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments.
- Preserve rural character in viewsheds.
- Residences along the roadway should be clustered and screened from the highway to preserve rural views.
- Plan rural-scaled, mixed use clusters at major intersections for local commercial and institutional services.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Open Space Preservation</u>. Utilizing large lot residential and conservation subdivisions in this area would set aside land in new developments to be preserved as protected green space.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Implementing a theme of rural preservation will help establish a unique sense of place and set it apart from other areas of the City.
- <u>Regional Cooperation</u>. Following the guidelines of the Fort Benning Joint Land Use Study in discouraging noise-sensitive land uses will help support the regional interest in maintaining the viability of Fort Benning.

<u>Bibb</u>

Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures to promote a sense of place related to the established historic theme.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall character of the area and enhance economic vitality.
- Take steps to actively preserve existing neighborhoods:
 - Enforce property maintenance codes.
 - Promote neighborhood events and festivals.
 - Maintain public facilities in public rights-of-way, including sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and landscaping.
 - Discourage non-residential encroachment that is not built in a single-family housing scale, style or character.
- Provide connections between the city's network of greenspace and trails. Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and greenspace where possible.
- When a residential conversion to a commercial or office use is permitted next to other residences, the scale and appearance of the residence should be maintained.
- Support protection of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries by requiring adequate riparian buffers to control runoff and sedimentation from new development, and prohibit incompatible uses such as junkyards, heavy industry and the use of toxic substances to protect water quality.
- Undertake streetscape projects along identified commercial revitalization corridors.
- Pursue designation of historic districts in Anderson Village and Bibb City, to encourage rehabilitation and conservation.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Heritage Preservation</u>. Efforts to protect and expand the historic character of this area will help preserve local heritage.
- <u>Housing Choices</u>. Expanded housing options will be pursued in encouraging infill development opportunities in the Bibb area, such as warehouse-to-loft conversion, mixed-use residential, fee simple townhomes, and senior living units.
- <u>Environmental Protection</u>. Preserving greenspace along major tributaries of the Chattahoochee and linking the local parks by a system of greenways and trails will help to protect the natural environment of future generations.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Preserving the character of the historic mill villages and Bibb City will help establish a unique sense of place and set it apart from other areas of the City.
- <u>Infill Development</u>. Infill development should be encouraged on vacant lots throughout this area.





Existing Character Description: Historic mill villages and early suburbs of the City, aged residential and commercial development in need of revitalization. Major transportation corridors in this area serve as gateways to the Uptown area, such as Veterans Parkway, I-185, Manchester Expressway, and 2nd Ave.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Planned single family residential, neighborhood commercial, mixed use at major intersections

Vision for the Future: A vibrant historic community that provides a variety of employment opportunities and serves as an appealing gateway to Uptown Columbus.





Existing Character Description: Historic center of the City, government and employment center

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Mixed Use, General Commercial, Office, Multi-family residential

Vision for the Future: The cultural and civic heart of Columbus, a vibrant 24-hour community that provides abundant opportunities for housing, employment, and entertainment. A regional tourist destination that showcases its preservation of historic and natural resources, and its access to cultural events.

Uptown

Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures to promote a sense of place related to the established historic theme.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall character of the area and enhance economic vitality.
- Take steps to actively preserve existing neighborhoods:
 - o Enforce property maintenance codes.
 - Promote neighborhood events and festivals.
 - Maintain public facilities in public rights-of-way, including sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and landscaping.
 - Require non-residential development to be built in scale, style and character fitting with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide connections between the city's network of green space and trails, such as the Riverwalk. Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and green space where possible.
- Support protection of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries by requiring adequate riparian buffers to control runoff and sedimentation from new development, and prohibit incompatible uses such as junkyards, heavy industry and the use of toxic substances to protect water quality.
- Provide and maintain sidewalks and appropriate street lighting along all public roadways and interior collector streets.
- Support the private efforts to attract diverse types of commercial development such as offices and specialty business in uptown to broaden the tax base and to lend support to revitalizing Uptown Columbus and surrounding areas.
- Encourage the use of parking decks and on-street parking. Surface parking lots should be placed in the rear of buildings.
- All buildings will maintain a pedestrian orientation.
- Highlight cultural assets through public art and the hosting and promotion of Uptown events.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Heritage Preservation</u>. Efforts to protect and expand the historic attributes of Uptown Columbus should be pursued.
- <u>Regional Identity</u>. The preservation and expansion of Columbus's historic urban core will contribute to the regional draw of this regional employment and cultural center.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Uptown Columbus offers a unique sense of place that is unavailable in most parts of City. New development within this area should respect and contribute to the unique historic character of the area.
- <u>Infill Development</u>. Infill development should be encouraged on vacant lots throughout this area.
- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area including sidewalks, bicycle paths, and multi-use trails.

