



DeKalb County  
G E O R G I A

# DeKalb County 2035 Comprehensive Plan 5- Year Update Executive Summary

*Prepared by  
DeKalb County Long Range Planning  
Planning and Sustainability Department*

March 2021



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## Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding principal for the future development of DeKalb County. After four (4) extensive public involvement meetings of all segments of the community, a thorough analysis of current and future trends, and assessment of the community's issues and opportunities, the "blue print" for the future was established. The comprehensive plan has been developed to state the vision for the future and establishes the goals, guidelines, and policies needed to achieve sustainable growth over a twenty to thirty year period. The Comprehensive Plan is based on the required elements specified by the Department of Community Affairs to address;

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Community Work Program
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Water Supply/Economic Quality

**Growth and Transportation.** The Atlanta Metropolitan Area including DeKalb County has experienced significant growth over the last twenty years. Although not as significant in DeKalb, a growth trend is expected to continue well into the next planning horizon of 2025. Overall, the population of DeKalb County increased 40% from 1980 to 2000 (483,024 to 665,865). The population is expected to increase to 848,706 in 2020. With changes in population, there is an increase in the demand for housing, goods and services, traffic congestion, and an increased pressure on infrastructure. The goal of this plan is to prepare a road map of short-term and long-term critical planning actions for the county. The plan will help guide the allowable uses, density/intensity and design character for future development.

**Strategies and Recommendations.** The Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations and strategies to improve the overall "quality of life" in DeKalb County. It takes a comprehensive approach to land use, transportation, green space, recreation, housing, economic development, infrastructure improvements, natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, community facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination. This document has been designed to be concise and user-friendly and is intended to guide decision making by elected officials.

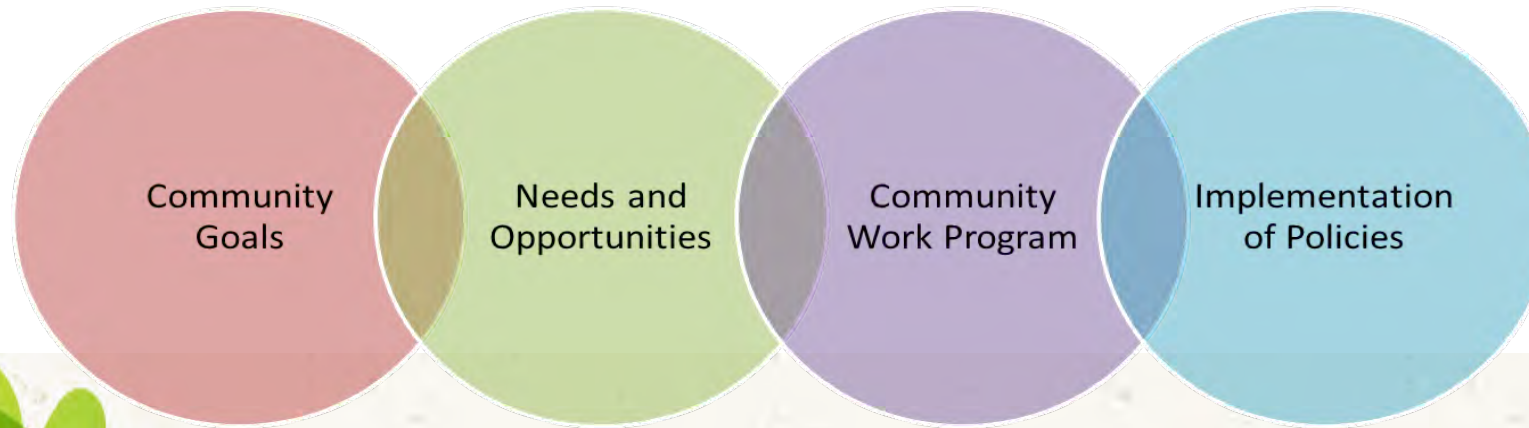
**Community Vision.** Another purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is that it provides a road map for the county's future. It has been developed through a public process involving the public, community leaders, and stakeholders with the goal of making key decisions about the future of the county. The Comprehensive Plan is a vital plan, as it includes the community's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities, and an implementation program for achieving the vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to direct the coordinated, efficient, and orderly development of DeKalb County and its environs based on an analysis of present and future needs, to best promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare.

**Public Process.** The Comprehensive Plan is a public driven document designed to accommodate future population growth and development while maintaining the county's vision. The document is user friendly for day-to-day decision making by community leaders as the community works toward achieving the desired future of DeKalb County.



# Important Elements of the Plan

5-Year Update  
2035 Comprehensive Plan



This plan update is an extension of the previous comprehensive plan. The existing comprehensive plan, the DeKalb County 2035 Comprehensive Plan, lays the foundation for this effort. Where relevant, the findings and recommendations of the existing plan remained, while necessary changes were incorporated and updated. In addition, this plan update incorporated and updated the recommendations of new planning studies, including the I-20 East MARTA Transit Oriented Development Plan, Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan, the updated DeKalb County HUD Consolidated Plan, and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. The public outreach effort launched for this plan update includes two steering committee meeting, two public meetings, and a public hearing. Announcements and notifications of these meetings were included on the County's website, local newspapers, and flyers. In addition, an on-line community survey was posted providing those who could not make the public meetings an opportunity to have their ideas recorded and heard. To help direct the formulation of the plan update, a stakeholders committee was formed and comprised of members representing a cross-section of the community including elected officials staff, local business interests, key staff, and residents.

## The goals of the Stakeholders Committee was to:

1. Help to draft a common vision for the future.
2. Solicit agreement on key issues.
3. Provide guidance on actions needed to achieve that vision.
4. Affirm public input.

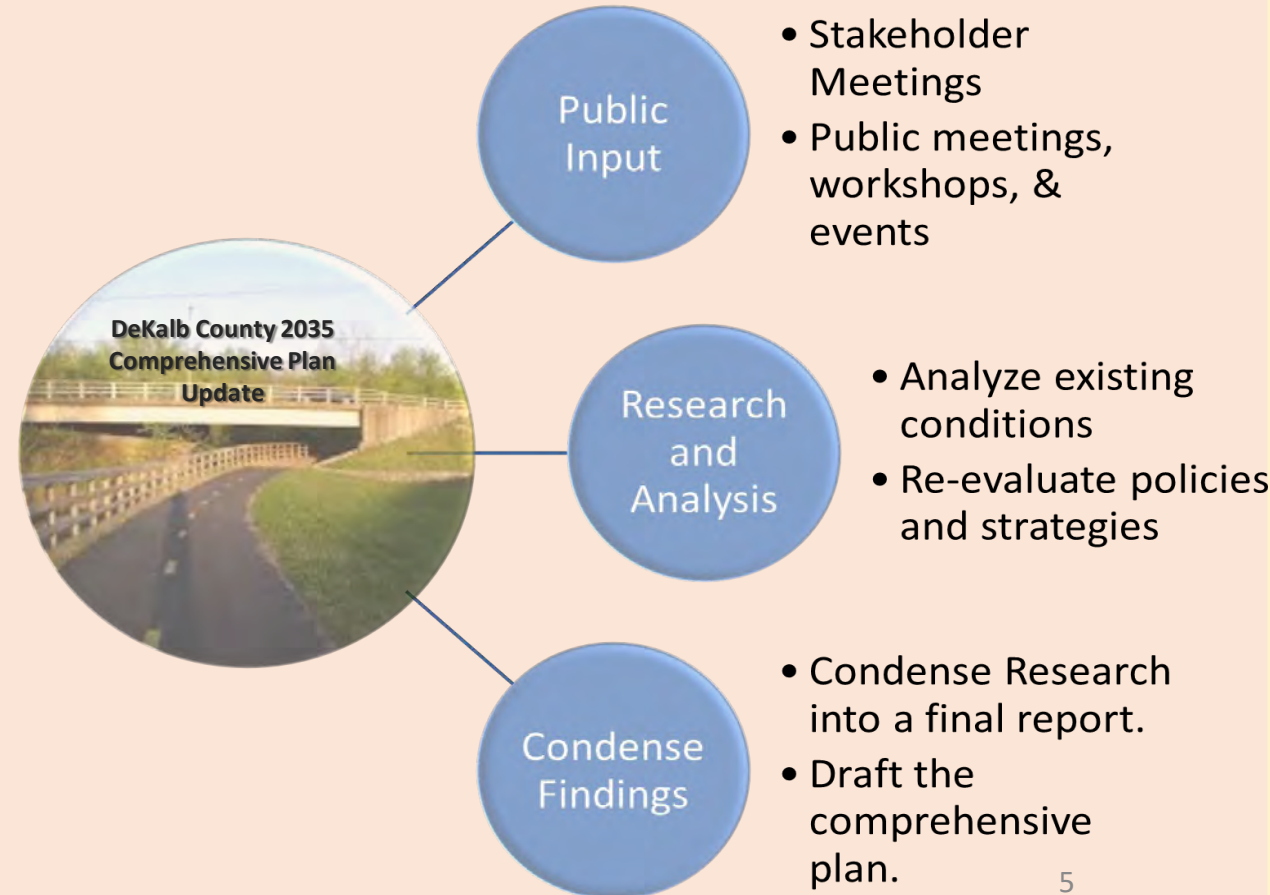
## 5-Year Update

### 2035 Comprehensive Plan

Set Goals for  
County

Gain Citizen  
Input

Prioritize



# Quality of Life

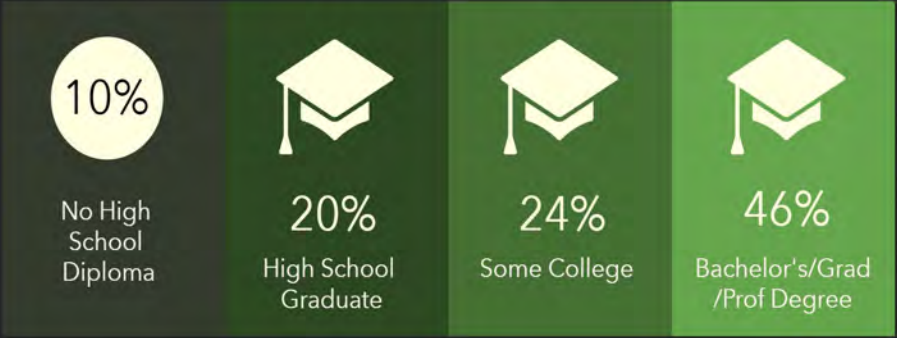
## Demographics

This section is based on the socio-economic conditions in DeKalb County. The information found in this chapter will provide the foundation for the issues, opportunities, policies and strategies to be discussed later in the plan.

