

CHAPTER THREE: LAND USE

3.0 Introduction

This section contains a review of existing conditions, analysis of land use issues, and recommendations for the future land use for the City of Auburn, looking forward to the year 2030. The heart of this section, and of the CompPlan as a whole, is the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan contains recommended land use designations for over 18,000 parcels in the Auburn city limits as of the writing of this plan as well as those areas the City may annex up to 2030.

What is the difference between land use and zoning?

Zoning is a tool used to implement plans and policies. It is a legal, enforceable part of City Code that is used to regulate the use of land and the type, scale, and intensity of use on that land.

Current land use is a description of how a parcel of land is currently being used; broad categories include residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional; land use designations can also be more specific. The **Future Land Use Plan** is *advisory* in nature and is intended to help achieve Auburn's long-range vision. The Future Land Use Plan provides parcel-level recommendations for the type, location and scale of new development for the existing city limits as well as areas the City may grow into over the next two decades. A parcel's future land use designation may be the same or may differ from what it is currently used for. If the designation is the same as its current use, then the Future Land Use Plan advocates that no change occur. If the designation is different than the current use, the Future Land Use Plan is advocating that change to the "new" use be permitted, as redevelopment, *et cetera* occurs over time.

3.1 Existing Conditions

The City of Auburn has seen tremendous growth between 1970 and 2015. The population has more than doubled from 22,767 to an estimated 62,059 and Auburn has grown geographically during that period from 19.3 square miles to 59.3 square miles. The City has created new zoning districts as a result of land use updates resulting from focus area studies recommended by this Plan (see Section 3.2.4). The CC (Commercial Conservation) district was replaced with two CRD (Corridor Redevelopment) districts, Urban and Suburban, as a result of the Renew Opelika Road Plan. The US (University Service) district was replaced with three new UN (Urban Neighborhood) districts as a result of the Downtown Master Plan. Finally, as a result of studying the South College Corridor Focus area, a new SCCD (South College Corridor District) district was created to preserve South College Street for land uses that focus on commercial development of regional scale.

Table 3.1 provides the acreage for each zoning district. The districts shown with zero acres in 2011 are new districts created after the adoption of CompPlan 2030 and the districts with zero acreage in 2016 are districts that were replaced with new districts after the adoption of CompPlan 2030. The Conservation Overlay District (COD) listed in Table 3.2 had an increase of 60.5 acres but shows a negative change in the area of the COD. This decrease in area is a result of previous mapping discrepancies, construction of new streets in COD areas that removed the right-of-way from the overlay totals, and an area of over 350 acres that was purchased by Auburn University which is no longer under the purview of the City of Auburn zoning regulations.

Zoning

Table 3.1 - Zoning					
	2011		2016*		Change
Category	Acres	% of City	Acres	% of City	Acres
CC (Commercial Conservation District)	252.4	0.8%	0	0	-252.4
CRD - S (Corridor Redevelopment District - Suburban)	0	0	294.9	0.9%	+ 294.9
CRD- U (Corridor Redevelopment District – Urban)	0	0	79.3	0.2%	+ 79.3
CDD (Comprehensive Development District)	6085.7	19.3%	5651.9	17.7%	- 433.8
DD-H (Development District – Housing)	4298.1	13.6%	4575.3	14.3%	+ 277.2
HD (Holding District)	3159.6	10.0%	3195.3	10.0%	+ 35.7
I (Industrial District)	1367.3	4.3%	1406.7	4.4%	+ 39.4
LDD (Limited Development District)	1129.3	3.6%	1190.2	3.7%	+ 60.9
NC (Neighborhood Conservation Districts – Combined)	4026.0	12.8%	3974.1	12.5%	- 51.9
R (Rural District)	10430.1	33.1%	10623.4	33.3%	+ 199.3
RDD (Redevelopment District)	457.0	1.4%	391.4	1.2%	- 65.6
SCCD (South College Corridor District)	0	0	184.8	0.6%	+ 184.8
UC (Urban Core)	56.2	0.2%	79.3	0.2%	+ 23.1
UN – E (Urban Neighborhood District - East)	0	0	85.4	0.3%	+ 65.4
UN – W (Urban Neighborhood District - West)	0	0	147.1	0.55	+ 147.1
UN - S (Urban Neighborhood District - South)	0	0	34.3	0.1%	+34.3
US (University Service District)	288.3	0.9%	0	0	-288.3
Total	31,093.0	100%	31,913.4	100%	+ 820.4
Table 3.2 - Overlay Zones					
	2011		2016*		Change
Category	Acres	% of City	Acres	% of City	Acres
CEOD (College Edge Overlay District)	14.7	0.04%	14.1	0.04%	-0.6
COD (Conservation Overlay District)	3009.0	8.92%	2668.6	8.36%	- 340.1
PDD (Planned Development District)	3838.6	11.38%	3852.4	12.07%	+ 13.8

* as of 12-31-2016

The City’s zoning is a modified performance zoning ordinance that utilizes less distinct zoning districts in favor of more general districts that require buffering between uses. One area of note is the large amount of land zoned Comprehensive Development District, which allows the broadest and most intense mix of uses of any zoning district in the City.

Land Use

Land use is a description of how land is occupied or utilized. The City of Auburn’s current land use is broken down into separate categories and illustrated in Table 3.3

Table 3.3 - Current Land Use

Category	2011		2016		2011		2016		2011		2016		2011		2016	
	Parcel Count	%	Parcel Count	%	Units	%	Units	%	Acres	%	Units	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Residential	12,422	74	14,332	79.6	26,429	98.8	30,618	98.6	12,049	34.9	13,045	37.8	13,045	37.8	13,045	37.8
Single-Unit	10,381	61.8	12,252	68.1	10,329	38.6	12,231	39.7	10,381	28.5	10,977	31.8	10,977	31.8	10,977	31.8
Duplex	875	5.2	927	5.1	1,765	6.6	1,945	6.3	272	0.8	297	0.9	297	0.9	297	0.9
Triplex	15	0.1	35	0.2	44	0.2	146	0.5	6	~	18	0.1	18	0.1	18	0.1
Quadplex	3	~	13	0.1	12	~	116	0.4	2	~	19	0.1	19	0.1	19	0.1
Apartments/Condominiums	325	1.9	270	1.5	12,149	45.4	13,858	44.6	1,296	3.8	1,220	3.5	1,220	3.5	1,220	3.5
Dormitory – Off-Campus	10	0.1	9	0.06	200	0.7	394	1.3	17	~	17	0.1	17	0.1	17	0.1
Private Dormitory			7	0.06			565	1.8			8	0.06			8	0.06
Townhouses	784	4.7	791	4.4	784	2.9	793	2.6	88	0.3	83	0.2	83	0.2	83	0.2
Group Home/Retirement Home	8	~	9	0.06	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	69	0.2	81	0.2	81	0.2	81	0.2
Mobile Homes	18	0.0	26	0.1	1,045	3.9	1,045	3.4	266	0.8	333	1.0	333	1.0	333	1.0
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	123	0.5			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Commercial	557	3.3	574	3.2	n/a	1.2	215	0.7	852	2.5	951	2.8	951	2.8	951	2.8
Mixed-Use (inc. residential)	22	0.1	20	0.1	308	1.2	215	0.7	28	0.1	15	0.1	15	0.1	15	0.1
Industrial/Manufacturing	98	0.6	108	0.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	974	2.8	1,216	3.5	1,216	3.5	1,216	3.5
Government/Social/Institutional	133	0.8	144	0.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	844	2.4	937	2.7	937	2.7	937	2.7
Transportation	32	0.2	29	0.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	226	0.7	220	0.6	220	0.6	220	0.6
Agricultural	6	~	6	~	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	832	2.4	831	2.4	831	2.4	831	2.4
Recreational/Open Space	237	1.4	267	1.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,727	5.0	2,436	7.1	2,436	7.1	2,436	7.1
Religious	43	0.3	46	0.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	159	0.5	182	0.5	182	0.5	182	0.5
University	96	0.6	71	0.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5,432	15.7	5,313	15.4	5,313	15.4	5,313	15.4
Vacant	3,163	18.8	2377	13.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11,414	33.1	9,324	27.0	11,414	33.1	9,324	27.0
Total	16,787	100	18,001	100	26,761	100	31,068	100	34,509	100	34,548	100	34,548	100	34,548	100

Notes: ~ indicates a number that is negligible. Percentages may not add to 100% in all cases.

Lands classified as “university” are owned by Auburn University. Lands classified as “recreation and open space” are protected from development, while lands classified as “vacant” may currently exist as open space, but could be developed in the future. The high percentage of vacant land suggests opportunities for infill development. See Map 3.1 for the current land use map.