Midtown

Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures to promote a sense of place related to the established historic theme.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall character of the area and enhance economic vitality.
- Take steps to actively preserve existing neighborhoods:
 - Enforce property maintenance codes.
 - Promote neighborhood events and festivals.
 - Maintain public facilities in public rights-of-way, including sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and landscaping.
 - Discourage non-residential encroachment that is not built in a single-family housing scale, style or character.
- Provide connections between the city's network of green space and trails. Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and green space where possible.
- Support local efforts to revitalize the Wynnton Road/Macon Road corridor as per the recommendation of the Wynnton Road Redevelopment Strategy.
- Support efforts to revitalize Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Warm Springs Road, and Buena Vista Road.
- Protect the residential uses along Wynnton/Macon Road between 13th Street and Rigdon Road to preserve a gateway to historic Columbus.
- Undertake streetscape projects along identified commercial revitalization corridors.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Heritage Preservation</u>. Efforts to protect and expand the historic attributes of Midtown should be pursued.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Midtown offers a unique sense of place that is unavailable in most parts of City. New development within this area should respect and contribute to the unique historic character of the area.
- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area including sidewalks, bicycle trails, and multi-use trails.
- <u>Infill Development</u>. Existing infrastructure and underutilized lots should be redeveloped to take advantage of Midtown's central location and to encourage growth in an area close to jobs and transportation, reducing development pressure on undeveloped land.





Existing Character

Description: Historic residential neighborhood offering a variety of commercial and employment opportunities.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: Single-family and multi-family residential, mixeduse, office, and neighborhood commercial.

Vision for the Future: A vibrant historic neighborhood with strong community character.





Existing Character

Description: Older suburban area of the City with aging commercial areas along major roadways. New industrial developments in the eastern portion of the area help to buffer residents from adjacent Fort Benning.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: All forms of residential, General Commercial close to I-185, mixed use and industrial uses

Vision for the Future: A safe sustainable, and thriving community that offers a variety of employment, housing and recreational opportunities.

Community Agenda October 2008

Southeast Columbus

Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall character of the area and enhance economic vitality.
- Take steps to actively preserve existing neighborhoods:
 - Enforce property maintenance codes.
 - Promote neighborhood events and festivals
 - Maintain public facilities in public rights-of-way,

including sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and landscaping.

• Discourage non-residential encroachment that is not built in a single-family housing scale, style or character.

- Provide connections between the city's network of green space and trails. Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and green space where possible.
- Develop neighborhood centers in old commercial areas, making them a series of interconnected, pedestrian-scale, mixed-use developments.
- Undertake streetscape projects along identified commercial revitalization corridors.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Infill Development</u>. Infill development should be encouraged on vacant lots throughout this area.
- <u>Regional Cooperation</u>. Following the guidelines of the Fort Benning Joint Land Use Study in discouraging noise-sensitive land uses will help support the regional interest in maintaining the viability of Fort Benning.
- <u>Employment Opportunities</u>. The development of the new industrial parks in this area will greatly improve the career options available for Columbus residents.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Creating neighborhood centers will help give Southeast Columbus a unique identity and will provide needed services to its residents.

Future Land Use Plan

Columbus South

Implementation Strategies:

- Support efforts to revitalize the City's Enterprise Zone through active marketing and the provision of redevelopment incentives.
- Support the efforts of the Columbus South Revitalization Task Force and work to implement the recommendations of the Revitalizing Columbus South Report which included strategies for building a stronger sense of place, enhancing the home place, restoring the community center, making Columbus South (and Oxbow) a destination, improving connectivity, and creating a learning environment.
- Pursue redevelopment efforts that create neighborhood centers, such as Baker Village, that give Columbus South symbolic and economic centers.
- Provide connections between the city's network of green space and trails. Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and green space where possible.
- Take steps to actively preserve existing neighborhoods:
 - Enforce property maintenance codes.
 - Promote neighborhood events and festivals.
 - Maintain public facilities in public rights-of-way, including sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and curb.
 - Discourage non-residential encroachment that is not built in a single-family housing scale, style or character.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall character of the area and enhance economic vitality.
- Noise abatement from Fort Benning Discourage the noise-sensitive land uses, such as single family subdivisions, churches, hospitals, and schools in noise-impacted areas.
- Support the efforts of the Columbus South Revitalization Task Force and work to implement the recommendations of the Revitalizing Columbus South Report which included strategies for building a stronger sense of place, enhancing the home place, restoring the community center, making Columbus South (and Oxbow) a destination, improving connectivity, and creating a learning environment.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area including sidewalks, bicycle trails, and multi-use trails.
- <u>Employment Opportunities</u>. The redevelopment efforts in the City's Enterprise Zone will greatly improve the career options available for Columbus residents.
- <u>Sense of Place</u>. Developing neighborhood centers will help provide residents with pedestrian-oriented community facilities and help shape South Columbus as a destination.



