

Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan

Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan

As Revised and Adopted – February 23, 2004

Table of Contents

Preface

Vision For Tucker, Georgia

Introduction and Scope of Plan

Section 1: Analysis of DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Goals and Strategies

DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Goal Statements

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Natural and Historic Resources

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Human and Social Development

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Housing

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Community Facilities

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Transportation

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Economic Development

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Land Use

Section 2: Tucker Land Use Planning Strategic Recommendations

Tucker Neighborhood Identity

Land Use Areas and Edges

Key Areas

General Recommendations

Glossary of Terms

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

HOST -Homestead Option Sales & Use Tax

LDR – Land Use Category for Low Density Residential

LIC – Land Use Category for Low Intensity Commercial

LMR – Land Use Category for Low/Medium Density Residential

OPR – Land Use Category for Office/Professional

HIC – Land Use Category for High Intensity Commercial

MARTA - Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

MSTA - Main Street Tucker Association

OI - Zoning category for Office/Institutional

PATH – A non-profit agency dedicated to building a system of interlinking greenway trails in Metro Atlanta for commuting and recreating available to any non motorized use.

PDK - DeKalb Peachtree Airport

TCA – East Tucker Civic Association dba Tucker Civic Association

TNSP - Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan

PREFACE

After DeKalb County updated its Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 1996, various neighborhood leaders, citizens and civic associations began holding hearings on how the future needs of the Tucker Community would be served in relation to the plan for the whole county. These studies resulted in a document known as “Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan” which was adopted by the Tucker Civic Association dated July 10, 2000. The general recommendation section of both plans provides that they should be a *living document* -- to be updated and remain current. It is in this context that the plan is being reviewed by the Proactive Planning and Economic Development Committee of Tucker Civic Association as of May 8, 2003.

Section 1 of this document analyzes specific goals and policies from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and applies them to the Tucker Community. Section 2 articulates strategic recommendations for planning in the Tucker area.

Vision for Tucker, Georgia

Tucker is a diverse community made up of many unique neighborhoods separated by major roadways. Tucker is an area which is not separate from, but totally integral with the entire Atlanta area.

The key to Tucker's long-term health as a defined community is to honor and support the integrity of each neighborhood and to develop a system of connectivity so mutual issues are addressed with a "small town" attitude. The overall vision is thus one of unique parts/segments communally connected with overall integrity, which celebrates the essence of family, local education opportunities for all ages and the local presence of religious and spiritual activity.

The physical and social attributes will include:

- A) Well-defined areas of single-family dwellings, apartments, attached town houses, commercial development, and multi-use projects coordinated in a vibrant, interactive mix where residents and commercial uses prosper harmoniously
- B) Continually increasing pedestrian/bicycle interconnectivity throughout by requiring developers to provide both sidewalks and bikeways and encouraging DeKalb County until seamless access becomes a reality
- C) Multi-model transportation alternatives that mesh well with regional highway, bus, MARTA and train systems
- D) Cost effective water, waste water and storm water systems that protect water quality
- E) Electrical and communication utilities that serve the community from underground or with as little visual impact as possible
- F) Continuity of community character through uniform streetscaping standards which will not only improve appearance but increase green space
- G) A destination downtown that serves diverse needs and populations centered on a revitalized Main Street which establishes a "sense of place" for the Tucker Community
- H) Strategies to enhance public safety combining neighborhood crime watch activities with appropriate support from DeKalb County safety-related agencies

- I) Maintenance of ongoing working relationships with county, state, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) that promote community health, welfare, prosperity and wise evolution as the need arises.

The collaboration of TCA, the community, the county and developers is critical to the implementation and long term stability of the Tucker Community as defined in the Strategic Plan.

Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan

Adopted February 23, 2004

Introduction and Scope of Plan

The Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan (TNSP) is a project of the Tucker Civic Association, with planning assistance from Robert and Company. Conducted 1999 - 2000, this strategic planning process was guided by a specific mission: review of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and developing a process where the community can be effective in fostering planning and development decisions by the County that are supportive of community goals and objectives.

The County's Comprehensive Plan provides information and conveys the broad objectives and policies that support the preservation of viable residential communities throughout the Tucker Community. The Plan also identifies the Neighborhood, Community and Regional commercial and industrial activity centers in the community and provides a future land use map which illustrates the officially adopted recommendations. Local government's abilities to provide planning activities are supported by State and Federal law as part of government's rights to "preserve the public health, safety and welfare." Unfortunately, no current plan can precisely and permanently define the boundaries of these activity centers without ownership by the regulating government. Therefore, land use conflicts arise as property owners seek the "highest and best" use of their property, and therefore, the County's Comprehensive Plan recommendations are constantly subject to change.