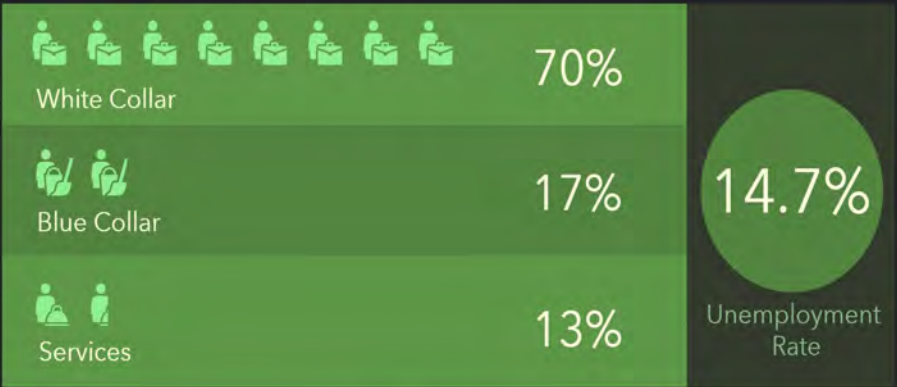
The infographic at the right shows that DeKalb County residents primarily work white collar jobs and just under half of the population has a bachelor's degree or beyond. The higher-than-average unemployment rate is most likely due to the impacts of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

However, it is important that readers note that these trends might not be distributed uniformly throughout the county and that these estimates reflect the characteristics of DeKalb County as a whole—not just unincorporated areas. (Source: Esri 2020 estimates)

### EDUCATION



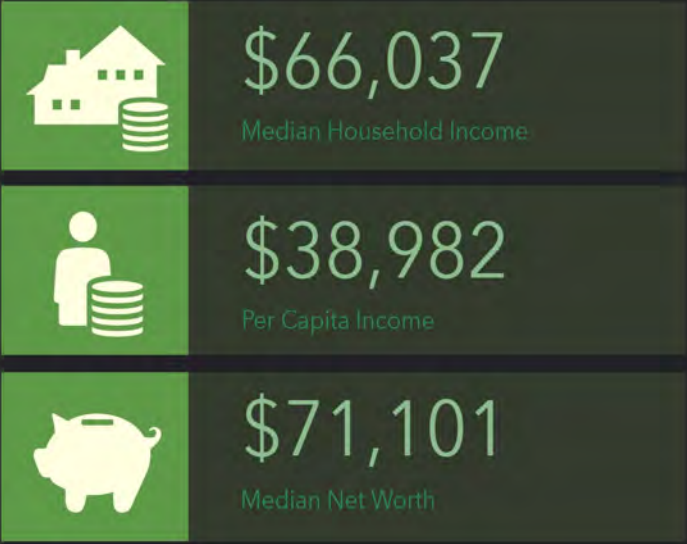
### EMPLOYMENT



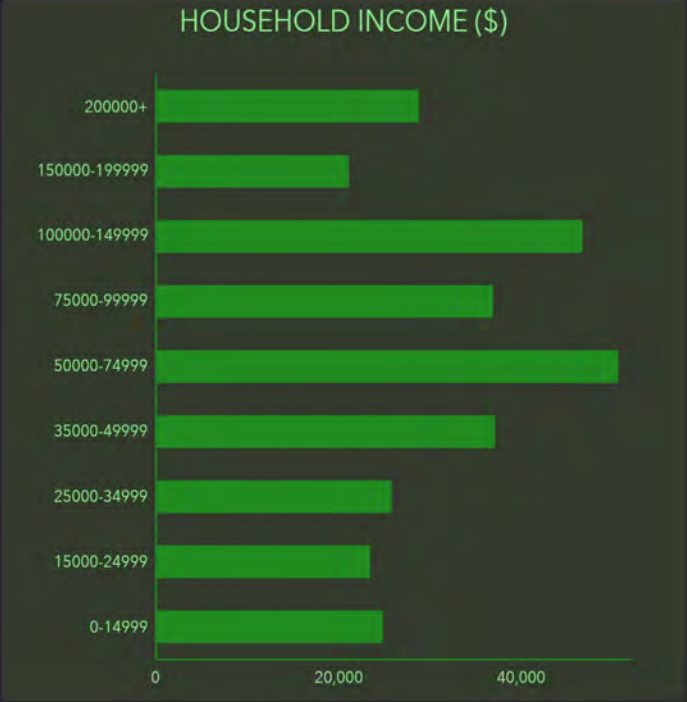
### KEY FACTS



### INCOME



### HOUSEHOLD INCOME (\$)





# Intergovernmental Coordination Summary of Services

The graphic illustration is a quick-reference guide, that is designed to show a simplified level of service provided by DeKalb County to it's municipalities and the City of Atlanta. A more complete and detailed version is located in the SDS document, on the Department's website.










<https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning-and-sustainability/long-range-planning>

5-Year Update



2035 Comprehensive Plan

DeKalb provides the following services to one or more cities

Police 	Fire 	Airport 
EMS 	Medical Examiner 	Water 
Recycle Program 	911 	Library 

# Quality of Life

## Historic Resources

DeKalb County is rich in historical resources and archeological resources. Many historic homes, mills, and bridges still stand as a living museum and history lesson for all. These are the sites and structures that molded the history and created the future of the county.

Several strategies to preserve DeKalb County’s historic resources are currently underway. These strategies range from efforts at the local level all the way to the federal level, with several structures and districts listed on the National Historic Register. DeKalb County’s Board of Commissioners created a seven-member **Historic Preservation Commission**, in 1994. This Commission is charged with the designation of historic properties, the issuance of certificates of appropriateness, and public hearing procedures. The commission is currently taking applications for historic designation and working to increase public awareness of the economic value of historic preservation. Listed in Table 2.6 , are several historic districts and structures located in the county.



Druid Hills Home with ivy grown façade.

Table 2.6 National Register Listed Districts	
Avondale Estates Historic District	December 8, 1986
Cameron Court Historic District	September 30, 1982
Candler Park Historic District	September 8, 1983
Candler Park Historic District	March 17, 2005
Decatur Downtown Historic District	May 23, 2012
Druid Hills Historic District	October 25, 1979
Emory Grove Historic District	March 31, 2000
Emory University Historic District	November 20, 1975
Kirkwood Historic District	September 24, 2009
Klondike Historic District	September 27, 2007
McDonough –Adams-Kings Highway Historic District	December 24, 2013
Northwoods Historic District	June 2, 2014
Oglethorpe University Historic District	August 6, 1994
Ponce de Leon Court Historic District	July 2, 2011
Ponce de Leon Terrace- Ponce de Leon Heights-Clairmont Estates Historic District	November 2, 2011
South Candler Street- Agnes Scott College Historic District	July 29, 1994
Stone Mountain Historic District	December 7, 2000
University Park- Emory Highlands- Emory Estates Historic District	August 31, 1998
Winnona Park Historic District	May 30, 2002
City of Stone Mountain	September 19, 2016
National Heritage Area	
Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area	October 12, 2006



## Quality of Life – National Register Historic Properties



Callanwolde



Swanton House



Soapstone Ridge

1. Agnes Lee Chapter House of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (July 25, 1985)
2. Blair-Ruthland Building (December 12, 2002)
3. Bond Family House (September 17, 2008)
4. Briarcliff (August 4, 1988)
5. Briarcliff-Normandy Apartments (March 26, 2003)
6. Callanwolde (April 24, 1973)
7. Callanwolde (October 9, 2003)
8. Cheek- Spruill House (June 9, 2000)
9. Cora Beck Hampton Schoolhouse and House (April 16, 1992)
10. Decatur Cemetery (May 23, 1997)
11. Decatur United Post Office (July 5, 2000)
12. Decatur Waterworks (March 15, 2006)
13. DeKalb Ave.-Clifton Rd. Archeological Site (December 14, 1978)
14. Donaldson-Bannister House and Cemetery (August 9, 2009)
15. Dr. Luther C. & Lucy Hurt Fischer House (June 8, 2011)
16. Druid Hills Parks and Parkways (April 11, 1975)
17. Kirkwood School (September 19, 2002)
18. Mary Gay House (May 5, 1975)
19. Neville and Helen Farmer Lustron House (March 18, 1996)
20. Old DeKalb County Courthouse (August 26, 1971)
21. Pythagoras Lodge # 41 Free and Accepted Masons (August 19, 1982)
22. Robert A. Alston House (July 14, 2004)
23. Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children (June 17, 1982)
24. Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children (September 4, 2004)
25. Smith-Benning House (June 28, 1982)
26. Soapstone Ridge (May 7, 1973)
27. Steele-Cobb House (July 17, 1982)
28. Swanton House (August 30, 1978)
29. The Seminary (November 15, 1978)
30. Villa Mira Flores (Pending 2015)
31. William & Minnie Pearce House (January 27, 2012)
32. William T. Genrty House (May 2, 1985)
33. Zuber-Jarrell House (September 30, 1997)



## Stone Mountain and Soapstone DeKalb Geological Features

### **Soapstone Ridge and Stone Mountain.**

Soapstone Ridge consists of approximately 5,000 acres located in the southwestern portion of the County. Rising 200 feet above the surrounding terrain, the Soapstone Ridge is a series of ultramafic rock formations which appear sudsy when wet, hence the name "Soapstone." The Soapstone Ridge contains aboriginal steatite quarries which are of archeological and historic significance. Soapstone was used by early inhabitants of DeKalb County to carve bowls and other small tools as early as the Archaic Period (3000 B.C. - 1500 B. C.). This designated area is protected by strict archaeological guidelines. Stone Mountain is located in the eastern area of the county and is the largest exposed granite outcropping in the world.



## Arabia Mountain DeKalb Geological Features

The 2,550 acres DeKalb County park called the Davidson – Arabia Nature Preserve. The Preserve also includes other large formations of exposed granite, wetlands, pine and oak forests, multiple streams, and two lakes.

While the Preserve is considered an exceptional ecological wonder the area is also very much influenced by the hand of man. The evidence of quarrying activities are apparent in the industrial debris left on the mountain and of the abandoned structures once used by workers for storage, offices and shelter. The ruins of quarry buildings are found interspersed throughout the park and metal spikes that were used to split the granite are still embedded in the rock.



## DeKalb County Wetlands DeKalb Geological Features

According to maps prepared by the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service there are various wetlands in DeKalb County. The majority of the wetlands are located in flood prone areas of perennial creeks. Wetlands are protected under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, which is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Before development permits are issued, a careful field examination shall be conducted to determine the magnitude and importance of each wetland and its role in the overall ecosystem. As a result of HB 285, State law requires that the engineer of record (with a current Level II certification) must make a site visit before plans can be submitted to the County which will outline all Natural Resources on the property.



# County and Local Plans Planning in DeKalb

The DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan is supported by many other planning documents that serve to shape development and the provision of County services. The graphic below in Figure 1.1 displays all relevant documents within which the comprehensive plan is based on. Livable Centers Initiatives and Neighborhood Studies are also referred to as Small Area Plans (SAP), which in detail, provide more detail to future land use recommended policy and strategies.