Subdivision Activity

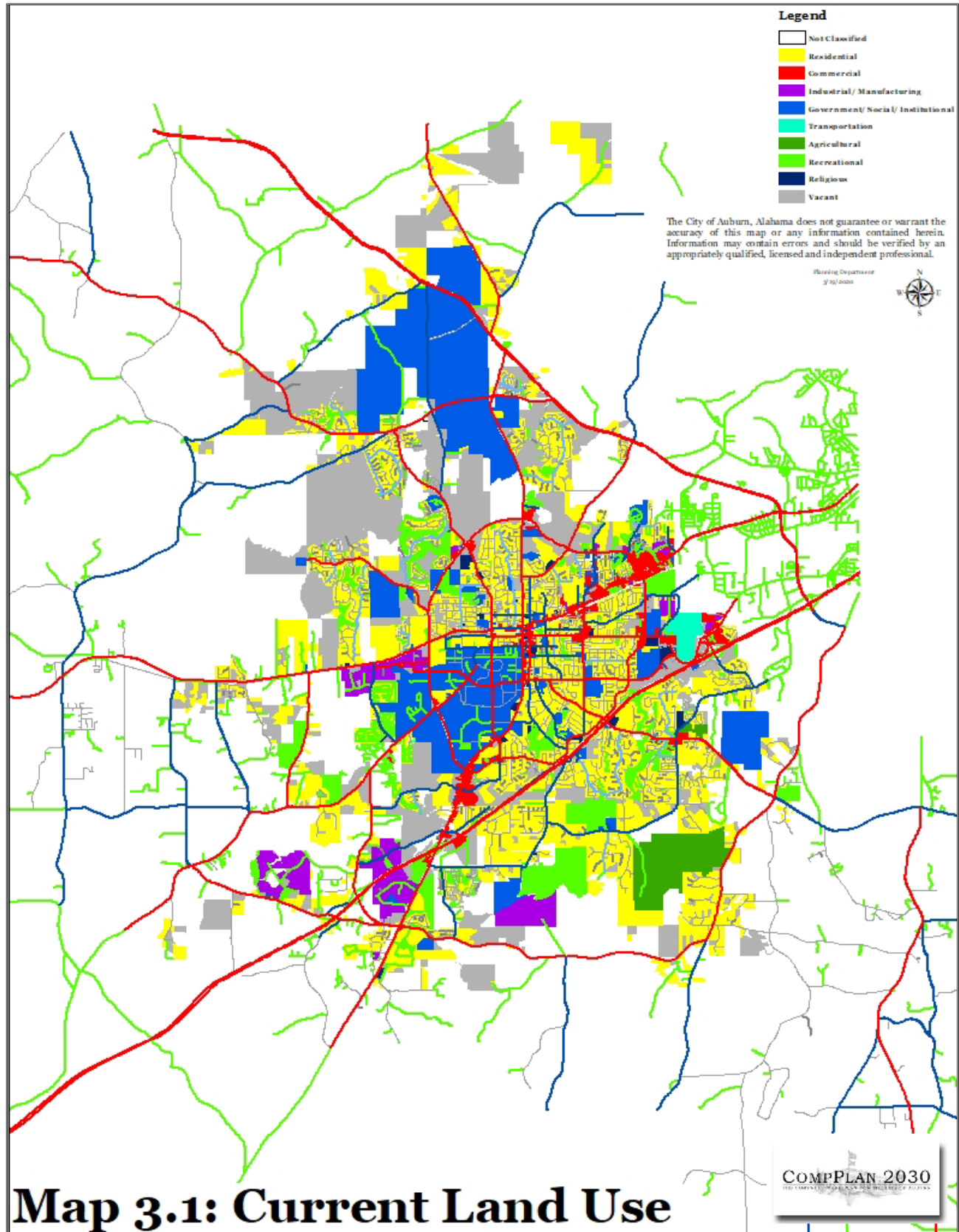
Auburn continues to see significant subdivision activity: Since January 2011, new development has added 1,547 new single-family residential lots with approximately 692 of the new lots being located in a Planned Development District (PDD). In addition, there are still many lots that were approved prior to the 2011 adoption of this plan that are still undeveloped; however, that number should start to decline as demand for single-family residential property increases.

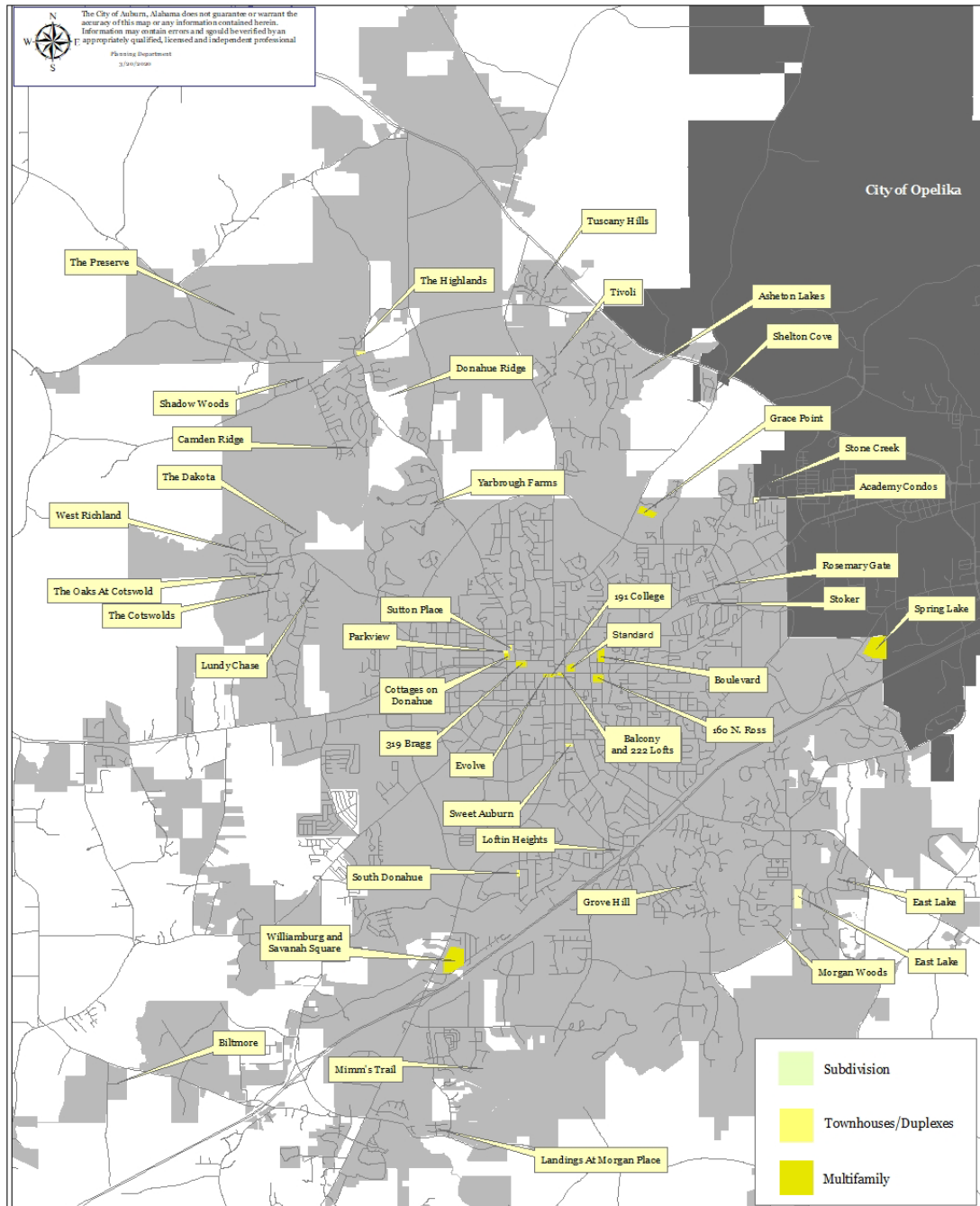
Building Permits:

Permitting activity has been strong in Auburn for the past decade. While the economic downturn affected residential building activity in 2008 and 2009, single-family permit activity rebounded in 2012 with a total of 100 more single-family permits issued than in 2007. It should be noted that apartment/condominium permits are issued per building, and not per unit.

Table 3.4 - Building Permits

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Residential	590	408	453	495	490	555	599	578	631	671
Single-Unit detached	298	226	268	271	278	359	398	410	449	465
Single-Unit attached	96	6	3	13	7	7	0	17	25	30
Duplex	18	6	5	0	0	0	1	1	7	0
Triplex/Quadplex	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apartments/Condominiums	8	7	9	1	3	3	2	1	6	5
Alterations/Additions/etc.	169	161	167	210	202	188	198	149	144	171
Commercial/Industrial/Other	102	77	76	76	83	92	74	87	80	81
Buildings	30	20	17	5	11	17	18	14	19	10
Alterations/Additions/etc.	72	57	59	71	72	75	56	73	61	71
Other Structures and Roofing	124	140	143	270	239	300	159	304	202	279
Total Permits Issued	816	625	672	841	812	947	832	969	913	1031
Note: All years are calendar.										





Subdivision	Lots	Subdivision	Lots	Multifamily	Units	Multifamily	Units	Townhouses/Duplexes	Lots
Asheton Lakes	52	Preserve	5	319 Bragg	86	Academy Condos	12	Sutton Place	9
Biltmore	5	Rosemary Gate	26	Spring Lake	270	Balcony	11	Highlands	6
Camden Ridge	28	Shadowwood Estates	27	Grace Point	84	222 Lofts	12	South Donahue	11
Cotswolds	162	Shelton Cove	46	Boulevard	48	160 N Ross	182	East Lake	12
Donahue Ridge	104	Stoker	22	Williamburg	6	Evolve	126	Parkview	8
East Lake	68	Stone Creek	5	Cottages on Donahue	10	Standard	219	Sweet Auburn	10
Grove Hill	41	The Dakota	14	Savannah Square	41	191 College	127		
Highlands	50	Tivoli	117						
Loftin Heights	11	Tuscany Hills	31						
Lundy Chase	97	West Richland	104						
Mimms Trail	154	Yarbrough Farms	334						
Morgan Woods	30								
Parkersons Mill	67								
		Total Single Family Lots	1533						
						Total Multifamily Units	545	Total Townhouse Lots	56

(All subdivisions received approval from Planning Commission or were in developmental phases between May 2011 and April 2017)

Map 3.2: Residential Developments in the City of Auburn

3.2 Future Land Use Plan

3.2.1 Principles

The development of the Future Land Use Plan was an iterative process that incorporated community input, advanced modeling, and the best practices of planning. The principles that follow were developed from community input as well as the best practices of planning. They helped shape the Future Land Use Plan map itself as well as the recommendations that follow. This 2017 update is based on the same advanced modeling, the Auburn Interactive Growth Model, and continued best practices of planning.

Promote infill development and redevelopment and reduce sprawl.

One thing that became clear as analysis was completed on the City's pattern of current land use was that many opportunities exist for developing close-in areas and redeveloping areas that are in decline. This can help to reverse the City's pattern of sprawl and encourage investment in areas that are already well-served by City services. In December 2011, the City made changes to the Article VII of Zoning Ordinance that regulated nonconformities to help with infill development and redevelopment.

Provide an expanded urban core.

Downtown Auburn is the heart of the City, and is well-loved by both residents and visitors. The growth of Auburn's population, though, has out-paced the growth of downtown, so opportunities exist to expand downtown to meet the needs of Auburn's growing population. In 2015, the City adopted a Downtown Master Plan that expanded the Urban Core an additional 23 acres to the south along College and Gay Streets. In addition the plan created three urban neighborhoods areas with a focus on more urban design characteristics.

Provide options for developing new mixed-use centers.