The "planning process" provides the means to make or affect proposed changes to the plan. In DeKalb County, the physical development of property requires appropriate zoning. The DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance regulates set-backs from surrounding properties; building size, height, and other physical criteria; parking requirements; and the use(s) of the property. The DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance also requires consistency between the land use plan category and the zoning category. The requirement for consistency provides the opportunity for the community to be specific regarding what changes it is willing to support as part of the process for amending the land use plan and for amending the County's zoning map.

To accomplish its mission, the Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan incorporates the County's stated goals, policies and action strategies, and provides an interpretation of how they can affect the Tucker community and some of the specific concerns of Tucker residents. The Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan also recommends a cooperative approach that supports the County's "Comprehensive Planning Process" as a tool to address planning, zoning and development issues that affect the community. The "planning process" can best be used as a means to inform property owners, developers, neighbors, staff and County decision-makers regarding the community's policies and objectives to support positive development initiatives and redirect ill-conceived development efforts into ones that support the long-term, well-being of the Tucker Community.

Secondly, the Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan identifies areas in Tucker that appear to have potential for development or redevelopment and makes some specific land use and development recommendations for these areas. Recommendations are based on the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and input from Tucker residents participating in public meetings held as part of the planning process.

Section 1:

Analysis of DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Goals and Strategies as they affect Tucker

This section of the Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan includes a summary of the goals, objectives, policies and action strategies from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Land Use Plan which are most pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood. Specific statements from the County Plan are stated in italics. The plain type provides a review and analysis of how these statements support the Tucker community's planning vision and goals.

The 1996 updated version of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Land Use Plan includes numerous goals and strategies for all of DeKalb County to guide the processes of land development regulation, public policy and expenditure of public funds. These specific goal, policy and strategy statements were recorded by planners following an extensive public input process. The goals, policies and strategy statements serve as a written set of guidelines for DeKalb County officials and staff, and it is important to pay attention to them as they affect the entire Tucker Area as defined in this report.

DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

A single broad vision statement is included in the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan to summarize the guiding community vision for the countywide plan.

DeKalb County envisions itself as a progressive influence within the Atlanta region and the state of Georgia. By preserving and respecting DeKalb's cultural history and character, including its neighborhoods, it will strengthen the social fabric of the community, thereby helping to create a society that values diversity, responds to the needs of individuals and families and encourages everyone to participate in public decisions. The county wishes to distribute the benefits and burdens of living in this county and region while balancing diverse interests. The county desires a safe community, quality housing, education, and jobs, and an economy which provides adequate opportunities for all members of the community. The county also envisions a shift to alternative forms of transportation from the single occupancy vehicle, active preservation and restoration of the environment, and comprehensive watershed planning.

In addition to the broad visions for DeKalb County expressed in this statement, Tucker residents hold a specific interest in promoting the stability and vitality of their community as a great place

to live and work and educate their children within DeKalb County and Metro Atlanta. The Tucker Neighborhood Area should be defined as an area within DeKalb County, which is diverse and inclusive. The Tucker Neighborhood Plan also identifies downtown Tucker as a core commercial and social center providing “community-level” services to the neighborhoods that surround it.

DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Goal Statements

Nine goals are included in the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan to specify the county’s vision to different planning interests.

Goal 1

Provide for the appropriate use and management of land, air, water, soils, forest, mineral, wildlife and other natural, archaeological and historic resources; limit growth in areas that cannot sustain increased development due to environmental or infrastructure constraints; encourage planned and orderly growth consistent with the county's resources and the county's ability to extend or provide the necessary public services and facilities to accommodate and support development.

The Tucker community strongly values its natural and environmental resources. County regulatory processes and proactive measures such as public purchase of environmentally sensitive land should be used to prevent damage to resources while promoting “sustainable” development and redevelopment initiatives. Areas that cannot sustain increased development should be identified and protected.

Goal 2

Restore watersheds into ecologically healthy systems that flow through naturally vegetated green-ways, maintaining clean water for DeKalb and for communities downstream.

New development should be encouraged to detain stormwater flow on site through creative design measures that reduce stormwater runoff and attendant pollution of the stream network. The identified floodplains within the Tucker Neighborhood area should be preserved as undeveloped land to allow floodwaters to dissipate and to protect downstream development from increased floodwater stream flows.

Goal 3

Foster collaborative relationships between the citizens of DeKalb County and the County's agencies and boards including the local school systems.