For more information on ARC LCIs:  
<https://atlantaregional.org/plans-reports/livable-centers-initiative-2015-report/>

**5-Year Update**   
2035 Comprehensive Plan



## Neighborhood Studies / Master Plans

Memorial Drive  
Revitalization Plan  
SDAT Bouldercrest  
Georgetown/N. Shallowford  
Lavista Blueprints  
Hidden Hills  
Lawrenceville Community Choice

## Countywide Master Plans

2035 Comprehensive Plan  
2014 Transportation Plan  
Strategic Economic Development Plan  
Consolidated Plan for HUD Programs  
Solid Waste Management  
Watershed Management  
Parks and Recreation  
DeKalb Transit Master Plan  
I-20 East MARTA TOD Plan

## Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)

Doraville GM Plant  
Medline  
Northlake  
Wesley Chapel  
Candler Flat Shoals

## County and Local Plans

### Community Plans

Community planning is essential to the vitality of a community. Community planning is a local comprehensive planning process that is designed to build, strengthen, and support community structures. The overall intent of community planning is to develop an inclusive plan that can be utilized to guide local community development initiatives. People who are close to the underlining issues can clearly identify community needs and advocate passionately for local concerns. The process directly engages community leaders and the broad-based citizenry in an active effort to move their community from today's reality to the possibilities of tomorrow.

DeKalb County has assisted in the development of several community plans, including neighborhood plans, revitalization plans, and overlay studies, among others. Many have been adopted and others accepted by the Board of Commissioners, while others are in the process of completion. The status of the plans can be found on page 180 of this document. The community plans developed for DeKalb County are as follows:

1. Tucker Strategic Neighborhood Plan
2. Emory Village Revitalization Plan
3. LaVista Plan (Blueprints)
4. Scottdale Revitalization Plan
5. Greater Hills Community Overlay Study
6. Garvin Study
7. Lindbergh-Lavista Plan (Blueprints)
8. Moreland-Bouldercrest-Cedar Grove Plan



### Corridor Plans

These are plans that generally occur along a stretch of road within the County. The acceptance or adoption is executed through the Board of Commissioners. Corridor Plans in DeKalb County are:

1. Lawrenceville Community Choice
2. Memorial Drive Strategic Action Plan
3. Clifton Corridor Transit Study
4. Buford Highway Corridor Study
5. Tucker Strategic Neighborhood Plan



# Public Involvement

Obtaining information from the public is one of the primary methods used for developing the Comprehensive Plan Update needs. Residents and stakeholders in the area present an important source of information for where the system can be improved. Even though our traditional methods for public engagement were altered during COVID-19, we were still able to gain input for critical areas of the plan. Opportunities for public input were leveraged, including two (2) steering committee and public meetings, virtually through Zoom. We included surveys to assist with input, along with development a project webpage. A technical stakeholders committee was established serving as a sounding board for analyses, public participation and documentation as well. This final report document also is being posted for a 30-day public review period in which anyone can download the document and submit comments. At the conclusion of the 30-day review period, there will also be a public meeting at a Board of Commissioners meeting where adoption will be discussed.

Table Public Outreach Schedule		
#	MEETING TYPE/FOCUS	DATE
1	Creation of Project Webpage & Public Information	July 2020
2	Finalize First Draft	August 2020
3	Finalize CWP/ROA with DeKalb Departments	October 2020
4	Steering Committee Meeting	August 2020
6	Public Meeting	September
7	Complete Second Plan Draft	December 2020
8	Steering Committee Meeting	August/October 2020
9-13	Public Meeting	September/November 2020
14	DCA Review Process	Jan/Mar 2021
15	DeKalb Public Hearing Process	Apr/Jun 2021



## The Steering Committee

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide valuable input into the development of a 5 - year comprehensive plan update for DeKalb County based on each individuals expertise. Also, they will be an advocate for the goals of the plan so that information is spread among a larger group of DeKalb County residents. This group has met on two occasions, and have extensively communicated via email throughout the process. They are an integral part of the comprehensive planning process by providing challenging feedback, creative ideas, and guidance for planned public meetings. A list of the participating committee is listed in the following table.

### The Committee:

- Commissioner Reps
- Community Council
- Decide DeKalb
- Atlanta Regional Commission



Prior to each public meeting, steering committee meetings are part of the process. The Steering Committee played a major role in developing the strategic plan for the public meetings and the gathering input for the 2035 Plan Update.



## Chapter 5

### Issues and Opportunities

This section includes a list of Issues and Opportunities that DeKalb intends to address over the next five years. They will be followed by the Community Goals covered in the next section and will be addressed with programs listed in the Community Work Program. The potential Issues and Opportunities identified in the Plan have been modified based on stakeholder knowledge of the community, staff interpretation of the Community Assessment and comments provided by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Each Issue and Opportunity will be discussed under the following categories:

1. Intergovernmental Coordination
2. Historic and Natural Resources
3. Land Use / Sense of Place
4. Population and Housing
5. Economic Development
6. Broadband





# Community Goals

The Community Goals section will provide the long-term vision and policies for DeKalb County's future growth. The foundation of this section is are updated goals from the 20215 Comprehensive Plan. One of the new goals included within this 5-year update, is broadband. This is a new requirement from the GA Department of Community Affairs. The process included community input, assessment of current needs and opportunities, and adjustments based on the updated Department of Community Affairs Minimum Standards and Procedures For Local Comprehensive Planning. Specific implementation policies are tied to each goal and are listed in the Community Work Plan section.



## Natural & Historic Resources

- Preservation
- Trail Network
- Open Space Acquisition
- Stormwater Management
- Neighborhood Parks
- Environmental Sensitivity



## Housing

- Infill
- Multi-family
- Workforce
- Seniors
- Mixed Use
- Housing Variety
- Code Compliance
- Special Needs



## Economic Development

- Revitalize Corridors
- Public / Private Partnerships
- Infrastructure and Aesthetics
- Employment Center Creation



## Transportation

- Asset Management
- Functional Classification
- Freight and Air Travel
- Access Management
- Complete Streets
- Bicycle and Pedestrian
- Demand Management
- Coordination with MARTA
- Schools
- Priority Projects



## Land Use

- Protection of Single Family Residential
- Mixed Use Development
- Enhanced Buffers
- Staggered Heights
- Streetscaping
- Cultural Diversity
- Traffic Calming
- Healthy Neighborhoods
- Connectivity
- Small Area Plans
- Broadband



## The Development Plan Concept

The Future Land Use Map provides specific and detailed future development patterns for the County. This Future Land Use Plan and Map consists primarily of the Activity Centers which emerged from the concept map. There are three types of Activity Centers: Neighborhood Centers, Town Centers and Regional Centers, which have emerged and included as a part of the Future Development Plan. There are a total of 46 Activity Centers countywide. In addition, the Future Development Plan includes residential designations: Rural, Suburban, and Traditional.



TOWN CENTERS		
ID	NAME/LOCATION	SMALL AREA PLAN
2	I-285 & Chamblee Tucker Road	None
5	Toco Hills	N. Druid Hills LCI
9	Memorial Drive & Columbia Drive	Master Active Living Plan
19	I-20 and Panola Road	MARTA I-20 TOD Plan
20	I-20 and Wesley Chapel Road	Wesley Chapel LCI and MARTA I-20 TOD Plan
22	I-20 and Candler Road	Flat Shoals and Candler Road LCI
23	I-20 and Gresham Road	Master Active Living Plan
28	Redan Road and Indian Creek Drive	Master Active Living Plan
31	North DeKalb Mall	None
36	Clifton Community	None
40	Swift Creek	None
45	N. Decatur & Scott Blvd.	Medline LCI

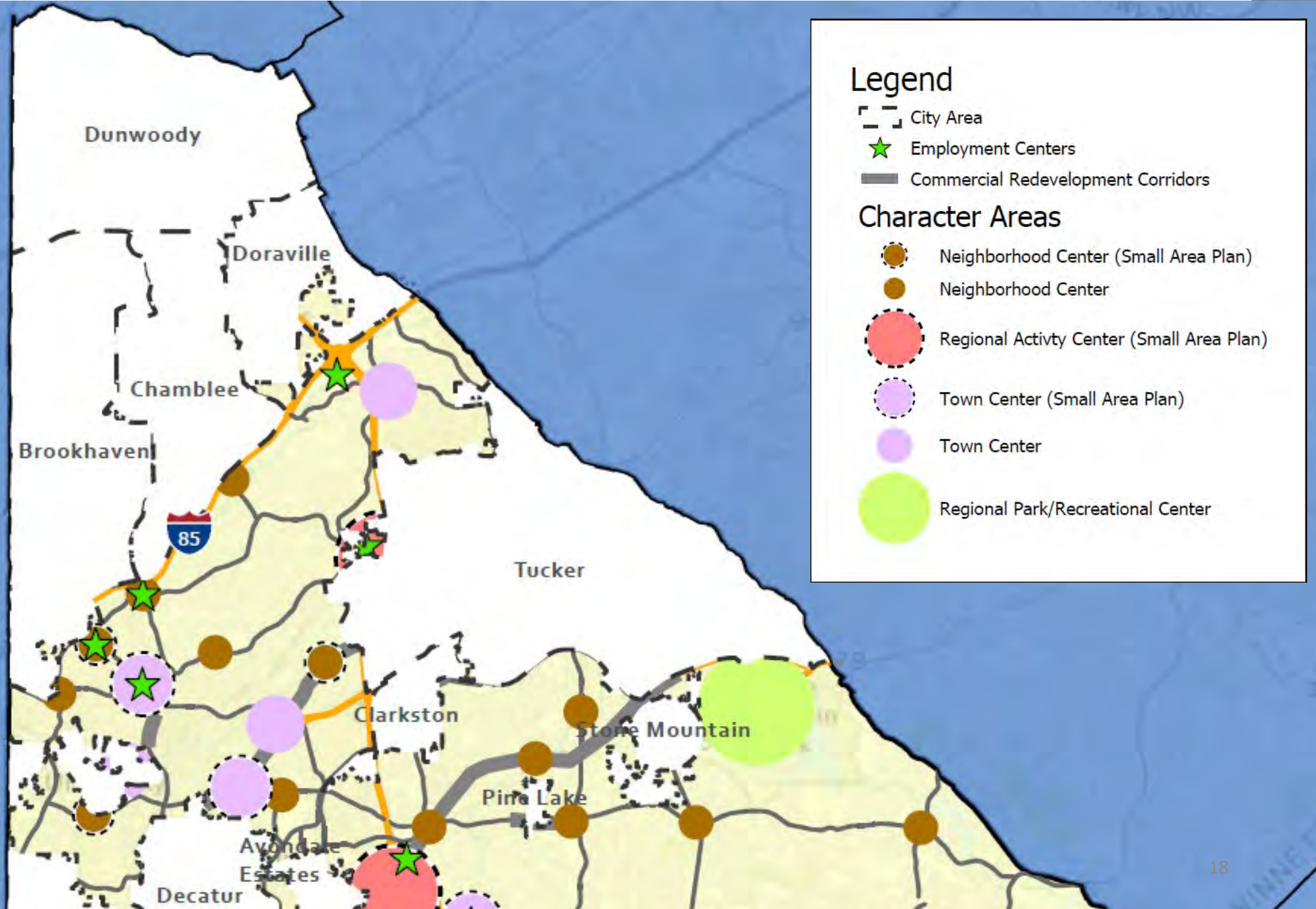
REGIONAL CENTERS		
ID	NAME/LOCATION	SMALL AREA PLAN
3	Northlake Mall	Northlake LCI
8	Kensington MARTA Station	Kensington MARTA Station LCI
	<b>Memorial Drive &amp; I-285</b>	<b>Memorial Drive Plan</b>

