

***ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES***

In designing the new land use map, a new set of land use categories was developed. Many of the new categories are mixed use, intending that a mixture of residential and commercial uses will occur. The following is a list of the new categories and a brief description of the uses anticipated in each:

**Community Center Mixed Use**

This is applied to areas that are in community centers on the Growth Concept map. These are the main shopping areas for the community, and should include the highest residential densities outside of the Downtown. It permits a broad variety of uses, including retail, services, and housing. It is the intention that this district be primarily commercial, and the housing permitted is incidental to the main commercial uses of the site. Housing should not occur on the ground floor adjacent to the main street frontage, and generally in the district no more than 30% of the building area should be devoted to residential use. These areas will serve a variety of needs for the residents of an area up to a three-mile radius, and therefore will include larger scale uses. However, these large developments are intended to be the focus of their respective neighborhoods, and their design should include connections between each development that is compatible with both pedestrian and transit users. A relatively high density is permitted, up to .7 FAR<sup>1</sup> and 25 units per acre of housing. Whenever possible, the adjacent corridor in this area should be of design type “Main Street.”

**Corridor Business**

This is intended for areas that are primarily business uses along corridors, but outside of centers. It would allow small and large scale retailing, services, and housing. It is intended for areas that have shallow lot depth and are mostly devoted to commercial uses, or areas that are auto-oriented, such as the Atlanta Highway. It is not as pedestrian friendly as Main Street Business, but still is reasonably accessible by foot, bike or transit. The corridor street type is most often Commercial Street.

**Corridor Residential**

These areas are residential uses located along a corridor. Densities of up to 10 units per acre are permitted, and design guidelines would require building orientation to the street and a design that would enhance the streetscape. Low intensity commercial uses such as office or bed-and-breakfast are also permitted.

**Downtown**

This is the area that contains Athens downtown. Retail, office and entertainment uses are permitted, as is high-density housing of up to 120 units per acre. Auto-oriented uses are not included in this designation. Off street parking for each individual development is not required as parking is handled on a district level. Parking structures with commercial uses on the street-level frontage are encouraged rather than multiple surface parking lots. This area also has strict design requirements, not only to protect the historic character, but also to insure that new buildings develop in a downtown style and are of sufficient intensity.

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### **Employment**

These are areas of industry, office, research parks, and flex-space mixed uses. There are two types of employment areas, which will be distinguished in the zoning for the specific properties. The first kind is large-scale employment areas, which include large industrial areas, office parks, and research centers. Housing is not compatible with these areas. As these are generally not visible from the main corridors of the community, design standards are only required within areas that are visible from main corridors, and for buffering adjacent residential areas. The second kind of employment area is smaller in scale, and these areas are often close to a neighborhood area, and design standards regulating building placement, landscaping, and buffering should apply. Housing and small amounts of retail may be compatible in some areas.

### **Government**

These areas are in use or proposed for use by a Federal, state, or local government agency, including the University of Georgia and Clarke County Board of Education facilities.

### **Community Institutional**

These areas are in use or proposed for use by a semi-public institution, including privately owned hospitals and health care facilities, retirement homes and convalescent centers, churches, private schools, and civic organizations.

### **Main Street Business**

These are commercial areas that front on a Main Street corridor, where development of a storefront commercial type is encouraged. The uses are generally small scale, but moderately scaled uses can be integrated within a Main Street if a storefront is developed along the street facade, with the larger-scaled use located behind. Larger scale uses should only be permitted in instances where they are compatible with the adjacent uses. Retail and office uses should dominate the ground floors of the Main Street facades, with residential uses permitted in second and third stories. Auto-oriented uses are not included in this designation. Some freestanding housing uses can also be accommodated on the edges of the main street area.

### **Neighborhood Mixed Use**

This is the designation for lands within the neighborhood centers designated on the Growth Concept Map. It permits a broad variety of uses, including retail, services, and housing. These areas will serve a variety of needs for the residents of an area up to a one-mile radius. The uses will typically be neighborhood-scale retail stores, along with small businesses. They are intended to be the focus of their respective neighborhoods, and their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses are not included in this designation. A density of up to .5 FAR for commercial uses and 15 units per acre of housing is permitted. Design standards would be required. Whenever possible, the adjacent corridor in this area should be of design type "Main Street."

### **Residential Mixed Use**

These are residential uses, 8 units per acre, that are intended to form a medium density residential neighborhood. Most of the units should be designed for individual ownership, in townhouse, duplex, or small lot detached single family housing types. Design standards would be required. Low intensity commercial uses such as offices or home work offices are permitted, but auto-oriented uses are not included in this designation.

## **Rural**

These are rural lands that are intended to have very low densities, averaging one unit for each 5 acres. Clustering of units would be encouraged, on lots of less than one acre, or as small as practical for septic tank installation. Common open spaces would be protected by conservation easements. Agricultural uses are permitted, as well as other compatible uses, such as horse raising and boarding, hunting clubs, and golf courses. Areas designated rural employment or rural residential are intended to apply to existing uses in rural areas that will allow these uses to continue in a conforming status.

There are two proposed rural communities designated on the Concept Plan map. A special overlay zone should be used to implement these. The intent of the rural communities is to provide a small rural scale neighborhood, including neighborhood-oriented retail, in the vicinity of public schools that are built in the rural areas. There should be no more than 50 to 100 homes in such an area.

## **Single Family Residential**

These are typical single family residential areas, with lot sizes that range from 15,000 square feet to 8,000 square feet. They permit single family detached housing, with accessory units permitted for owner occupied housing.

## **Traditional Neighborhood**

These are neighborhoods that are either were developed in a traditional style, or new areas that are intended to develop with traditional qualities. Average density would not exceed 6 units per acre. These areas would include a well-connected street system, narrower streets, sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of housing types. Homes would be built closer to the street with many having porches. Alley access to garages would be encouraged, and garages would be set back farther than the homes and porches. Homes on lots as small as 4,000 square feet, duplexes which resemble large homes, and townhouses would be allowed, as well as accessory units, although overall densities would be within the limitations of six units per acre. Strict design standards would be in place to ensure a high quality character of the neighborhood. Apartments and condominiums designed solely for rental purposes are not compatible with these areas. The areas designated include some residential areas of traditional Athens which are suitable for infill development, and large areas of relatively vacant land in greater Athens that are close to corridors and centers, and have good access to transit.

## **University District**

This is a special designation, signifying the University of Georgia Campus and adjacent private property that is primarily housing and services for the University community. It is governed by an agreement jointly adopted by the University and the community coordinating development of these areas. In general, this agreement should delineate the areas of expansion of the university, and areas where development of the university requires additional coordination or special treatment in sensitive areas. In addition, infrastructure demands of the university plan should be coordinated with the Athens Unified Government to insure efficient delivery of services.