Auburn's existing mixed-use centers, such as downtown and the area centered on the intersection of Moore's Mill and Ogletree Roads, are some of Auburn's best-liked neighborhoods, offering daily needs in close proximity to residences and a visitor experience that is not centered on the automobile. Opportunities exist to provide new mixed-use centers (hereafter referred to as *nodes*) throughout the City. More information on nodes, including a full listing of their benefits, is in Nodes, Section 3.3.

Encourage a development pattern that promotes transportation choices.

The dominant form of transportation of Auburn is and in the future will remain the automobile. Auburn's road network, however, will face increasing strain in terms of providing an adequate level-of-service to get those automobiles from place to place. Opportunities exist to reduce the strain on the road network by providing for alternate forms of transportation, including walking, biking, and bus service. Encouraging infill development and mixed-use centers are two ways to develop that are supportive of these alternate forms of transportation.

Limit multi-family development to infill and mixed-use areas.

Auburn has seen a significant amount of multi-family construction in the last several years, with 3,007 multi-family units approved between 2007 and 2011 with an additional 3,144 since 2011. However, there has also been some demolition of older, obsolete multi-units, such as the Hyatt House and Castilian Condominiums, which will be replaced by commercial uses, the Center Court Apartments, which are being redeveloped as a mixed-used development, and the Carolyn Apartments which will be used as a surface parking lot. As the demographics of the City shift to include a smaller proportion

of students, the need for additional multi-family units will decline. Placing new multi-family units in infill and mixed-use areas will help encourage development of those areas and lessen the strain on the City's road network. As part of the zoning changes associated with the 2015 adoption of the Downtown Master Plan, the City created a new housing type, Private Dormitory, which is only permitted in the Urban Neighborhood areas to help promote student housing within walking distance to Auburn University. In addition, the city through zoning changes, has identified additional areas where mixed use is to be required on the first floor in portions of the Urban Core and Urban Neighborhood areas.

3.2.2 Auburn Interactive Growth Model

The Future Land Use Plan was developed with the assistance of the Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM). The AIGM is a rule-based (zoning) and analytical tool for predicting the total population and population distribution of Auburn over time. The model helps the City predict the location of future growth based on a variety of factors. Other components of the model assist in predicting optimal future locations for schools, parks, commercial centers, and fire stations.

The AIGM consists of a number of separate but linked models, including demographic, economic, socio-political, spatial relationship, and land resource models. The AIGM is a very complex model applied to a very complex environment, but it provides the City of Auburn with a valuable tool in predicting where future population growth will occur. AIGM modeling serves as the foundation of the Future Land Use Plan.

The AIGM allows City staff to test what impact changes to land uses, zoning, or other factors will have on our future growth. As part of the development of the future land use plan, three scenarios were examined:

- 2009 baseline scenario
- Optimal boundary scenario
- Concept plan scenario

2009 Baseline Scenario

Briefly, the 2009 baseline scenario:

- Used the 2009 city limits and zoning
- Assumes area outside city develops at 1 unit per acre
- Updated annually

The baseline scenario tells us where growth and development is projected to occur by 2030 based on existing city limits and zoning and the model's internal features. This scenario is what will occur if Auburn's existing zoning and city limits do not change between now and 2030.

2009 Baseline Scenario



Optimal Boundary Scenario

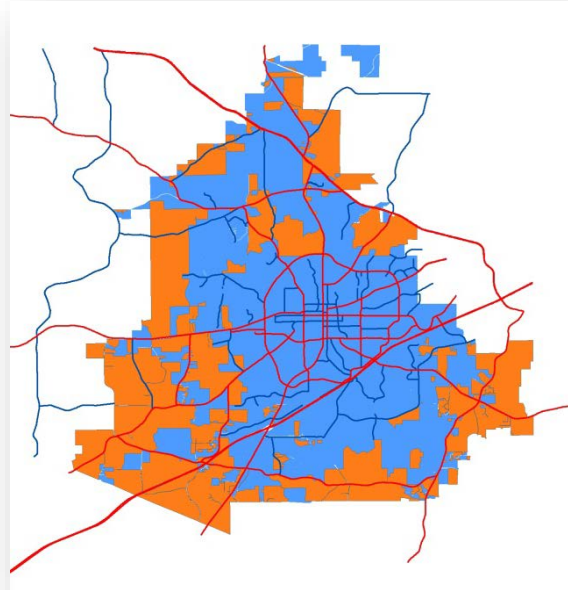
Briefly:

- Uses 2009 zoning inside city limits (blue)
- Assumes optimal boundary (orange) will develop at 1 unit per 3 acres
- Optimal boundary will be part of City by 2030

The AIGM allocates population in the study area based on the existing corporate boundary of the City. Since it is understood that the City's corporate boundary will continue to grow over time, it was necessary to attempt to project where it might be most desirable for the City to grow geographically over the next twenty years. Developing the optimal 2030 corporate boundary was the first step in developing the land use plan.

The boundary was developed using a GIS model developed at the City of Auburn. For more information on the model, see Appendix C. The resulting boundary, an area of approximately 37 square miles, consists of those areas that are most logical to be part of the City in 2030 based on the priorities of the CompPlan. The Future Land Use Plan provides recommendations for this area as well as the existing City limits.

Optimal Boundary Scenario



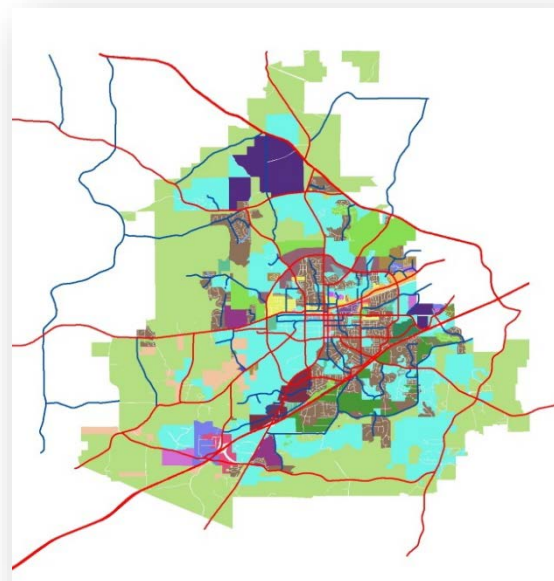
Concept Plan Scenario

Briefly:

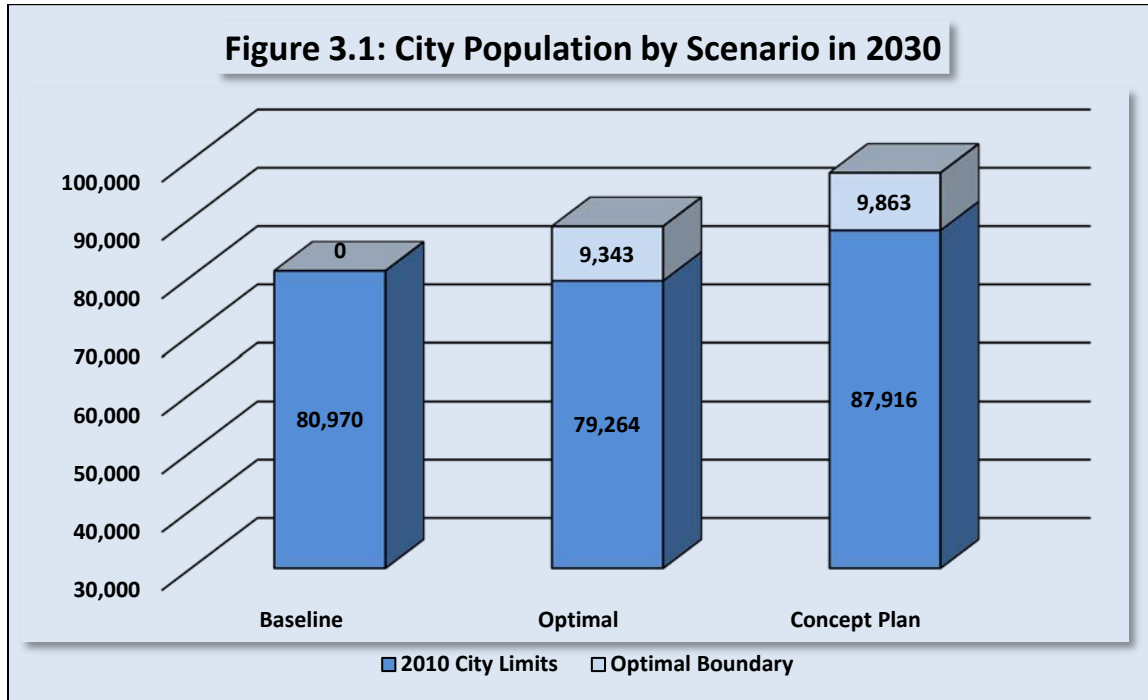
- Tested effect of focusing development within the existing city limits
- Future Land Use Plan was developed from this scenario

Once an optimal boundary was established, a final scenario was run. The concept plan scenario tested changes to Auburn's current growth pattern, and began with the optimal boundary scenario as its basis. The concept plan scenario focused on infill development and transition of close-in rural land to denser residential uses. The scenario identified areas of change, no change, transition, and redevelopment. The resulting scenario showed increased density in and around the urban core as well as in areas currently zoned rural that will transition to denser uses under the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is derived directly from the concept plan scenario, with limited changes.

Concept Plan Scenario



Infill Focus



The chart above shows Auburn’s projected population in the year 2030 by scenario. As noted above, one of the defining factors used in developing the concept plan scenario was a focus on infill development. This focus is apparent when comparing where the City’s future population is projected to live. Under the concept plan, 87,916 people are projected to live in the approximately 56 square miles that makeup the existing City limits. Only 9,863 are projected to live in the 37 additional square miles of the optimal boundary. This focus on infill development will help limit sprawl and ensure the City is able to effectively and efficiently deliver services in the future.

3.2.3 Future Land Use Plan Categories

Each parcel on the Future Land Use Map has a designation. The following list describes each category in detail. Some areas are also covered in additional detail in the focus areas section immediately following this section. When a category specifies a desirable percentage of uses, that percentage is intended to be maintained across all parcels in the category, not any individual parcels.