REGIONAL PARK & RECREATIONAL CENTERS		
ID	NAME/LOCATION	SMALL AREA PLAN
25	Arabia Mountain Park	
26	Stone Mountain Park	

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS		
ID	NAME/LOCATION	SMALL AREA PLAN
1	Moreland Ave. & Cedar Grove	SDAT - SW DeKalb
4	LaVista Road & Briarcliff Road	None
6	Oak Grove	None
7	Emory Village	Livable Centers Initiative
10	<b>GSU/Georgia Piedmont</b>	<b>Memorial Drive Plan</b>
11	<b>Village Square/Value Mall</b>	<b>Memorial Drive Plan</b>
12	Panola & Rockbridge Road	None
13	Deshon & Rockbridge Road	None
14	Redan & Hairston Road	None
15	Covington Highway & Hairston Road	None
16	Covington Highway & Panola Road	None
17	Covington Highway & DeKalb Medical Way	None
20	Hairston Road & Central Drive	None
21	Flat Shoals Pkwy & Wesley Chapel Road	Master Active Living Plan
24	East Lake Village	None
27	Browns Mill & Klondice Road	None
29	Redan Road	None
30	Salem Crossing	Master Active Living Plan
32	Bouldercrest & I-285	SDAT - SW DeKalb
33	Briarcliff & N. Druid Hills Road	Livable Centers Initiative
34	Shallowford Road & I-285	None
35	Clairmont & Briarcliff Road	None
37	Cedar Grove	SDAT - SW DeKalb
38	Panola & Redan Road	None
39	Hairston and Rockbridge Road	None
41	Memorial Drive & Wilkinson Drive	None
42	Flat Shoals Pkwy & Clifton Road	Livable Centers Initiative
43	Panola and Young Road	
44	N. Decatur Road & DeKalb Industrial Way	Livable Centers Initiative
46	Lawrenceville Hwy & McLendon Drive	Community Choice

# NORTH DEKALB

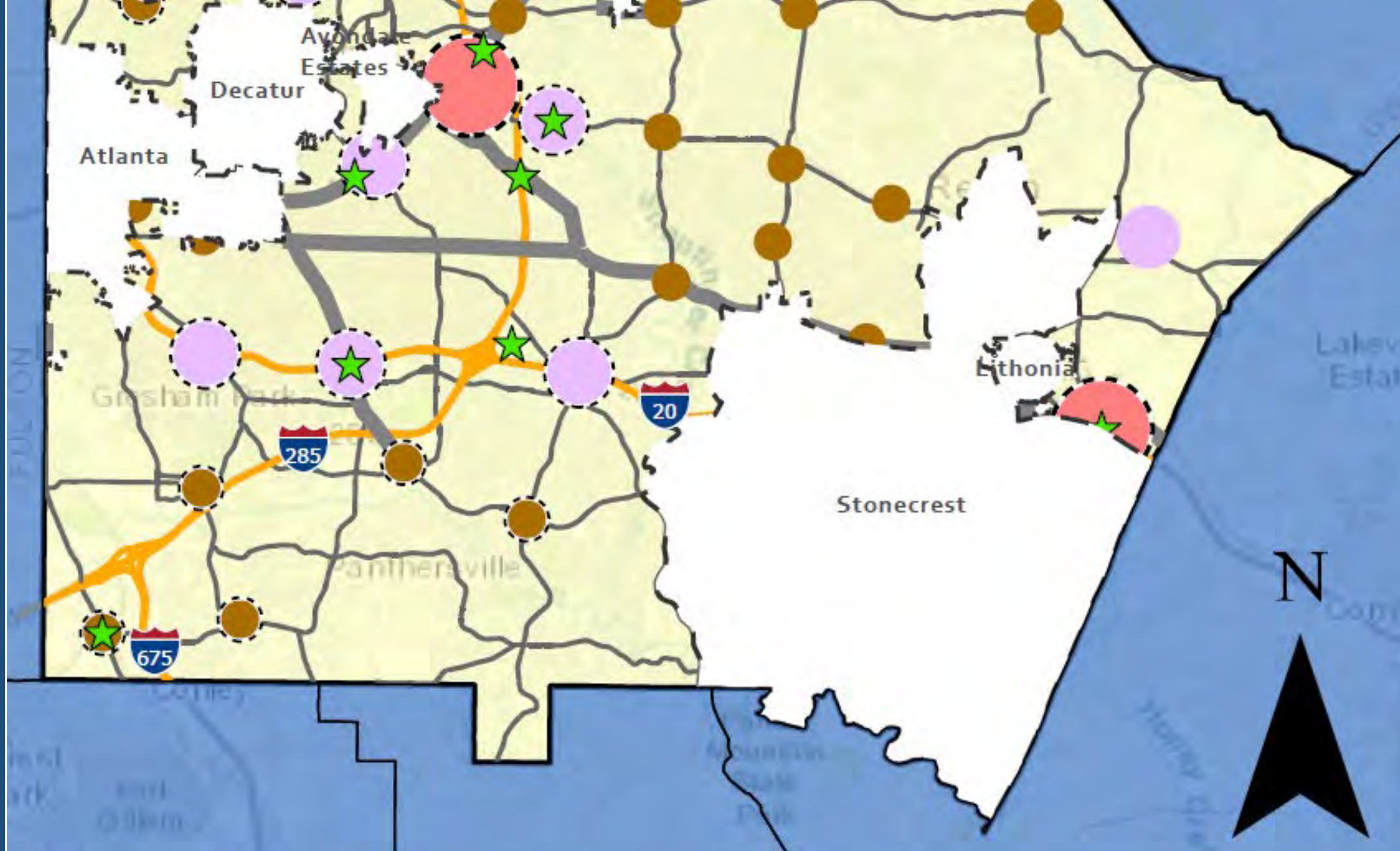
## 2035 Future Development Concept Map





# SOUTH DEKALB

2035 Future Development Concept Map



# Land Use

## Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

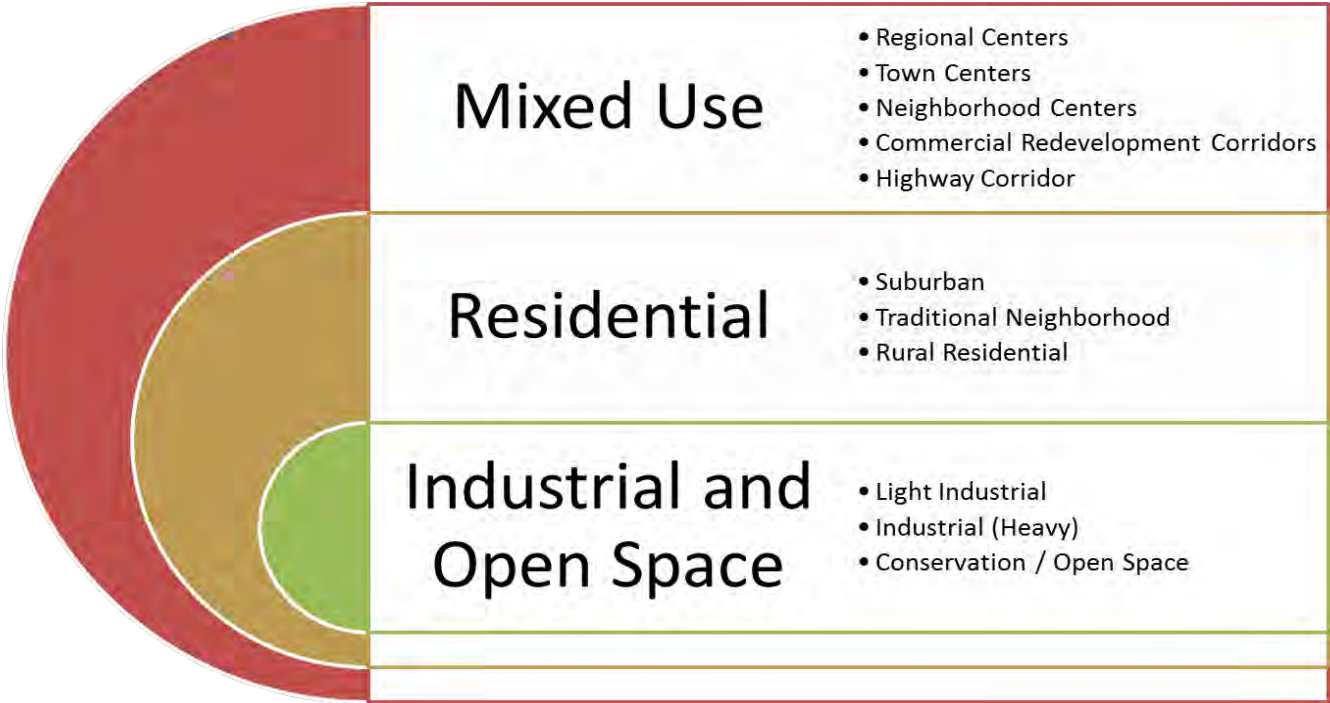
This map was created by delineating the boundaries of each of the character areas, based on the concept map as well as the countywide small area studies and existing and proposed transit stops, which were instrumental in the location of the Activity Centers. The 46 Activity Centers have also been mapped and placed in the appendices section of this document. Each parcel of land in the County is identified with a future land use designation.

The Future Land Use Map also includes gateways, which are not a part of the character areas. These gateways are locations that serve as important entrances and means of access into the County and create an identity or “sense of place.” Gateways may be represented with appropriate signage, landscaping, hardscaping and other beautification measures.

The Future Land Use Map depicts the way the County anticipates land will be used over the next 20 years. The map will be put into practice as a guide for zoning decisions. The policies in this section are a continuation of the countywide policies discussed further in the Community Goals Section.