Existing Character

Description: Old industrial area that includes a number of residential neighborhoods and commercial areas in need of redevelopment and revitalization.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: All forms of residential, mixed-use, general commercial and industrial uses.

Vision for the Future: A safe and active employment center for the community that serves as an appealing gateway to Fort Benning.





Existing Character

Description: An area in transition from industrial, aging residential and commercial uses to a tourist destination offering cultural amenities, such as the Oxbow Meadows learning center and the Infantry Museum.

Predominant Land Uses to be encouraged: All forms of residential, neighborhood commercial, mixed-use, and recreational uses.

Vision for the Future: A

regional tourist destination and landmark area for the community highlighting its preservation of natural and cultural resources through such venues as the Oxbow Meadows Learning Center and the Infantry Museum.

<u>Oxbow</u>

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide connections between the city's network of greenspace and trails. Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and greenspace where possible.
- Support protection of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries by requiring adequate riparian buffers to control runoff and sedimentation from new development, and prohibit incompatible uses such as new sanitary landfills, junkyards, heavy industry and the use of toxic substances to protect water quality.
- Restrict development in floodplain areas to protect sensitive wetlands and private property from the impact of seasonal flooding. Use floodplains as possible sites for pervious trails and passive recreational uses.
- Promote Oxbow Meadows and the Infantry Museum as a regional tourist destination.
- Support the efforts of the Columbus South Revitalization Task Force and work to implement the recommendations of the Revitalizing Columbus South Report which included strategies for building a stronger sense of place, enhancing the home place, restoring the community center, making Columbus South (and Oxbow) a destination, improving connectivity, and creating a learning environment.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- <u>Regional Cooperation</u>. By taking measures to protect the water quality of the Chattahoochee River, Columbus is supporting regional efforts to protect this valuable water resource.
- <u>Transportation Alternatives</u>. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area including sidewalks, bicycle trails, and multi-use trails.
- <u>Heritage Preservation</u>. The Oxbow Meadows Learning Center and the Infantry Musuem include interpretive exhibits that highlight the history and importance of Native American cultures in the region and of the U.S. military in the defense of our country.
- <u>Environmental Protection</u>. Protecting the Chattahoochee River from the detrimental effects of overdevelopment and incompatible uses will contribute to Oxbow's transition into a tourist destination.

Future Land Use Plan

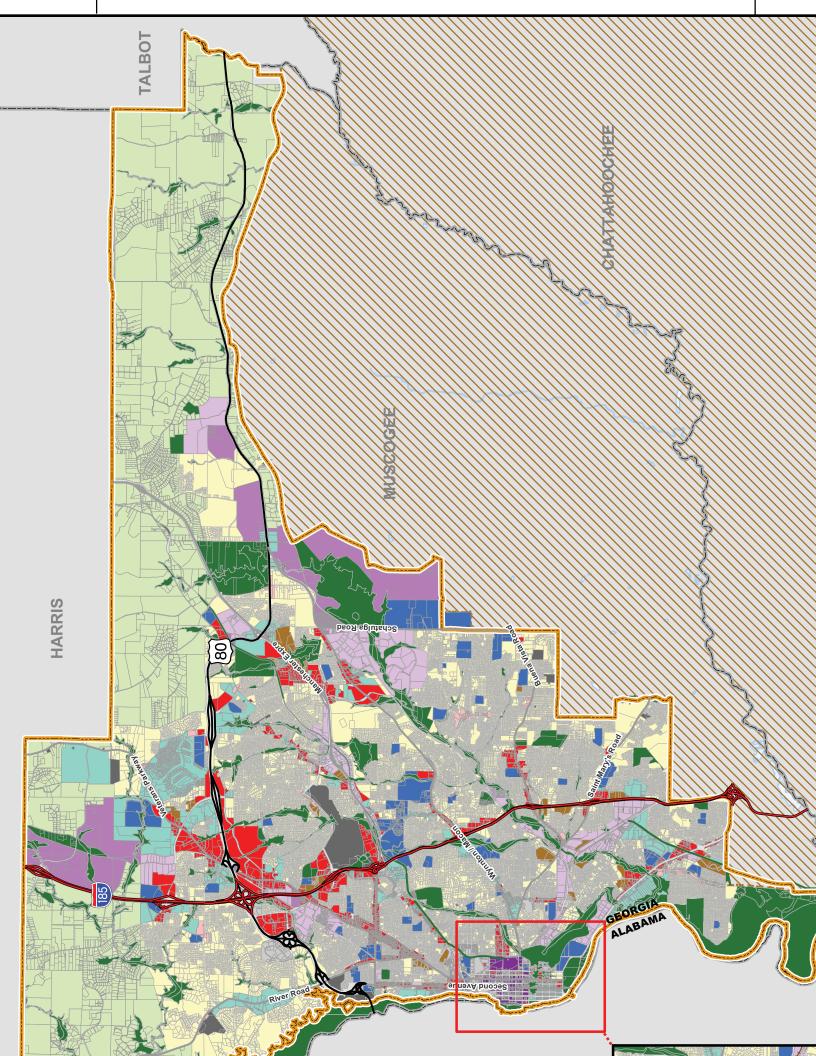
The recommended future land use plan for Columbus is a parcel-specific map that is intended to serve as a guide in making rezoning and capital investment decisions. Rezoning decisions in each future land use designation should be consistent with the list of associated zoning codes that correspond with that designation. The map assigns a future land use designation to every parcel in the City. The future land use categories shown on the map are listed and defined in the **Figure 2.4** below. The definitions also describe what zoning districts are appropriated for each future land use category.