Category List

- Conservation/Cluster Residential
 - Conservation subdivisions are encouraged, with a five (5) acre minimum size for conservation subdivisions. Conservation subdivisions may develop at two (2) dwelling units per acre; all other development may develop at one (1) dwelling unit per acre.
- Corridor Protection Zone (overlay)
 - Maintain the long-term development potential of the corridor by focusing on access management and cross-connectivity. Most uses should be conditional, and a 300-foot buffer should be implemented for residential uses along the corridor.

- Corridor Redevelopment
 - Redevelopment is encouraged, with incentives for redevelopment, reduced setbacks, shared parking, and possible City investments in infrastructure. The average breakdown of uses should be 85% commercial, 5% office, and 10% residential (12 du/ac).
- Corridor Redevelopment (Preservation)
 - Redevelopment is encouraged, but reuse and protection of existing historic structures is a priority. The average breakdown of uses should be 85% commercial, 5% office, and 10% residential (12 du/ac).
- Gateway Commercial
 - Broad mix of uses (see CDD zone) along existing corridors with emphasis on access management, corridor overlay requirements and quality aesthetics. Multi-family uses are conditional.
- Gateway Corridor Commercial
 - Broad mix of uses (see SCCD zone) along existing corridors with emphasis on access management, corridor overlay requirements and quality aesthetics. The primary land use focus is on commercial uses geared toward local, regional, and interstate markets. Residential, outdoor recreational and most institutional uses are not permitted.
- High-Density Residential
 - Maximum density of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include all residential uses except manufactured homes.
- High-Density Residential (Redevelopment)
 - Maximum density of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include all residential uses except manufactured homes. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Industrial
 - Existing industrial uses. Future industrial uses will be accommodated through future industrial parks, with locations to be determined.
- Institutional
 - Institutional uses include schools, churches, and government buildings.
- Interstate Commercial
 - Uses to serve the traveling public, such as hospitality uses, restaurants, and gas stations.
- Light Industrial
 - Intended to accommodate commercial support and light industrial uses, such as wholesale warehouses and services such as exterminators, plumbers, et cetera.
- Limited Residential
 - A density of no more than one (1) dwelling unit per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached houses and limited, special residential uses (accessory dwelling units and B & Bs), institutional uses (schools, churches, cemetery, and day care homes) and public service uses (communications tower and public utility station or facility). Intended for areas in the rural periphery that are transitioning to a sub-urban residential character.
- Low-Density Residential
 - Average density of four (4) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached and duplex.

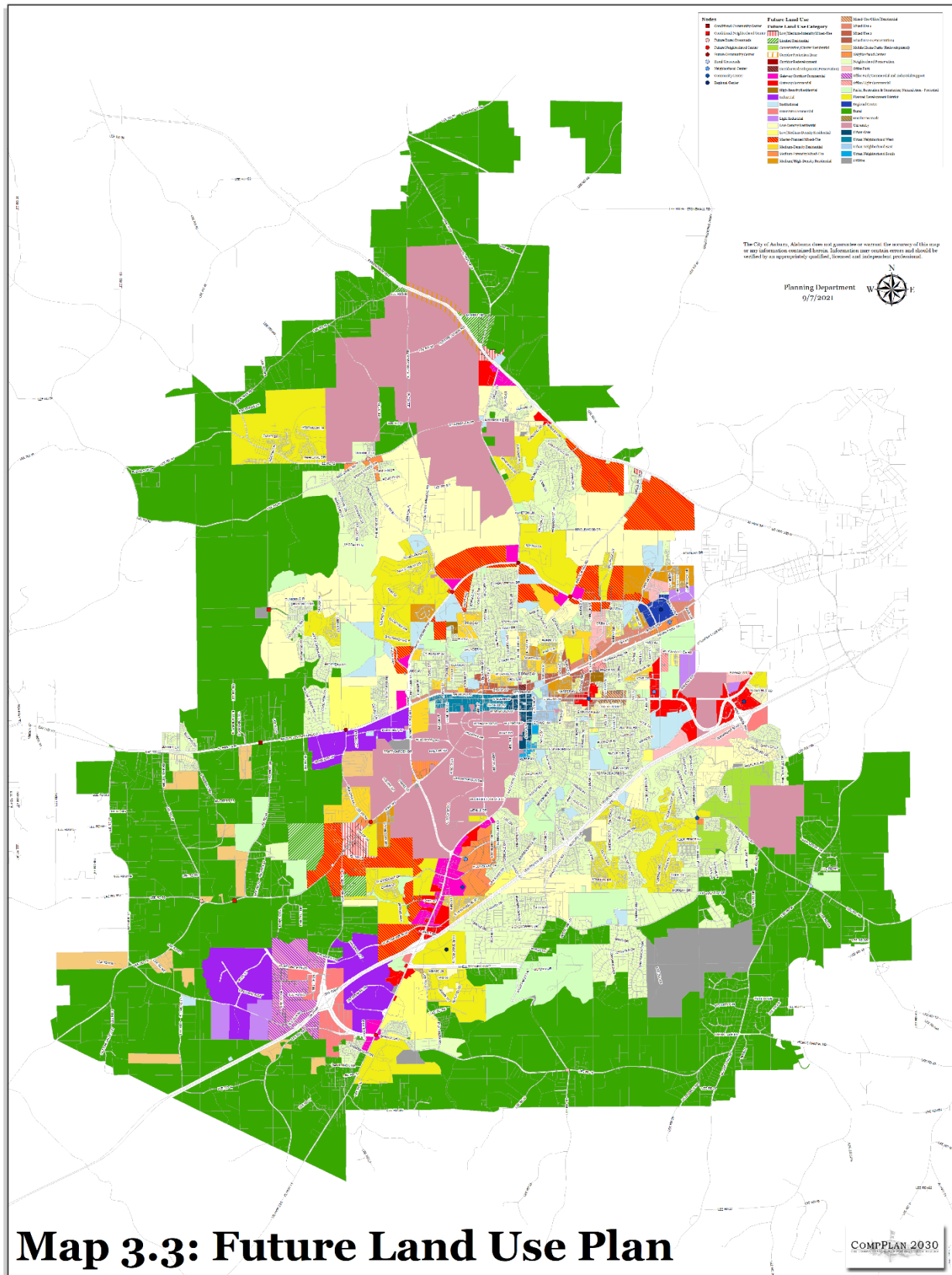
- Low-Density Residential (Redevelopment)
 - Average density of four (4) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached and duplex. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Low/Medium-Density Residential
 - Average density of six (6) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development.
- Low/Medium-Density Residential (Redevelopment)
 - Average density of six (6) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Low/Medium-Intensity Mixed-Use
 - Provides a transition between rural/low-density areas and developed areas on the city's periphery by introducing limited commercial uses in a mixed-use setting. Permitted uses would include low and medium density residential, office, and neighborhood commercial uses. Indoor and most commercial recreational, agricultural support, and limited road service uses are also permitted. Average residential density is six (6) dwelling units per acre. Prohibited uses include: conventional subdivisions, farm product processing, auto dealerships, flea markets, race tracks, stadiums, and building material sales.
- Master-Planned Mixed-Use
 - This use category provides for a collaboration of developer, municipality and public when larger tracts of land are proposed for development. Master-planned mixed use developments can include a broad mix of uses which are contextually appropriate and specific to its surrounding area. Development must provide an internal network of streets and incentives are offered for implementing nodal principles.
- Medium-Density Residential
 - Average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development.
- Medium-Density Residential (Redevelopment)
 - Average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Medium-Intensity Mixed-Use
 - Permitted uses include low and medium density residential, office, and neighborhood commercial.
- Medium/High-Density Residential
 - Average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre for medium-density (75% of area) and sixteen (16) du/ac for high-density (25% of area). Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, apartments, and traditional neighborhood development.

- Medium/High-Density Residential (Redevelopment)
 - Encourage redevelopment with similar mix of uses and densities. Average densities of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre for multi-family (50% of overall area), 7.5 du/ac for duplexes (40% of overall area), and 3.5 du/ac for single-family (10 % of overall area).
- Mixed Use 1
 - This category represents the area located along the Opelika Road beginning at Old Stage Road extending easterly (excluding the intersection of East University Drive and the shopping mall) to the city limits and Martin Luther King (MLK) Drive starting west of the Moton Apartments and continuing to the intersection with Richland Road. This designation may include retail, commercial, residential and office uses. Setbacks are intended to be larger and lot coverage to be smaller than the centers. Connectivity between parking lots is encouraged, along with shared parking. A mixture of uses is expected to be more horizontal than vertical. Due to the high quantity of commercial uses, residential uses are conditional except for single family detached which is not permitted.
- Mixed Use 2
 - This category is intended to provide a more urban character to areas near the Urban Core, particularly along major transportation corridors such as Bragg Avenue, Opelika Road and East Glenn Avenue between downtown and Dean Road. The Mixed Use 2 category provides a transition from the downtown to more suburban character areas. Uses are focused on retail and adaptive reuse of existing structures, where possible. Residential uses are permitted in integration with retail uses, albeit at a lower intensity than in the Neighborhood Centers. Mixed uses are permitted both horizontally and vertically, with vertical mixtures to be more appropriate closer to downtown.
- Mixed Use 2 (Preservation)
 - Redevelopment is encouraged, but reuse and protection of existing historic structures is a priority. The average breakdown of uses should be 85% commercial, 5% office, and 10% residential (10 du/ac).
- Mixed-Use Office/Residential
 - Allows office and residential uses as horizontal or vertical mixed-uses. Live-work units are encouraged. The average residential density is eight (8) dwelling units per acre, with an average breakdown of uses at 75% office/25% residential.
- Mobile Home Parks
 - Existing mobile home parks
- Natural Area – Protected
 - Protected natural areas that are not developable.
- Neighborhood Center
 - Permitted uses include neighborhood-serving commercial uses as well as residential uses. The Neighborhood Center designation allows both horizontal and/or vertical mixed-uses. Many uses are permitted within this area, the focus being high density residential, retail and entertainment uses; the main exceptions are single-family detached housing, heavy industrial, commercial support and storage facilities. Should be developed in accordance with neighborhood nodal guidelines.