A digital and interactive version of a parcel based future land use map is available on our website. Click the following link for access:  
<https://dekalbgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f241af753f414cdfa31c1fdef0924584>

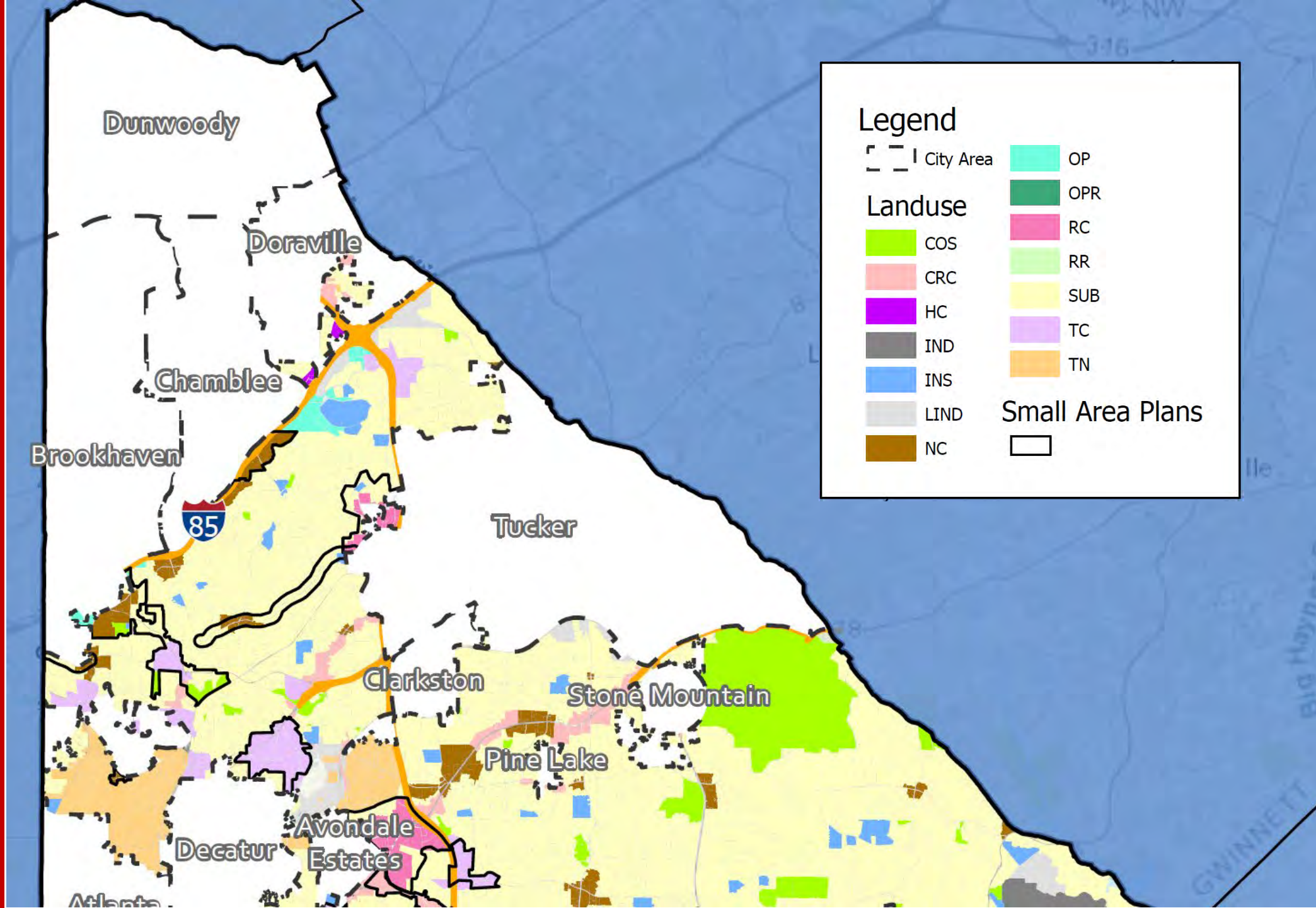
## Character Area Groupings at a Glance





# NORTH DEKALB

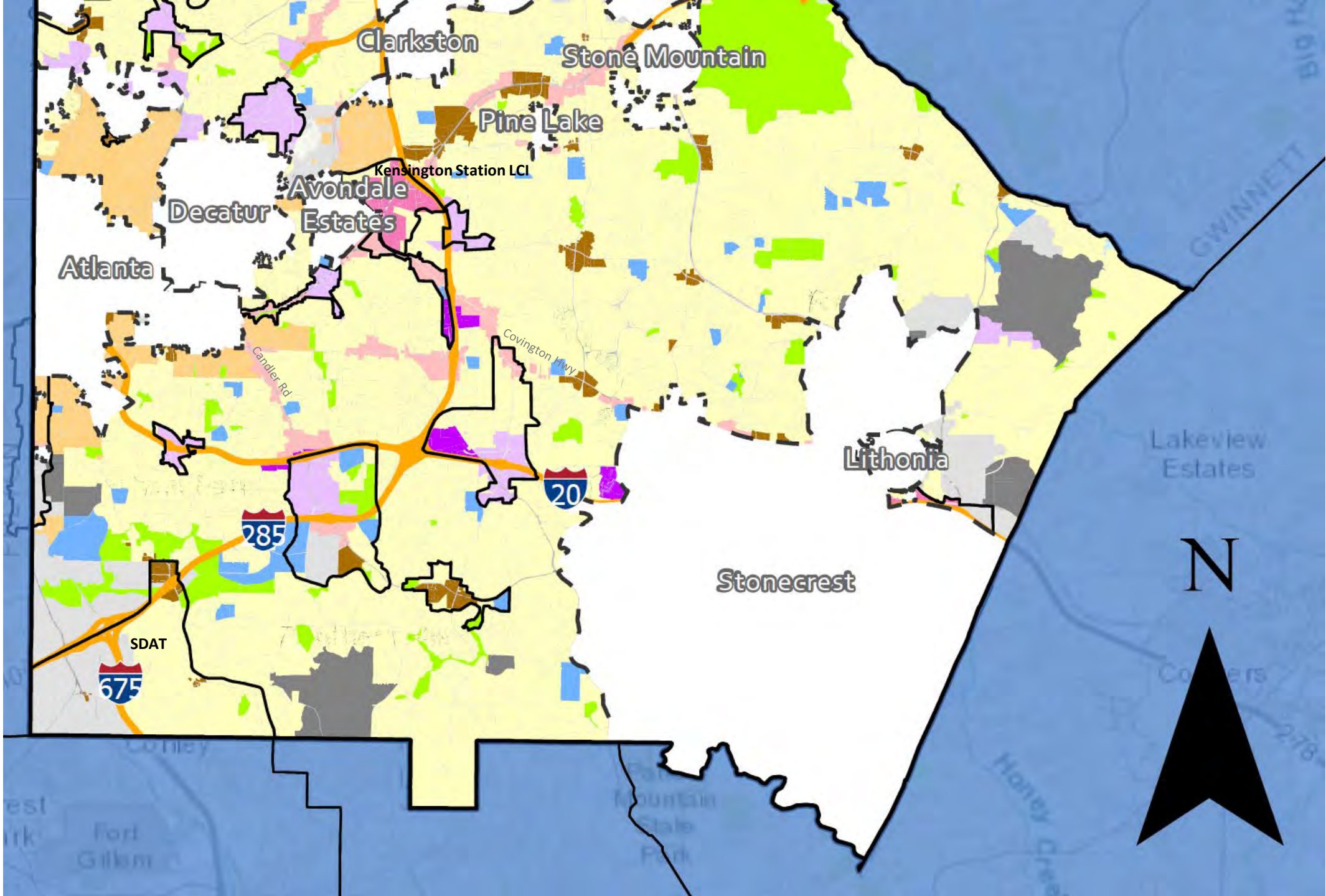
## 2035 Future Land Use Map





# SOUTH DEKALB

2035 Future Land Use Map





# DeKalb County Future Land Use Plan

## Land Use Consistency Table

Character Area / Land Use	Density Max (du/ac)	Primary Uses	Permitted Zoning	Small Area Plans (SAP)
Regional Center	Over 60 No Max	Townhomes / Condominiums / Apartments Retail and Commercial / Office Civic / Entertainment & Cultural / Parks & Recreation Health Care / Institutional/ Technology Centers	MU-1, MU-2, MU-3, MU-4, MU-5, MR-2, MR-1, C-1, OI, OIT, HR-1, HR-2, HR-3	Kensington LCI Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan
Town Center	Up to 60	Townhomes / Condominiums / Apartments Retail and Commercial / Office Civic / Entertainment & Cultural / Parks & Recreation Health Care / Institutional/ Technology Centers	MU-1, MU-2, MU-3, MU-4, MU-5, MR-1, MR-2, C-1, OI, HR-1, HR-2, RSM	Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan / Candler Road LCI / Emory Village LCI / N. Druid Hills LCI / Wesley Chapel LCI / Medline LCI / Panola MALP
Neighborhood Center	Up to 2	Townhomes / Condominiums / Apartments Retail and Commercial / Office Civic / Parks & Recreation / Institutional	MU-1, MU-2, MU-3, MR-1, MR-2, C-1, OI, NS, NSRSM	Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan / Portion of N. Druid Hills LCI (Mason Mill Node)
Commercial Redevelopment Corridor	18	Townhomes / Condominiums / Apartments Retail and Commercial / Office Mixed Use / Institutional	MU-1, MU-2, MU-3, MR-1, MR-2, C-1, OI, OD, RSM	Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan / Covington and Belvedere MALP
Traditional Neighborhood	12	Traditional Single-Family Homes / Apartments Assisted Living, Neighborhood Retail / Schools / Institutional	MU-1, MU-2, MR-1, C-1, OI, NS, RSM	None
Office Professional	30	Office Development / Business Services / Educational / Training Facilities / Apartments and Condominiums / Accessory Commercial / Technology Centers / Medical and Training Facilities / Institutional Uses	MU5, MU4, MU3, MU2, MR1, MR2, C-1, OI, HR1, HR2	None
Suburban	Up to 8	Single-Family Detached / Townhomes Neighborhood Retail / Schools / Libraries / Institutional Assisted Living Facilities / Parks and Related Health Care / Civic	MU-1, C-1, OI, NS, RSM, RE, RLG, R-100, R-85, R-75, R-60, MHP, RNC	Hidden Hills Study
Rural Residential	Up to 4	Low Density Single-Family Detached Agricultural Related / Cultural and Historic / Institutional	NS, RE, RLG	None
Conservation / Open Space	N/A	Passive Parks / Nature Trails / Floodplains / Wetlands Watersheds / Golf Courses / Athletic Fields Amphitheaters	All zoning designations.	None
Light Industrial	Up to 120	Warehouse Distribution / Wholesale-Trade / Automotive Entertainment	OD, C-2, M-1, HR-1, HR-2, HR-3	None
Heavy Industrial	N/A	Manufacturing / Warehouse Distribution / Wholesale-Trade / Automotive / Entertainment	OD, C-2, M and M-2	SDAT - SW DeKalb and Conley Study

The **basic premise** is to focus more intense development at the Activity Centers/Nodes. This basic premise will help to protect existing neighborhoods from incompatible land uses. The intent of the 2035 plan is not to allow intense development throughout the designated node, but to provide consideration of the allowable densities/intensities. Listed below are the guiding principles for development.

**A. Locational Criteria** - The most intense development shall occur in the center of the node or at the major intersections within the defined area. Higher density residential is encouraged within the defined area (stand alone or as a vertical mixed use development). Office uses are encouraged within the node but can also be used as a buffer/transition between existing commercial uses and residential uses. **Density** shall be increased to support urban lifestyles

within mixed uses. Bonuses shall be granted for workforce and senior housing.