Future Land Use Designation	Description	Associated Zoning Codes
Rural Residential	Single-family residences on greater than 1 acre.	RE-10, RE-5, RE-1, PUD
Single-Family Residential	Single-family residential areas between 1 and 7.25 units per acre.	RT, SFR-1, SFR-2, SFR-3, SFR-4
Multi-Family Residential	Multi-family residential areas up to 18 units per acre.	RMF-1, RMF-2, PCD, MROD, RMH, RO
General Commercial	Property where business and trade are conducted. They may be single-use or grouped together in a shopping center.	GC, PCD, PMUD
Neighborhood Commercial	Small-scale retail uses that serve surrounding neighborhoods with common goods and services.	NC, PMUD
Light Industrial	Property used for warehousing, distribution, trucking and light manufacturing, which are primary uses.	TECH, LMI, PID
Heavy Industrial	Property used for heavy industrial uses such as large-scale manufacturing or mining.	HMI, PID
Park/Recreation/Conservation	Areas that have been developed or are proposed to be developed for park, recreational use or protected open space.	Any Zoning District
Office/Professional	Property that accommodates business concerns that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not as a primary activity involve manufacture, storage or distribution.	CO, RO, SAC, TECH, PCD, PMUD
Mixed Use	Areas of mixed-use development (multi- family residential, office, commercial) up to 43 dwelling units per acre.	RO, H, PUD, PCD, PMUD
High Density Mixed Use	Areas of mixed-use development containing both high intensity commercial and residential uses with no limit placed on dwelling units per acre.	UPT, CRD, PUD, PCD, PMUD