- Neighborhood Preservation
 - Designation for stable existing neighborhoods. Existing density and housing types should be retained.
- Office Park
 - Uses in a campus setting. Average breakdown of use is 85% office, 15% commercial.
- Office Park/Commercial and Industrial Support:
 - This category envisions the transition of these parcels to either office park or commercial and industrial support uses. Prior to development or redevelopment, some of these properties may need to undergo lot consolidation to create lots that are an appropriate development size for the intensity proposed.
- Office/Light Commercial
 - Average breakdown of uses is 85% office, 15% commercial. Allows service-oriented commercial uses.
- Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries
 - Existing parks & recreation facilities and cemeteries.
- Planned Development District
 - Existing areas zoned PDD, Planned Development District. For more information on the uses permitted in a specific PDD, please contact the Planning Department.
- Regional Center
 - This area is intended to focus on entertainment and retail uses, but may be supported by office and residential uses. Any residential component, however, shall be limited to no more than 50% of the allowable dwelling units per acre. The Regional Center provides goods and services citywide and regionally with a diverse mixture of land uses at higher permitted densities. Roadways within this area are more automobile-focused, and larger front setbacks (20' min.), rear setbacks (20' min.) are plausible in comparison to the Neighborhood Center category. Building heights should be no more than three stories. Many uses are permitted within this classification, the focus of which is retail, commercial and office uses that serve the community at-large; the main exceptions are single-family detached housing, heavy industrial, commercial support uses and storage facilities.
- Rural
 - Allows single-family detached residential at a density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) acres, as well as agricultural and other uses as permitted in the Rural zoning district.
- Rural Crossroads
 - Allows low-intensity service commercial uses, such as gas stations and feed stores
- University
 - Property owned by Auburn University
- Urban Core
 - The Urban Core is intended to serve as the retail, financial, service, historical, and religious focal point of Auburn. High-density residential uses and commercial as vertical mixed-uses are permitted. Private Dormitories are not permitted in the Urban Core. The average floor area ratio should be 5.0 but may be as high as 8.5.

- Urban Neighborhood – East
 - The UN-E represents a diverse mixture of uses, where commercial, residential, and institutional uses coexist. Residential densities are allowed up to 85 bedrooms per acre. The maximum height of new development will be limited to 45 feet, except where properties are adjacent to Neighborhood Conservation districts and limited to 35 feet.
- Urban Neighborhood – West
 - The neighborhood west of the Urban Core is envisioned to serve the needs of the University, while improving the pedestrian environment. The primary purpose for this area is to support the University's student housing needs by the development of new student housing on undeveloped land and the redevelopment of older, lower-quality student housing. Commercial uses should be limited to primary corridors in close proximity to campus and be typically oriented toward the needs of the student residents of the area. Residential densities allowances are the highest in the city at 255 bedrooms per acre. The maximum height of new development is allowed to be up to 75 feet east of North Donahue and 50 feet west of North Donahue.
- Urban Neighborhood – South
 - New development should be encouraged to replace noncontributing or dilapidated structures and should be sensitive to the existing built environment. Expansion of neighborhood commercial uses should be encouraged with a form that enhances the pedestrian experience. Residential densities are allowed up to 85 bedrooms per acre. The maximum height of new development will be limited to 45 feet, except where properties are adjacent to Neighborhood Conservation districts and limited to 35 feet.
- Utilities
 - Utilities include water, sewer, power, and telecommunications providers.





3.2.4 Focus Areas

Completed Focus Area Studies

As part of the original CompPlan 2030, there were areas identified that should be evaluated more in-depth with regard to current and future land use designation. The following focus areas have been reviewed and changes to land use and zoning have taken place or is recommended since the 2011 adoption of CompPlan 2030.

Conservation/Cluster Residential (South of I-85): Recommend changes as follows:

- The land use for the area north of Hamilton Road east of the Moores Mill Master Development area change to Low Density Residential.
- The land use for the area west of the Moores Mill Master Development and Grove Hill areas and south of I-85 to Low Density Residential.
- The land use along the north and west side of Ogletree Road across from Eastlake Subdivision to the Lake Wilmore property change to Neighborhood Preservation.
- The land use along Wrights Mill Road between I-85 and Ogletree Road change to Low Density Residential.
- The land use west of Ogletree Road and north of Shell Toomer Parkway change to Neighborhood Preservation.
- The land use south of Hamilton Road and north of Moores Mill Road west of the Auburn University property change to Conservation/Cluster Residential.

Corridor Redevelopment: Result – The Renew Opelika Road Plan was completed in 2014 which resulted in land use and zoning changes for the eastern portion of the Corridor Redevelopment Focus Area. The western portion of the Corridor Redevelopment area, Martin Luther King/Bragg Avenue, was included in a broad neighborhood plan, The Northwest Auburn Plan that kicked off in August 2016 and was adopted by the Planning Commission in February 2018 and by the City Council in March 2018. Land use, zoning, and a comprehensive infrastructure and general services plan has been completed.

East Samford Avenue Focus Area: Result – New High School Property.

Indian Hills Focus Area: Result – Medium to high density residential has been allowed in this area as a result of the Spring Lake Master Planned Development changing the focus of the future land use from commercial land use to a mixed-use area with the Indian Hills Subdivision itself remaining “low density residential.”

South College Focus Area: Result – South College Corridor District (SCCD) zoning changes removed most non-retail uses from being allowed in the district.

Urban Core – Urban Core 2 – Urban Core 3: Result – Downtown Master Plan, land use and zoning changes, which included the expansion of the urban core and a focus on creating a more urban form of development in the surrounding “urban neighborhoods.”

Harper Avenue Focus Area: Result – The Harper Avenue Focus Area study was completed in 2019 and resulted in land use and zoning changes. The land use changes included extending the Medium/High Density Residential land use category east to Summer Hill Road and south to

Harper Avenue between the east side of Cook Street east to Summer Hill Road. The change excluded properties which are non-residential or front on East Glenn Avenue. Properties on the west side of Cook Street, along East Glenn Avenue, along the south side of Harper Avenue and three parcels at the eastern end on the north side of Harper Avenue, and properties along both sides of Old Stage Road, and the east side of Summer Hill Road north of Bryant Circle were changed to Mixed Use 2 to allow greater opportunities for commercial and residential uses. The remaining properties east of Summer Hill Road along Florence and Village Drives will remain in the Low/Medium Density Residential Land Use category.

Glenn/Dean Focus Area: Result – The Glenn/Dean Focus Area study was completed in 2019 and resulted in land use and zoning changes. The land use changes included changing; 1) the Corridor Redevelopment land use areas along the west side of North Dean Road north of East Glenn Avenue and the north side of East Glenn Avenue from Charleston Place to the Walgreens Pharmacy property was changed to Mixed Use 2 to encourage a transition from residential to mixed use, 2) the portion of the multiple unit residential property at the northeast corner of Annalue Drive and North Dean Road to High Density Residential to align with the current land use. The zoning for the area where the land use was updated, with the exception of the apartments, was also changed to allow and encourage mixed use development with a focus on walkable, neighborhood scale uses.

Recommended changes to the land use south of East Glenn Avenue were to extend the Mixed Use 2 along the properties which front on the east side of Dean Road from McKinley Avenue north to include the block of properties on the southeast corner of the Glenn/Dean interchange bounded by Short Street on the east. Recommended changes to parcels located south of McKinley that front South Dean Road on the west side and parcels between South Dean and Maple Street on the east side were changed from Neighborhood Preservation to Low and Low/Medium Density to encourage redevelopment and more diverse housing styles. Changes in zoning were also adopted to encourage more diverse housing styles beyond the current permitted single-family dwellings.

Cox and Wire Road Corridors Focus Area: Result – The Cox and Wire Road Corridors Focus Area study was completed in 2020. This was the first in depth study of an area where a majority of the parcels were unincorporated. The Cox and Wire Road area contains several mobile home parks with a total number of mobile homes greater than 1,500, compared to approximately 250 other types of residential dwellings. The recommendation for future land use changes were focused primarily on parcels which were mobile home parks, or located along Wire Road, particularly parcels with non-residential uses. Also due to the many large parcels in this study area, the staff amended the practice of only placing one Future Land Use category on a parcel by recommending Master-Planned Mixed-Use and the Limited Residential categories on parcels adjacent to the intersection of Cox and Wire Roads.

The outcome of the study resulted in: the creation of two new future land use categories; Limited Residential and Low/Medium Intensity Mixed-Use, and amending the definition of the Master-Planned Mixed-Use future land use category. The Future Land Use Map changes included replacing the Mobile Home Parks (Redevelopment) category on properties along Webster Road with the Medium Density Residential category to allow for more diverse housing types at similar unit densities to the current mobile home parks. The other properties with a future land use

designation of Mobile Home Parks (Redevelopment) along Wire and Cox Roads were changed to either Low/Medium Intensity Mixed-Use or Master-Planned Mixed-Use. The areas at the intersection of Cox and Wire Roads, including the previous mentioned mobile home parks, were changed from Rural to Master-Planned Mixed-Use. There was a change to approximately 30 acres on the west side of Cox Road (south of Longleaf Drive) from Rural to Low Density Residential and a Neighborhood Center node was placed at the Cox/Longleaf intersection. The Limited Residential future land use designation was recommended to be placed on the western portion of the Conway Acres mobile home park, the southern portions of the Swann and Dawson family properties on Cox Road, and the properties with access to Sunset Drive.

U.S. Highway 280 Focus Area Study: Result – The U.S. Highway 280 Focus Area Study was completed in Spring of 2021 after delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and focusing staff resources toward Short-Term Rental regulations and revisions to the Downtown Design Standards. This study focused on reviewing development potential for the area in accordance with existing and proposed infrastructure as the majority of the property in the study area is undeveloped and outside of the city limits. Staff identified several clusters of property along the southern portion of U.S. 280 in the Shelton Mill Road area and a potential commercial node at the U.S. 280 & North College Street intersection that may be ripe for development/redevelopment. Other recommended changes focus on cleaning up inconsistencies with the Future Land Use plan and existing uses such as university property that has been newly acquired, institutional uses like churches and cemeteries, and applying the Limited Residential designation on existing single-family lots that are non-conforming to the Rural designation.

The previous recommendations and results for the above-mentioned areas can be found in Appendix K.