**B. Land Use Compatibility** - Development intensity shall transition from the most dense toward the edge/periphery of the activity center. Smaller scale professional services and residential developments may serve as transitions to existing neighborhoods. Staggered heights, greater setbacks, increased screening/buffers can help mitigate compatibility issues.

**C. Neighborhood Compatibility** - Commercial and office uses that would have a negative or blighting influence on adjacent residential neighborhoods or individual residence shall not be permitted.

**D. Services/Facilities** - Proposed developments shall not degrade the level of service on roadways, capacity of water/sewer, or cause drainage problems. The developer must provide evidence to the contrary that is acceptable to staff, make on

or off site improvements, and/or provide funding to mitigate impact on public facilities and services. All new development will be subject to review of its proposed impact on existing services and infrastructure. Developers will be required to submit additional plans, which will mitigate any negative impacts.

**E. Environmental** - The proposed development shall be allowed only in areas where it can be demonstrated that environmental damage will not occur and mitigation measures must be approved by EPD and local stream buffer standards.

**F. Policies** – The policies and strategies will be used to make recommendations for zoning and land use decisions.

**G. Mandatory Pre-Application Meeting** – shall occur prior to zoning and land use application submittal to guide the applicant with development standards and maintaining an acceptable quality of life.



# Land Use Policy

## Guiding Principles for Development

- A. Locational Criteria
- B. Land Use Compatibility
- C. Neighborhood Compatibility
- D. Services/Facilities
- E. Environmental
- F. Policies
- G. Mandatory Pre-Application Meeting



**Infill** - Identify and encourage the development of priority areas for new infill or redevelopment.



### Mixed Use

Create compact mixed use districts and reduce automobile dependency and travel to obtain basic services.



### Density

Allow increased density to encourage urban lifestyles that support mixed use in activity centers.



### Existing Residential

Ensure that new development and redevelopment is compatible with existing residential areas.



### Parking

Decrease the amount of land used for surface parking.



### Corridor Aesthetics

Improve the aesthetic appearance of developments along major corridors.



### Contextual Design

Support context sensitive design as a way to mitigate the impact of new development at higher densities and intensities.



### Land Development

Enforce the Land Development Chapter (14) of the County Code to improve development within the County.



### Zoning (Commercial)

Strictly regulate existing nonconforming commercial uses that are not recognized by the Future Development Map.



### Development Standards

Provide standards of development for retail, office and neighborhood-serving commercial uses to protect the appeal and character of neighborhoods.

# Land Use Policy

## Guiding Principles for Development

- A. Locational Criteria
- B. Land Use Compatibility
- C. Neighborhood Compatibility
- D. Services/Facilities
- E. Environmental
- F. Policies
- G. Mandatory Pre-Application Meeting



### Transportation

Encourage development within and near principal transportation corridors and activity centers.



### Clustering

Encourage the clustering of neighborhood and community shopping and office facilities in nodes with defined boundaries which are convenient to population concentrations and major transportation facilities.



### TOD

Encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in appropriate locations.



### Brownfield/Greyfields

Promote the reclamation and re-use of Brownfield and Greyfield development sites



### Buffers

Encourage the use of buffers by large scale office, commercial, industrial, institutional and high density residential development to reduce noise and air pollution in residential neighborhoods.



### New Developments

Promote new communities that feature greenspace and neighborhood parks, pedestrian circulation transportation options, and appropriate mix of uses and housing types.



# Chapter 7 Land Use - Development of Activity Centers

## 1. **Design Guidelines** -

Implement design guidelines for site planning, landscaping, hardscaping, and architectural features to exhibit and enhance local character.

## 3. **Small Area Plans (SAP)** -

Create small area studies to address specific land use issues where needed. Adopted SAPs within Activity Centers (Regional, Town, and Neighborhood Centers) supersede the policies of general policies and guidelines. Implement appropriate sub-policies development guidelines in Activity Centers that have Small Area Plans, which provide more guidance to the development of mixed use and transition down to single family residential.

## 4. **Connectivity** - Establish inter-parcel connectivity between residential and commercial properties .

## 5. **Councils, Commissions**

**and Boards** Promote the appropriate training and guidance for the Community Council, Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners to ensure that objective and consistent zoning standards are applied.

## 6. **GIS** - Implement GIS based planning efforts to improve visual awareness and planning analysis.

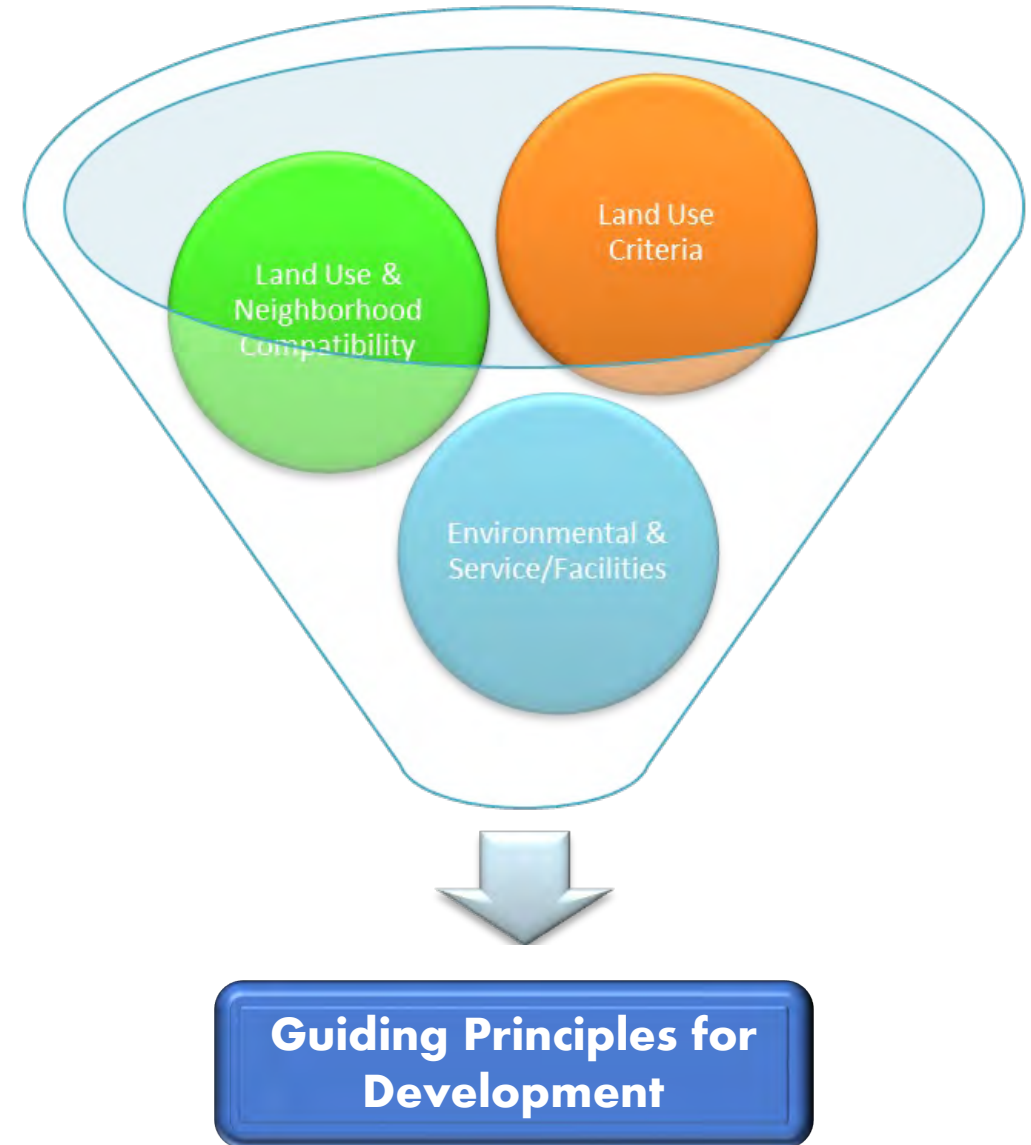
## 7. **Graphic Enhancements** -

Illustrate complex concepts with photos, renderings and other imagery.

## 8. **Developers and**

## **Community Engagement** -

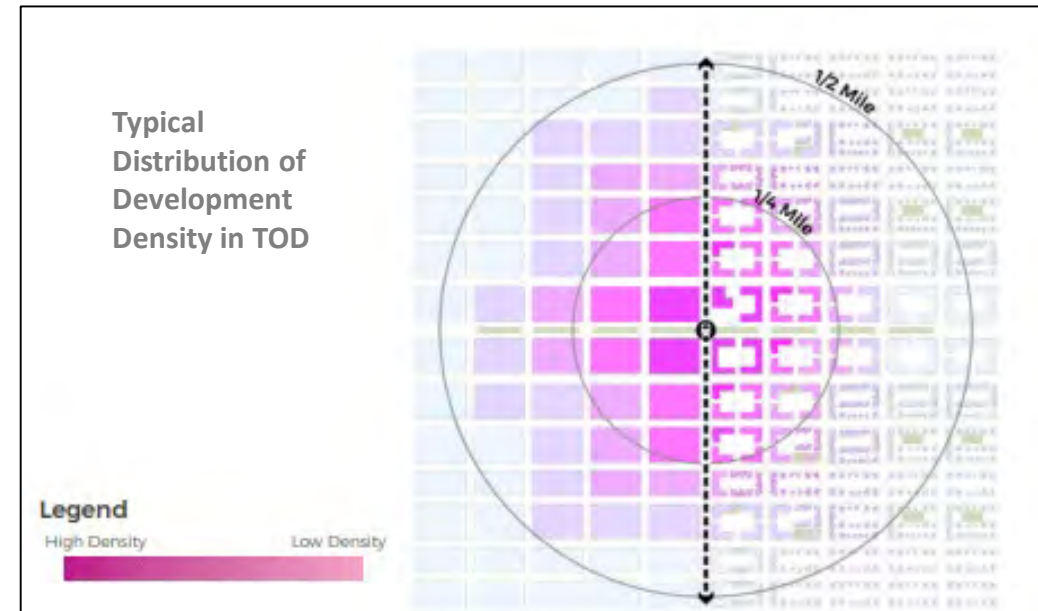
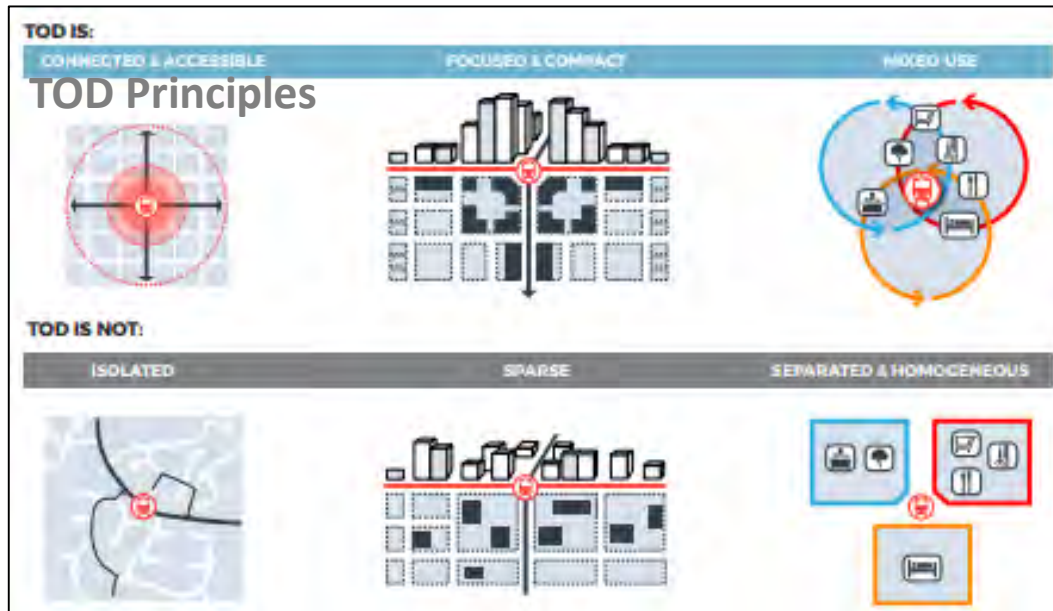
Encourage developers to work extensively with surrounding neighborhood residents to resolve community concerns prior to formalizing development plans.