Figure 2.4: Columbus Future Land Use Table

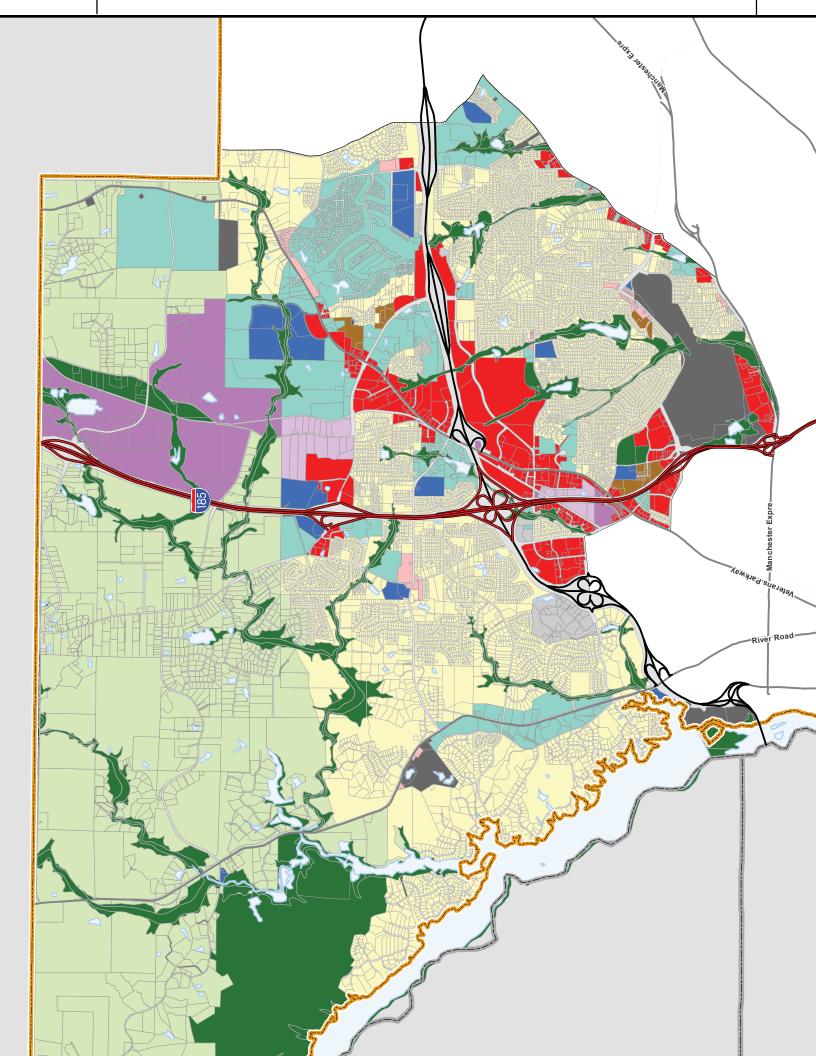
Future Land Use Designation	Description	Associated Zoning Codes
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	Areas housing uses such as power generation plants, sewerage and water treatment facilities, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities, or similar uses.	Any zoning district, if use is consistent with the description of future land use.
Public Institutional	Areas housing local government's community facilities, general government, and institutional land uses. Examples include schools, city halls, county courthouses, landfills, health facilities, churches, libraries and police and fire stations.	Any zoning district, if use is consistent with the description of future land use.

On the following page is a city-wide copy of the Future Land Use Plan, **Map 2-3**. Followed by enlarged maps for every planning district **Maps 2-4 to 2-9**. A PDF of a larger 30" x 40" sized version of the city-wide Future Land Use Map is available from the Columbus Planning Department.



This page represents the back of an 11" x 17" map.

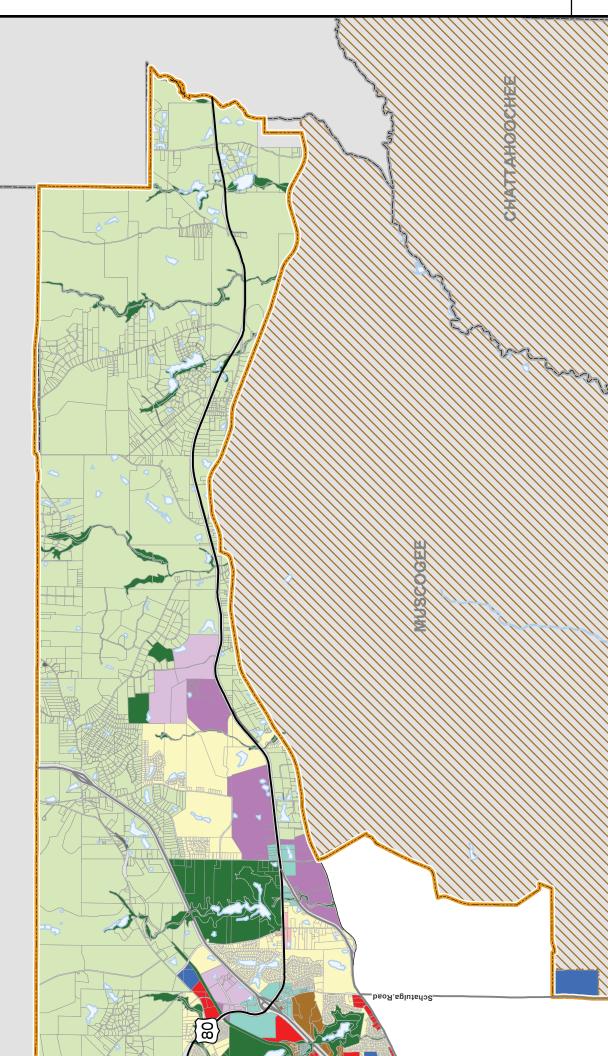
Future Land Use Plan



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Future Land Use Plan

TALBOT



HARRIS