Future Focus Study Areas

Mobile Home Parks

Mobile home parks within the City of Auburn have continued to decline in recent years. Those that have been in reasonable proximity to the Auburn University campus have been targeted for redevelopment opportunities by the private sector for multi-family housing designed for the student population. The mobile home parks have been attractive for acquisition because they are generally of substantive size and, equally important, are generally under unified ownership. Existing mobile home parks are largely on the City's periphery and located in Lee County, but within the optimal boundary identified for Auburn as part of this plan. The largest assembly of mobile home parks, specifically, exists in the southwest quadrant of Auburn's growth area, along the Cox Road and Webster Road corridors. These corridors will become of increasing strategic importance now that the City's newest interstate interchange (Exit 50) located in the vicinity of I-85 and Beehive/Cox Roads has been completed.

Recommendation

Evaluate future land use classifications along the aforementioned corridors in light of the new interchange initiative. Acknowledge the importance of Webster Road as the primary access way to the Auburn Industrial Park from the south. Consider targeting strategic parcels for annexation and potential redevelopment as a means to better control access and curb cuts along the Cox, Beehive and Webster Road corridors.

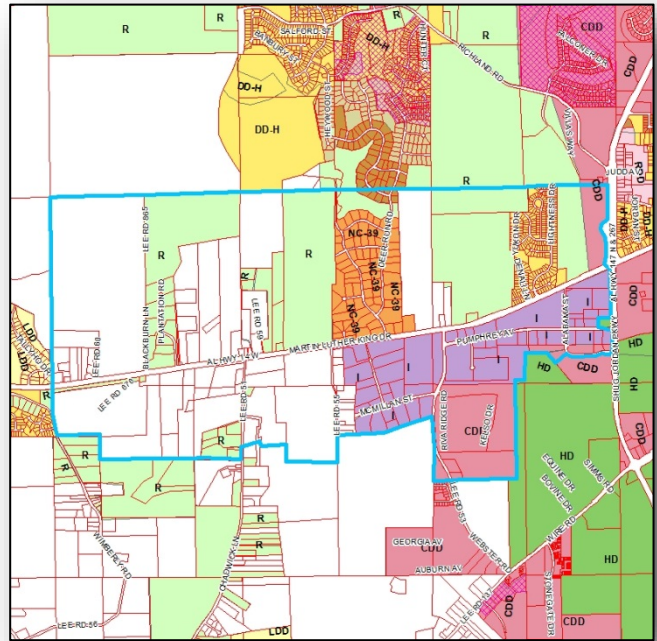
Highway 14 Focus Area

The Highway 14 focus area comprises approximately 2,450 acres of land along both sides of Highway 14. The study area commences immediately west of Shug Jordan Parkway and extends westward to Wimberly Road and is adjacent to, but does not include, Woodland Park Subdivision, Phase I. The area is predominantly rural in nature and includes two sizable residential subdivisions. Willow Creek subdivision is a large lot, low-density residential subdivision that is rural in character. Solamere subdivision is a higher-density, smaller-lot subdivision that is more suburban in character, and it is located on the “city” end of the focus area. Both subdivisions precede the adoption of *CompPlan 2030* in October 2011.

The study area is quite large due to it containing very large, deep rural tracts of land on the north side of the corridor. Properties on the north side of the Corridor (with the exception of the two aforementioned residential subdivisions) are either zoned Rural or are in unincorporated Lee County. The CSX railroad serves as a hard boundary and runs along the south side Highway 14. As such, challenges to development are greater, as railroad crossings are limited, and the current development pattern on this side of the Corridor reflects that impediment.

The Auburn Industrial Park comprises the eastern half of the study area on the south side of the corridor, but largely has an inward orientation, meaning it is largely screened from Highway 14 and most of its traffic is oriented toward Shug Jordan Parkway and southward toward I-85.

It should be expected that there will be continued future residential development demand along Highway 14, particularly on the north side of the Corridor between Willow Creek and Solamere. Development pressures will likely be enhanced by the knowledge of new Auburn City School facilities (new elementary and high school) proposed to be located immediately north of the Corridor north along Richland Road.



Recommendation

Analyze and evaluate current future land use designations along the north side of the Corridor, in particular. An assessment of the land located at the northwest corner of the Shug Jordan Parkway/Highway 14 intersection for future commercial/mixed-use purposes use should be performed and future land use map amendments considered. Maintaining the rural character of the study area west of Willow Creek is recommended.

3.3 Nodes¹

3.3.1 What is a node?

Nodes are physically and aesthetically unified, concentrated mixed-use areas containing commercial, office, institutional, high- and medium-density residential uses, and parks and open spaces, arranged in a walkable, compact, pedestrian- and transit-friendly manner. All elements and land uses are designed to function as an integrated whole (rather than as a series of unconnected, unrelated developments). They are focal points for the surrounding neighborhood and community, and should have a strong sense of identity.²

Nodes can be magnets for activity and development that affect urban form, environmental quality and the transportation network in a positive way. Nodes can provide focus for the community and convenient access to employment, goods and services. Nodes promote the efficient use of land and public services such as water, sanitation, fire and police protection, recreation and open space, and transportation.

The three mixed-use node types (neighborhood, community, and regional) are intended to accommodate a significant amount of the City's projected commercial demand in the year 2030. This is further discussed in the Node Locations section.

Some nodes are pedestrian-friendly environments that are supportive of public transportation. Some existing nodes feature an automobile-dominated development pattern and often have little or no relationship to surrounding residential neighborhoods. These types of nodes generally feature buildings that are set far back from streets with parking between the building and the street, or are completely surrounded by parking. Conventional commercial development is generally aligned along major thoroughfares in a strip pattern, with large concentrations frequently found at major intersections.

Nodes other than rural crossroads should be connected by public transit or major travel routes such as interstates, freeways, and arterials.

3.3.2 Why do we need nodes?

- Reduce sprawl and promote compact, efficient development with a strong sense of place
- Reduce vehicle trips by providing daily needs (commercial and civic) in close proximity to housing
- Limit the emergence of new commercial corridors (strip commercial) by concentrating development at crossroads and in mixed-use centers along corridors
- Promote transportation choices by creating walkable neighborhoods of sufficient density to make mass transit a viable option
- Maintain the excellent quality of life currently enjoyed by citizens of Auburn
- Promote redevelopment of existing corridors and expansion of the urban core
- Promote efficiency in delivery of city services

¹ Some language in this section comes from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County, TN Comprehensive Plan

² From Town of Cary, NC Comprehensive Plan

3.3.3 Node Components

Nodes are generally composed of three areas: the core, the transition, and the edge.

Core. The core consists of the most intense urban buildings in both mass and in land use, and is considered to be the center of pedestrian activity. Buildings in the core are often vertically mixed-use, providing opportunities for housing and office uses above ground level retail. Like most main streets, retail and eating establishments should be physically concentrated in the core, providing the critical mass of shopping and pedestrian activities that identifies it as an activity center or a destination point.

Transition Area

The transition area serves as the transition from the high intensity level of the core to the surrounding and supporting neighborhood areas. The transition area, due to its physical proximity to the core is the ideal location for medium-density residential. Housing is supported by the commercial core and vice-versa, along well-connected, pedestrian-scaled streets. In addition, where transit stops are located, or proposed to be located, there is a significant user population within walking distance to the transit stop.

Edge

While these areas are seamlessly connected to the core by pedestrian-oriented streets, transitions from the neighborhood to the core of the activity center should be accomplished through proper design of the street, appropriate massing, scale, and architectural design of the buildings.

3.3.4 Node Types

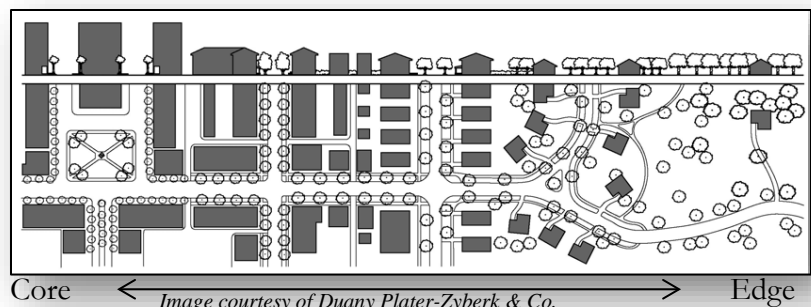
Nodes vary in size and function. Rural crossroads will not typically exhibit the same mix of uses and pedestrian orientation that is seen in the other node types. The other three node types (neighborhood, community, and regional) are of gradually increasing scales. It should also be noted that these recommendations are intended to primarily apply to future centers; for recommendations for uses in existing centers, consult the Future Land Use Plan map. Existing centers within focus areas may also have specific recommendations in the Focus Areas section of the plan.

Rural Crossroads

Rural crossroads are intended to provide limited commercial services to low-density rural areas. They should be located at the intersection of collectors or arterials.

Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood centers are small, compact, clustered, low-intensity and low-traffic generating developments that support the common day-to-day demands of surrounding neighborhoods for goods and services. The core of the neighborhood center should contain a diverse mix of land uses and intensity levels. Neighborhood centers should balance pedestrian and automobile needs with pedestrian access being an integral element of the commercial core and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. A continuous network of sidewalks in the commercial and residential areas



encourages people to walk from their homes to retail shops, parks, and open spaces. To make the commercial core more attractive for pedestrians, landscape amenities and public open spaces should be provided.

Neighborhood centers are encouraged to develop as mixed-use or multi-use centers that are generally within a five-minute walk of the surrounding neighborhoods they serve. The core of the activity center should radiate one quarter mile, or an area equivalent to a 5-minute walk from the core to the edge. Neighborhood centers generally serve a few neighborhoods within a several mile radius. Land uses within neighborhood centers typically include uses found in a grocery store anchored shopping center, even though they front on a pedestrian-friendly grid of streets rather than a parking lot. They may also contain a variety of small-scale retail shops, small drug store, convenience stores, eating establishments, offices, and personal and business service establishments. Civic and institutional uses, as well as open spaces, neighborhood parks, greens, and squares should also be included within the core. Medium to high-density housing is also appropriate within the core, either in mixed-use structures, or in single-use developments. Housing densities generally should be the highest within the core, transitioning to progressively lower densities moving outward from the core to the edge.