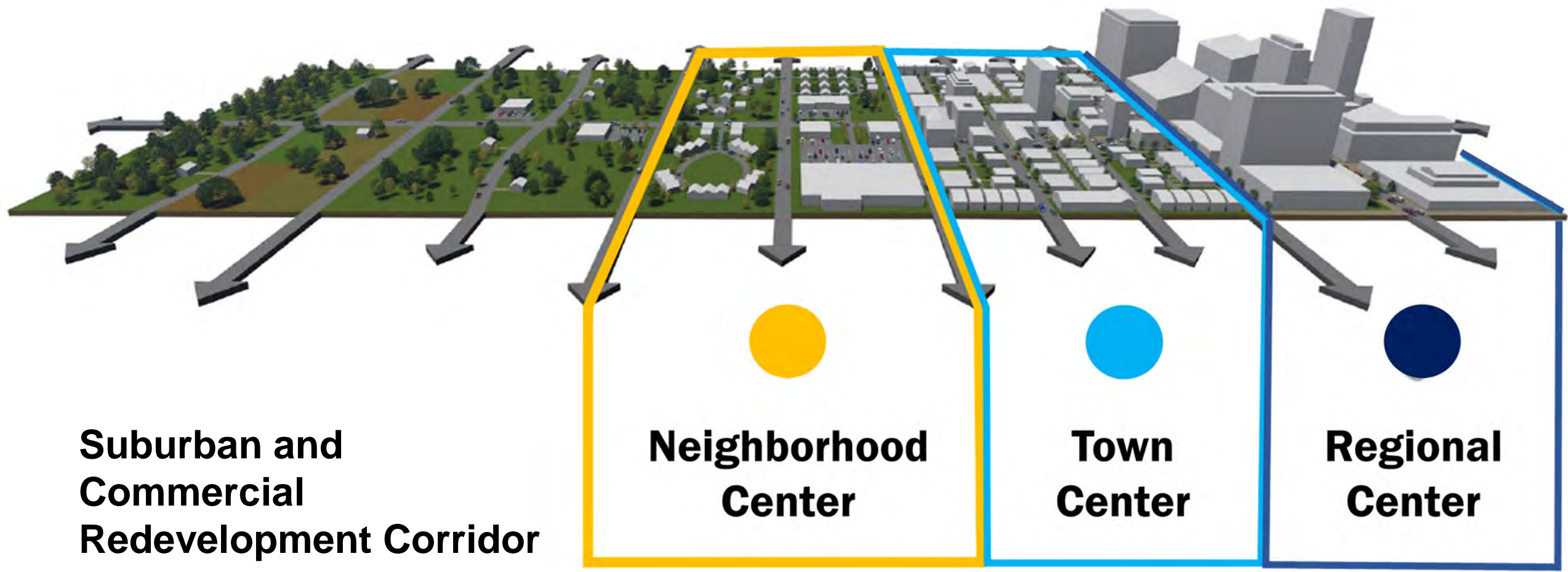
## TOD OVERVIEW

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is pedestrian-oriented, compact, mixed-use development that is centered around quality public transportation. TOD often includes a mix of residential, office, and retail supported by neighborhood amenities. TOD creates connected, focused, and mixed-use communities, as illustrated in Figure 1-4. It is generally denser than the development surrounding it or often includes higher densities and multifamily housing options. The typical arrangement of TOD density is presented in Figure 1-5 with development focused at the center of a one-quarter to one-half mile radius area, which is estimated to be a 5 to 10 minute

walk from transit. The characteristics of TOD include an emphasis on the public realm, public space, planning at the pedestrian scale, providing freedom of mobility choice, ensuring development is sensitive to community context, and reducing and/or incorporating shared parking requirements. The form of TOD is highly dependent on context. Density and mix of uses depend not only on the type of transit, but also on the context of the surrounding areas, input from the community, and the value of the land. TOD is adaptive, and the look and feel should consider the desires of the existing community to ensure a good fit and to avoid displacement of current residents.









## Regional Center (RC)

The intent of the Regional Activity Center is to promote the concentration of regional serving activities to a centralized location that allows for a variety of uses while reducing automobile travel, promoting walkability and increased transit usage. These areas consist of a high intensity of regional commercial, office, employment area, and higher-education facilities. These areas are characterized by high vehicular traffic, and high transit use, including stops, shelters and transfer points. These areas also have on-site parking, high floor-area-ratios, large tracts of land, and campus or unified development.



## Town Center (TC)

The intent of the Town Center is to promote the concentration of residential and commercial structures, which serve many communities in order to reduce automobile travel, promote walkability and increased transit usage. The areas consist of a focal point for several neighborhoods with a variety of activities such as general retail, commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses that are easily accessible by pedestrians. This character area is similar to neighborhood center, but at a larger scale. **The preferred density for areas of this type is up to 60 dwelling units per acre.**

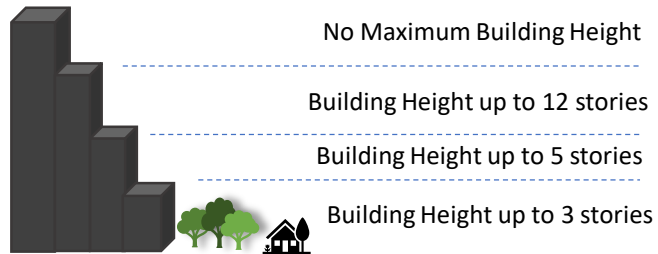


## Neighborhood Center (NC)

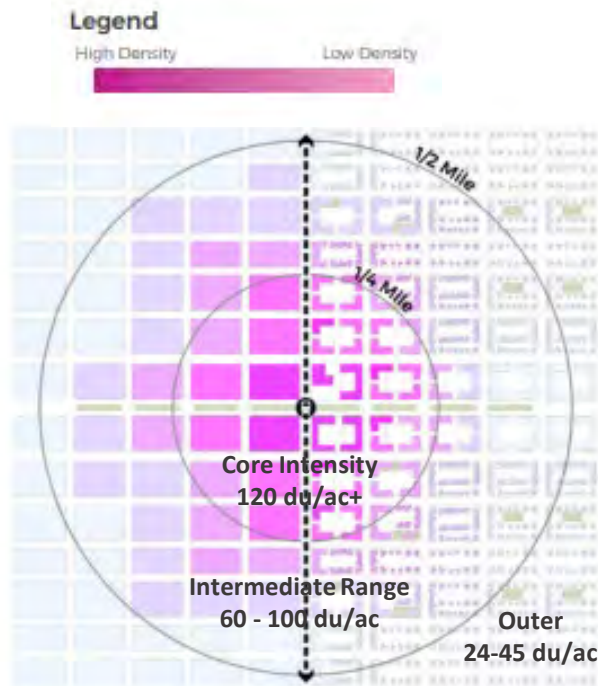
The intent of the Neighborhood Center Character Area is to identify areas that can serve the local neighborhood's needs for goods and services. These areas shall complement the character of neighborhoods and the location of the commercial areas shall reduce automobile travel, promote walkability and increased transit usage. These areas consist of a neighborhood focal point with a concentration of activities such as general retail, neighborhood commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses that are easily accessible by pedestrians. **The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 24 dwelling units per acre.**



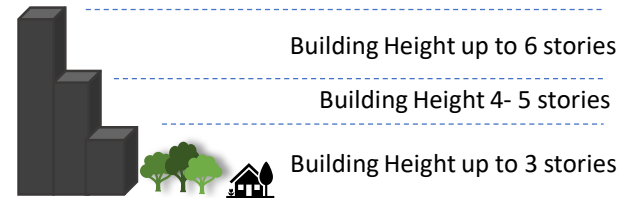
## Regional Center Guidelines



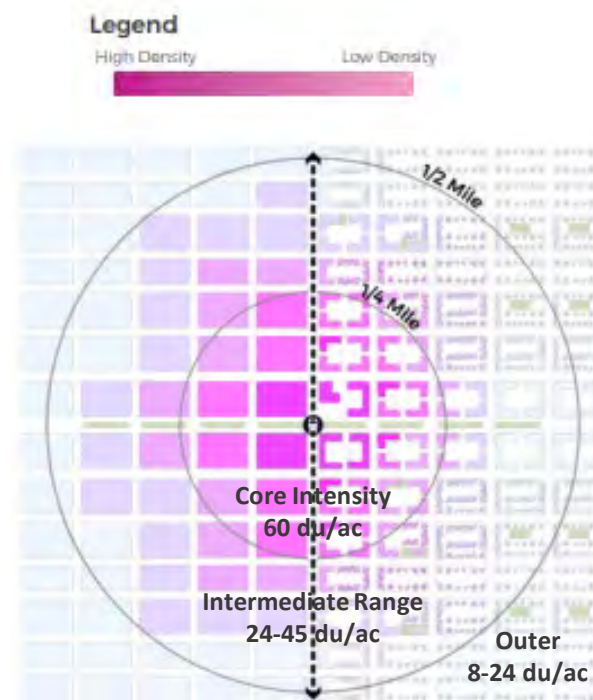
Typical Distribution of Development Density in Regional Center