The actual amount and types of land uses within the core will likely vary according to different circumstances such as physical constraints of the site and the free market. Generally, as a guide, the core of the neighborhood center should be between 3 and 10 acres in size. Building heights in the core of the neighborhood center should be the highest and transition to lower heights moving outward from the core to the edge. Buildings at the edge of the activity center should be comparable in height and mass to adjacent and nearby properties, as well as surrounding neighborhoods. The maximum height of any structure located within the core of the neighborhood center is typically two stories.

Neighborhood centers are appropriate for those areas divided into four quadrants by the intersection of two arterial classified streets, or the intersection of an arterial and a collector classified street.

Neighborhood centers should include the following features:

- Predominantly horizontal mixed-uses
- Well-defined neighborhood edges
- Moderate to high residential densities, with higher-densities concentrated toward the core
- Wide range and mix of housing styles, types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
- Convenience retail uses (typically found in a grocery store-anchored center)
- Neighborhood-serving office and service uses
- Civic and institutional uses
- Compact development patterns
- Include public spaces well-integrated into the development pattern
- Pedestrian-oriented
- Accessible via public transit
- Interconnected street grid or network of streets, sidewalks, alleys, and paths that facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- Streets and rights-of-way are shared between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- On-street parking.

- Surface parking placed behind or to the side of buildings.

Design Features:

- Buildings in core built to street
- Streetscaping provided
- Buildings no taller than two stories
- Parking at rear or side
- Civic uses or park space as focal point of development

Community Center

Community centers are dense, compact, medium-scale and medium-intensity areas designed to provide convenient goods and services for a number of surrounding neighborhoods. The core of the community center should contain a diverse mix of land uses and intensity levels. Community centers should balance pedestrian and automobile needs with pedestrian access being an integral element of the commercial core and the surrounding residential neighborhood. A continuous network of sidewalks in the commercial and residential areas encourages people to walk from their homes to retail shops, parks, and open spaces.

To make the commercial core more attractive for pedestrians, landscape amenities and public open spaces should be provided. Community centers are encouraged to develop as mixed-use or multi-use centers with the core of the center generally radiating a 1/2 mile, or an area equivalent to a 10-minute walk from the core to the edge. They generally serve several neighborhoods within a 10-mile radius.

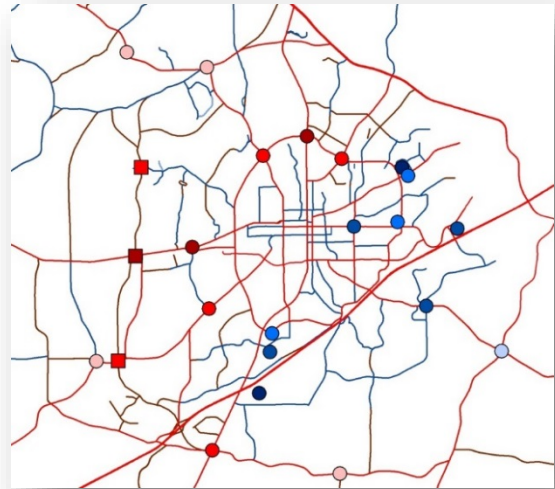
Land uses within community centers typically include large-scale supermarkets, community-sized drug stores, smaller discount retail stores (big-box), convenience stores, eating establishments, and entertainment uses (movie theaters, bowling alleys). Employment intensive offices and personal service establishments such as beauty/barbershops, financial services, and dry cleaners are appropriate uses. Parks, open spaces, greens, plazas and squares, civic, and institutional uses are appropriate land uses within the core. Medium and high-density housing should also be located within the core, primarily in mixed-use structures. Housing densities should be highest within the core, transitioning to progressively lower densities moving outward from the core to the edge. The actual amount and types of land uses in the core will likely vary according to different circumstances, such as physical constraints and the free market. Generally, as a guide, the core of the community center is typically between 10 and 30 acres in size. Building heights should be greatest in the core and should transition to lower heights moving outward from the core to the edge. Buildings at the edge of the activity center should be comparable in height and mass to adjacent and nearby properties as well as surrounding neighborhoods. The maximum height of any structure located within the core of the community center is typically 3-4 stories.

Generally, community centers are appropriate for those areas divided into four quadrants by the intersection of two arterial classified streets. These centers also benefit from being located along major public transportation routes.

Community centers should include the following features:

- Vertical and horizontal mixed-uses
- Well-defined neighborhood edges

- Moderate to high residential densities, with higher-densities concentrated toward the core
- Wide range and mix of housing styles, types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
- Full range of retail, office, and service uses
- Civic and institutional uses
- Compact development patterns
- Include public spaces well-integrated into the development pattern
- Access to external arterial streets
- Access management via network of internal streets
- Pedestrian-oriented where feasible
- Accessible via public transit
- Interconnected street grid or network of streets, sidewalks, alleys, and paths that facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- Bicycle and pedestrian uses are separated from arterial street right-of-way
- Surface parking placed behind or to the side of buildings where feasible.
- Shared parking



Design Features:

- Buildings in core built to street
- Streetscaping provided
- Buildings no taller than four stories
- Parking at rear or side
- Civic uses or park space as focal point of development

Regional Center

Regional centers are existing and planned large concentrated centers of mixed-use or multi-use areas that are generally anchored by a regional shopping center. Regional centers provide goods and services citywide and regionally. Regional centers contain a diverse collection of retail uses such as general retail uses, large big-box retailers, convenience stores, eating establishments, offices, institutional and civic uses, entertainment uses, high-density residential, and automotive related uses. A regional center has the potential for a more diverse mixture of land uses and intensity levels than either community or neighborhood centers.

The actual amount and types of land uses in a regional center will likely vary according to different circumstances such as physical constraints of the site and the free market. However, as a guide, regional centers will likely be 30 or *more* acres in size, and contain big-box centers, strip shopping centers, and freestanding stores. They generally serve many communities within a 30-mile radius or greater.

Due to the overall size of these centers, regional orientation, and traffic generating characteristics, regional centers should have a high level of accessibility to and within the center, including public transportation. Regional centers should be located with easy accessibility from interstate/freeway interchanges. Ideally, regional centers should be close to or directly served by a major radial and/or circumferential arterial street (such as East University Drive) and should be ringed by an arterial street network. They should be served by a high level of public transportation service.

Regional centers were originally designed for automobile access and circulation. Existing centers should redevelop over time to give equal attention to pedestrian access and circulation so they can evolve into truly integrated mixed-use or multi-use centers. Intensification should take place within the current boundaries of the regional center rather than spread outward.

Regional centers should include the following features:

- Vertical and horizontal mixed-uses
- Well-defined neighborhood edges
- Moderate to high residential densities, with higher-densities concentrated toward the core
- Wide range and mix of housing styles, types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
- Grocery stores and smaller big-box retailers
- Community-serving office and service uses
- Entertainment and hospitality uses
- Civic and institutional uses
- Compact development patterns
- Include public spaces well-integrated into the development pattern
- Portions of core pedestrian-oriented
- Accessible via public transit
- Interconnected street grid or network of streets, sidewalks, alleys, and paths that facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- Streets and rights-of-way are shared between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- On-street parking.
- Surface parking placed behind or to the side of buildings where feasible.
- Shared parking

Design Features:

- Where feasible, building built to street
- Streetscaping provided
- Buildings no taller than six stories
- Where feasible, parking at rear or side
- Civic uses or park space as focal point of development

3.3.5 Node Locations

Node locations are set in part by the Auburn Interactive Growth Model, and are subject to change. Future nodes are intended to meet a significant proportion of Auburn's future commercial and office space needs. Node sizes and locations (except for rural crossroads) are linked to the sizes of centers

in the AIGM commercial sub model. Node locations may move as the AIGM is updated. If mixed-use zoning already exists at a node location, the node is a development **option**. If existing zoning is not mixed-use and the desire is to build a mixed-use development, the node is a **requirement**. The **conditional nodes** shown on the Future Land Use Map to be constructed only if the Outer Loop is funded and constructed, and their final locations are subject to the final alignment of the Outer Loop.

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 Infill Development

As was noted earlier, a major focus of the Future Land Use Plan is a strategy of focusing on infill development. Infill development is development or redevelopment in established areas of the City. This might be developing a vacant lot or redeveloping an area with more intense or dense uses. The benefits of infill development are many. The infrastructure that must be constructed with greenfield development is typically already in place, saving the City and developer money. Infill development often results in increased density, which is needed to support the types of businesses and transportation modes (such as transit) that are needed for successful compact, walkable communities. It also discourages urban sprawl, thus protecting outlying areas from overdevelopment and limiting the inevitable strain placed on City services when it becomes necessary to serve far-flung developments.

Infill development is typically more expensive than greenfield development. It is therefore imperative to reduce regulatory barriers to infill development and redevelopment. This can include providing density and intensity bonuses, expedited permitting, and other measures to help promote infill development. It should also include a review of the zoning in areas that are likely candidates for infill development where the previous zoning has impeded infill development and redevelopment. Certain areas, such as Opelika Road, the Urban Neighborhood areas and the Northwest Auburn Neighborhood, have all had comprehensive studies done on the existing land use and zoning. Land use and zoning adjustments have been implemented for Opelika Road and the Urban Neighborhoods while new land use and zoning regulations are currently being finalized for Northwest Auburn and should be implemented in 2018. Finally, it will be imperative to review the City's zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as the Public Works and Water Resource Management Design and Construction manuals, for provisions that conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. A major focus of the CompPlan 2030 implementation effort will be completing that review and adopting recommended changes.

3.4.2 Mix of Housing Types

In 2011, Residential uses made up 74% of Auburn's land use; by 2016, that number has risen to 79.6%. It is no exaggeration to say that residential development has an immense influence on the type of place Auburn is and will become. Auburn's diverse population requires a diverse mix of housing types. This can already be seen in Auburn today with 44.6% of Auburn's housing units made up of multi-family units. The large supply of multi-family units has traditionally served the City's large student population. When CompPlan 2030 was initially written, Auburn University stated student enrollment would be capped at 25,000; however, the enrollment for the 2016 academic year was 28,290³. As the City's population continues to increase, Auburn's demographics will begin to transition, with older residents and families with children making up a larger proportion of the population. This will both

³ <https://oira.auburn.edu/factbook/enrollment/enrtrends/ebcuagsf.aspx>

slow the need for additional multi-family units (though many existing units are aging and increasingly suitable for redevelopment) as well as increase demand for various other housing types, such as detached single-family homes and townhouses. The decreased demand will not necessarily result, however, in decreased multi-family construction. The City has amended the zoning ordinance to require conditional use approval for multi-family development in all but the Urban Core and Urban Neighborhood zoning districts in order to promote multi-family development where services exist and to encourage density to support future mixed-use centers and alternate transportation choices. The United States is also experiencing the aging of the baby boomer population. This generation has entered retirement age, and as a result the demand for housing that allows seniors to “age-in-place” (that is, to remain in their homes for as long as possible) will significantly increase. Auburn can plan ahead for this demand by encouraging the development of housing that has features designed to accommodate seniors.