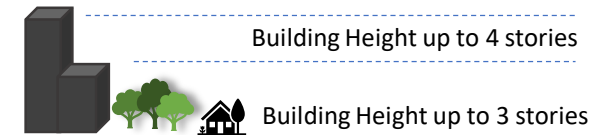
## Town Center Guidelines



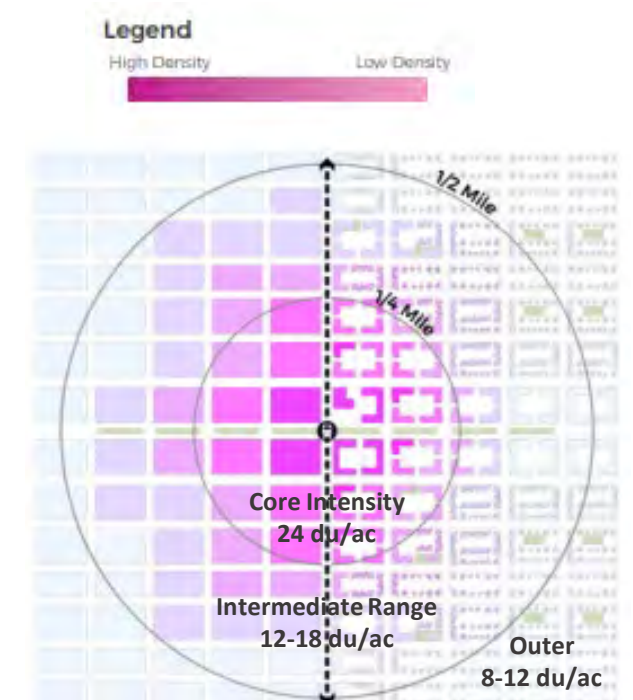
Typical Distribution of Development Density in Town Center



## Neighborhood Center Guidelines



Typical Distribution of Development Density in Neighborhood Center





# Commercial Redevelopment Corridor (CRC)

The intent of the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor Character Area is to promote the redevelopment of declining commercial corridors and to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors. These areas mostly consist of strip-style shopping centers that are in need of aesthetic or functional improvements, are in economic decline or are vacant. They are often characterized by a high degree of vehicular traffic, on site parking, moderate floor to area ratio and large tracks of land. The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 18 dwelling units per acre, with a maximum height of 3 stories.



## Institutional (INS)

The intent of the Institutional Character Area is to designate specific areas that provide institutional services. These areas consist of large areas used for religious, civic, educational and governmental purposes. Those smaller areas with similar purposes have been integrated into the rural, suburban and traditional neighborhood character areas as secondary uses and are considered residential support uses.



## Suburban (SUB)

The intent of the Suburban Character Area is to recognize those areas of the county that have developed in traditional suburban land use patterns while encouraging new development to have increased connectivity and accessibility. These areas include those developed (built out) and those under development pressures. These areas are characterized by low pedestrian orientation, limited transit access, scattered civic buildings and curvilinear street patterns. The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 8 dwelling units per acre.

Most of these areas are prevalent in South DeKalb (below Memorial Drive and I-20 area).



## Traditional Neighborhood (TN)

The intent of the Traditional Neighborhood Character Area is to preserve the style and appeal of older traditional neighborhood communities. These areas primarily consist of residential areas in older parts of the community that were typically developed prior to WWII. The characteristics include higher pedestrian orientation, sidewalks and more grid-like street patterns. They have on-street parking, small, regular lots, and buildings closer to the front property line. Many of these areas have a predominance of alleys and neighborhood-scale commercial scattered throughout. The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 12 dwelling units per acre.



## Conservation Open Space (COS)

The intent of the Conservation and Open Space Character Area is to preserve areas in the county with significant natural and ecological features, as well as environmentally sensitive recreational facilities for public enjoyment. These areas consist of un-developed natural lands, environmentally sensitive and conservation areas that are not suitable for development. It also includes land used for active recreational purposes that provide for a wide range of activities with some land designated for cultural and historic preservation.







## Industrial (IND)

The intent of the Industrial Character Area is to identify areas that are appropriate for more intense industrial and industrial related uses. The location of these uses shall be such as to protect residential and commercial areas from potential disturbances generated by industrial land uses. These areas consist of land used in higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing activities where noise, vibration and air pollution or other nuisance characteristics are not contained on-site.



## Light Industrial (LIND)

The intent of the Light Industrial Character Area is identity areas appropriate for industrial type uses. The location of these areas shall preserve the appeal and appearance of residential and commercial areas from the prospective intrusion of light industrial land uses. These areas consist of areas used in low intensity manufacturing, including wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, vibration, air pollution or other nuisance characteristics.

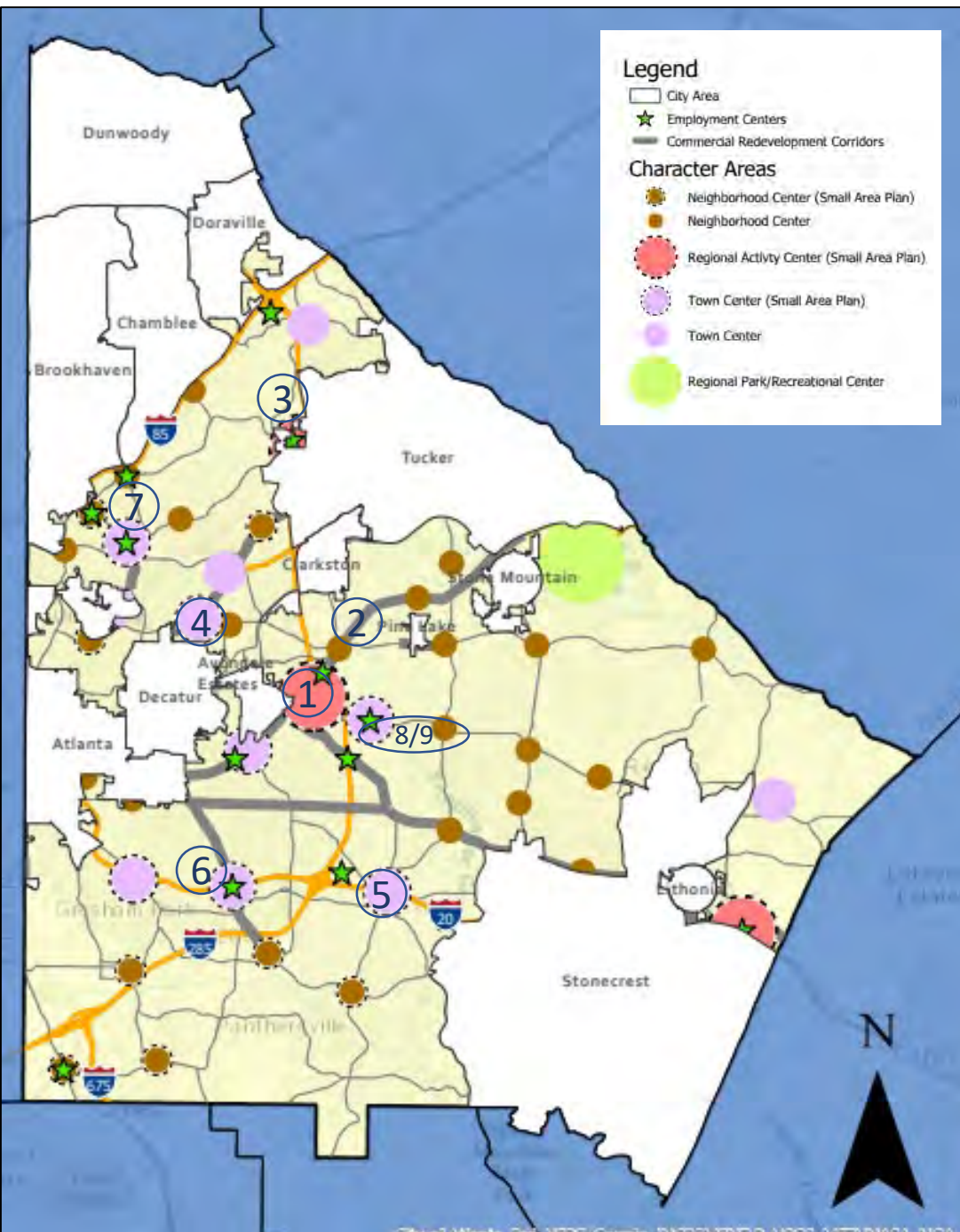


## Office Park (OP)

The intent of the Office Park Character Area is to provide areas primarily used for office purposes that also contain accessory commercial and residential uses to reduce automobile dependency. These areas consist typically of campus-style developments characterized by high vehicular traffic, and transit (if applicable), high density housing, on-site parking, low degree of open space, and moderate floor-area-ratio.



## DeKalb County Small Area Plans (SAPs)



1. Kensington Activity Center

2. Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan Corridor

3. Northlake-Tucker Activity Center

4. Medline Activity Center

5. Wesley Chapel Activity Center

6. Candler Flat Shoals Activity Center

7. North Druid Hills Activity Centers

8. MARTA I-20 East TOD Plans

9. Master Active Living Plans (MALPs)

# Implementation Planning Process and Strategies

## Planning Process Policies

1. **Public Outreach** – Actively involve the public in the planning process.
2. **Frequency of Amendments** – Reduce the number of annual changes to the land use plan and maps.
3. **Updates to the Plan** – Actively work to update the Comprehensive Plan Annually.

## Planning Strategies



**Support Neighborhoods**  
Promote the creation of and support existing community and neighborhood organizations.



**Outreach Techniques**  
Use innovative participation and marketing techniques to increase public awareness.



**Media**  
Work with the media to distribute planning materials and inform the public about planning related activities in the county.



**Public Meetings**  
Hold public meetings at various venues throughout the County, to support cases as needed.



**Frequency of Amendments**  
Revise the re-zoning and land use designation process to reduce the number of changes.



**Programs**  
Establish a DeKalb County Community Planning Participation program.



**Speaker's Bureau**  
Create a Speaker's Bureau to engage the public in the planning process.



**Staff Resources and Development**  
Provide adequate staffing, training, and equipment for the effective delivery of planning and development services.



# Implementation

## Land Use Amendment, Rezoning, Special Land Use Permit and Major Modification Process



Land Use Amendments are usually heard by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners only twice a year (usually March and September). Commissioners can introduce or allow land use amendments between cycles if warranted.

## Community Work Program (CWP)

The CWP is formally referred to as the Short-Term Work Program (STWP). According to the Department of Community Affairs, the CWP is a required element of the plan, and DeKalb County is required to update it every five years. This element of the comprehensive plan lists the specific activities DeKalb County plans to undertake during the next five years to address the priority Needs and Opportunities, and to achieve portions of the Community Goals. This includes any activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances, administrative systems (such as site plan review, design review, etc.) to be put in place to implement the plan.

The Community Work Program must include the following information for each listed activity:

- Brief description of the activity;
- Legal authorization for the activity, if applicable;
- Timeframe for initiating and completing the activity;
- Responsible party for implementing the activity;
- Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity; and
- Funding source(s), if applicable

## Report of Accomplishments Key to Terminology:

Items that are Completed have been finished within the 5- Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update.

Items that are Underway have been initiated or have had partial progress made as of the end of the 5-Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update. They have been carried over into the new 5-year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update.

Items that are Postponed are still priorities for the community, and have been carried over into the new 5-Year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update.

Items that are Cancelled / Not Accomplished will not be carried over into the new 5-Year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update. Generally, these are items that are broad policy statements or routine county operations, and they have been identified appropriately as such.