3.4.3 Expansion of the Urban Core

As noted in the guiding principles for the Future Land Use Plan, downtown Auburn is the heart of the City, and is well-loved by both residents and visitors. The growth of Auburn’s population, though, has out-paced the growth of downtown, so opportunities exist to expand downtown to meet the needs of Auburn’s growing population.

In June 2013, the City kicked-off the Downtown Master Plan (DMP) with an open house and three public meetings continuing into 2014. The DMP was officially adopted by the City on September 15, 2015. The DMP created a vision with goals and objectives centered on downtown growth and development, housing and mixed uses, walkability and streetscapes, open space, transportation and circulation, parking, identity and vitality, and partnership and implementation. The plan provided for an expanded urban core and identified the unique characteristics of the neighborhoods to the north, south, east and west and recommended three new land use areas, Urban Neighborhood – East (UN-E), Urban Neighborhood – West (UN-W), and Urban Neighborhood – South (UN-S). With the creation of these three new neighborhoods, a new type of performance residential use was created, private dormitory, to address purpose-built student housing. Private dormitory development is only allowed in the UN areas and was created to encourage student housing to be developed within walking distance of the University. Another change related to the DMP is how density is measured in the UN areas. The new density measure is bedrooms per acre instead of the traditional units per acre. The UN-W district allows up to 255 bedrooms per acre, while the UN-E and UN-S allow only 85 bedrooms. The intent of higher density is to allow the highest density of students in the area immediately north of the University in an area where there is little, if any, single-family residential use and limiting the intensity near the traditional single-family residential areas to the east and south of Downtown. Multi-family residential is still permitted in the Urban Core with no density caps; however, Private Dormitory development is not allowed in order to encourage housing that would appeal to all market segments of the population. The overall goal of the DMP is to increase the population of the Downtown and immediate urban areas and promote walkable mixed use development.

3.4.4 AU/City Cooperation

The City of Auburn/Auburn University town-gown relationship is of vital importance. Both entities have a track record of cooperation on various projects and programs, such as the Yarbrough Tennis Center, the Auburn Research Park, and in providing public safety services to campus. Both entities are or will be guided by long-range plans for future development. Where possible, coordination on

long-range planning issues should take place. It is also important for the City to be aware of future changes to the enrollment cap, as such changes will influence City land use policies.

3.4.5 Mixed-Use Centers

Mixed-use centers (nodes) are discussed in Section 3.3.

3.4.6 Form-Based Codes

One key implementation tool for building nodes as well as other mixed-use neighborhoods indicated in the Future Land Use Plan is the use of form-based codes. Form-based codes are a form of zoning that “address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a *regulating plan* that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types.”⁴

“This approach contrasts with conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS), to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes depends on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements.”⁵

3.4.7 Annexation Policy and the Optimal Boundary

As discussed in Section 3.2.2, the development of the optimal boundary was necessary to determine areas the City might logically make part of the corporate boundary in the future, for modeling purposes and for inclusion into the Future Land Use Plan. Because the methodology for developing the boundary included review of many factors for determining the desirability of annexation for each parcel, the optimal boundary serves as a reference point for property annexation. Prior to the adoption of CompPlan 2030 the City’s annexation policy was not strategic in nature, but rather provided guidelines for determining whether individual annexations were permissible, such as requirements for contiguity and minimum acreage of individual lots to be annexed. In 2012, the city revised the annexation policy, addressing Land Use Goal 5 of CompPlan 2030, by requiring the analysis of the property to determine if the property is ripe as a logical extension to the corporate boundary of the City as how it is rated according to the CompPlan 2030 Optimal Boundary. Applicants are not guaranteed that City services will be provided to them. The optimal boundary could serve as a useful guide for whether or not an area should be eligible for annexation based on the City’s plan for future growth. Additional review and revisions of the annexation policy should be drafted, with emphasis placed on annexing those areas that are enclaves, surrounded by existing City limits, and the ability of the City to provide services at little or no additional costs. The City should also implement a level-of-services review for future annexations, both to determine the true cost of annexations as well as to

⁴ From <http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes>

⁵ From <http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes>

ensure that annexed properties receive services equal to that provided to properties already inside the corporate boundary.

3.5 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

LU 1: Continue to maintain a Future Land Use Map guiding the distribution, location and extent of future land uses by type, density and intensity. The Future Land Use Map should promote protecting natural and man-made resources and the City's unique character, providing essential services in a cost-effective manner, discouraging urban sprawl and providing for the expansion of the City's population growth and its physical boundaries commensurate with the highest quality standards that define the City's character.

LU 1.1: Continually review and update the Future Land Use Map categories of land uses to provide varying densities and intensities in order to provide for the full range of activities.

LU 1.2: Encourage infill development and provide appropriate incentives as a means to efficiently utilize existing infrastructure, discourage urban sprawl, and promote walkable neighborhoods and alternative transportation choices.

LU 1.2.1: Provide for density and intensity bonuses, expedited permitting, and possible fee waivers, where such measures can be effectively used to promote infill development. Evaluate those uses that may require additional parking (such as multi-family) as part of this process.

LU 1.2.2: Along older commercial corridors such as the Glenn Avenue/Dean Road area, review existing zoning provisions that serve to impair redevelopment/infill objectives.

LU 1.2.3: Recognizing that the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are the principal regulatory implementation tools of CompPlan 2030, their current provisions will be analyzed for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan. Where significant conflicts exist, the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations will be recommended for amendment.

LU 1.2.4: The non-conforming use provisions of the Zoning Ordinance should continue to be reviewed to determine whether specific provisions impede infill development.

LU 1.2.5: Recognizing that the City's Public Works and Water Resource Management Design and Construction Manuals have a significant influence on the built environment, their current provisions will be analyzed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and will be amended where significant conflicts exist.

LU 1.3: Provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of Auburn's changing population.

- LU 1.3.1:** Encourage future housing designed to meet the needs of the elderly. These could include wider door portals or locating the unit on the first floor when elevators are not provided.
 - LU 1.3.2:** The City should continue to conduct in-depth inventory of existing housing stock as to its condition, affordability and occupancy in an effort to determine a baseline of housing conditions and needs.
 - LU 1.3.3:** Traditional neighborhood developments of detached/attached single family homes in such configurations as zero lot line, duplex and small lot (approximately 5,000 square feet) subdivisions will be encouraged to provide for greater diversity of the housing stock and for the growing demographic of young families and the aging population, especially to promote infill and nodal development.
 - LU 1.3.4:** Monitor the supply of units in existing multi-family housing. Future multiple unit developments in areas not recommended by the future land use plan will require a market analysis justifying need.
- LU 2:** Provide for the expansion, infill, redevelopment, open space, parking, increased densities and commercial intensification of downtown Auburn consistent with forecasted population growth to the year 2030.
- LU 2.1:** Promote downtown infill, redevelopment, increased densities and commercial intensification to accommodate the City's growth over time and the need for additional downtown land uses that serve the general public and the University.
- LU 3:** Encourage continued cooperation and coordination between the City and Auburn University with regard to land use issues and opportunities.
- LU 3.1:** Coordinate with Auburn University to integrate and absorb growth of campus while increasing coordination between the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Auburn University Master Plan.
 - LU 3.1.1:** Encourage coordination between the City and Auburn University regarding any future proposed changes to the enrollment cap, to allow ample consideration of the impact of such an increase on the City's long-range plans.
 - LU 3.1.2:** Determine opportunities for cooperation or areas of concern regarding the impact of the Auburn University Master Plan and Strategic Plan on the City of Auburn and the impact of Comprehensive Plan 2030 on Auburn University.
- LU 4:** Promote mixed-use development expansion and redevelopment within designated nodes for neighborhood, community and regional centers and infill along existing commercial corridors.

- LU 4.1:** Provide for commercial development at various levels of intensity and scale to accommodate population growth over time, located and designed to reduce traffic trips and to maximize the use of current public services and infrastructure.
 - LU 4.1.1:** Significant future commercial growth will be encouraged to locate within the commercial nodes depicted on the Future Land Use Map, recognizing that additional commercial uses will be located outside nodes in downtown and along existing corridors where infill development will be encouraged.
 - LU 4.1.3:** Densities within each node will be highest within the core, and step down in density within transition areas to ultimately blend into abutting or nearby edge residential neighborhoods at the same approximate density and building mass.
 - LU 4.1.4:** Residential development proposals within nodes will be reviewed as to their qualities, including, but not limited to, open space, connectivity to public transit, walkability, ease of accessibility to other uses within the node and on-street parking.
 - LU 4.1.5:** Consider use of a form-based code overlay zone to implement mixed-use development at appropriate locations, including nodes.
 - LU 4.1.6:** Parking requirements may be reduced when it can be shown that some of the commercial land uses occur at different times of the day or night (such as church and office uses located adjacent to each other).
 - LU 4.1.8:** Small commercial centers that provide for basic commercial services will be strategically located to provide reduced traffic trips to residents in West Auburn. Preference will be given to those locations well served by public infrastructure and at intersections.
- LU 5:** Encourage the annexation of land that lies within the City's optimal boundary, with an emphasis on enclaves created between the city limits as they were in 1984 and land annexed thereafter, and after analysis of criteria and impacts of the true costs and benefits of individual annexation proposals has been performed.
 - LU 5.1:** Provide incentives related to future annexations within the optimal boundary.
 - LU 5.1.1:** Enclaves created between the city limits as they appeared in 1984 and land annexed thereafter will receive expedited review of annexation proposals and possible filing fee waivers or reductions.
 - LU 5.1.2:** Implement a level-of-services review for all requested annexations, with the goal of ensuring that services will be provided at a level equal to that provided to properties already in the City of Auburn.