The Tucker Civic Association, as an active community organization representing and serving the Tucker Neighborhood Area, should establish and maintain positive working relationships with various elements of DeKalb County government to improve communications and identify means for accessing the County's resources and disseminating information to Tucker's residents and workforce and school systems. Tucker residents should actively seek representation on County boards and agencies and be willing to foster exchanges of viewpoints and information regarding development and other issues that would affect the community.

Goal 4

Create and maintain a growing and balanced economy that ensures the stability of neighborhoods and the preservation of historic properties and districts.

Tucker is a community that includes single and multi-family residences, offices, institutions, commerce and industry. It is critical that the overall land uses and activities be balanced to support the economic health and well-being of the Tucker Community.

Goal 5

Create cost effective allocation of public funds, services and facilities.

The Tucker community, as represented through the Tucker Civic Association and other groups, should advise DeKalb County as to desired and efficient expenditure of public funds allocated for the Tucker Neighborhood Area.

Goal 6

Create through a redirection of funding, alternative forms of transportation, which meet mobility needs with a balanced multi-modal transportation system.

Many of the major road corridors in Tucker are already four or five lanes wide. Traffic flows relatively smoothly to the east and west and the major factor affecting north-south traffic are the at-grade rail crossings at Main Street and Brockett Road. MARTA provides bus services along

several major corridors accessing the employment centers along Mountain Industrial Boulevard and Lawrenceville Highway as well as residential development along Chamblee-Tucker and LaVista Roads.

The addition of medians to major corridors, without considerable in-depth community input, should be strongly discouraged. The adjustment of some turning lanes and timing of traffic signals could positively impact traffic flows.

MARTA is not expected to extend their heavy rail system to Tucker although a line along the railroad corridor has been discussed over the past thirty years. If a commuter rail station is proposed for Tucker, the community should encourage planners and designers to design the proposed station in such a way as to enhance the community's livability, functionality and character.

Based upon the present redirection of State, County and MARTA funds and the continuing need for maximum mobility for all uses, a comprehensive urban transportation plan is needed. We encourage the county to include the Tucker area in all manner of movement planning including pedestrian and bicycle.

Goal 7

Create managed growth and stable land uses consistent with the County's policies to enhance the quality of life for citizens throughout the county.

The stability of residential neighborhoods in Tucker should be maintained. Transitional land uses should be clearly identified, and developers should be required to implement design solutions that limit impacts on adjacent properties.

Goal 8

Strive to achieve fair share contributions from new development to defray the costs of public improvements associated with growth.

New development, public or private, should be required to contribute a fair share of the costs of projected future infrastructure and utilities in the affected Tucker area. Should the County adopt impact fees, any future development should be required to contribute appropriate development fees to address important infrastructure needs.

Goal 9

Encourage adaptive reuse or rehabilitation of existing building stock.

There are multiple opportunities for rehabilitation of existing buildings and/or redevelopment of existing buildings which do not meet current standards. These properties should be identified and promoted to developers willing to adapt existing structures and meet current health and safety code standards. Along with redevelopment of existing commercial uses into higher quality commercial uses, alternative uses may include office and residential development.

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Natural and Historic Resources

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Natural and Historic Resources from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 1.6

Secure adequate future sites for recreation activities by identifying land and water areas having the best combinations of natural features, size and location suited for the type of experience to be provided (see also 7.18).

- Acquire by purchase, donation or easement flood plain areas for public passive recreation parks.*
- Develop passive recreational improvements in parks (Cofer Park in Tucker).*

Cofer Park, Henderson Park and Montreal Park provide substantial passive recreational assets that supplement the active recreational uses. Lakes at these parks provide fishing and canoeing resources. Trails around the lakes should support hiking, walking and jogging opportunities. Picnic areas could also be improved.

The downtown core of Tucker needs a gathering place for community special events. The vacant land bordered by Burns Avenue, Lynburn Drive, Lawrenceville Highway and LaVista Road (plus any adjacent properties that could be assembled) provides an ideal opportunity.

Planning, negotiating and acquiring property requires organization and creation of a “vehicle” that can hold and develop the property accordingly. County assistance in developing the required resources and organization should come through the identification of such a project as an active goal of the community and subsequent lobbying of the County’s decision-makers.

Policy 1.7

Encourage the joint use of school board properties which provide recreation facilities for county-wide recreational programs when the properties are not in use by the school system. (see also 4.12)

Tucker High School is a central landmark for the Tucker community and provides an excellent resource_which should be utilized. Play fields at several elementary schools are also used by soccer, baseball and softball teams for practice. Similar uses should be supported throughout Tucker. Aesthetic improvements to the Tucker High School campus would encourage more use.

Policy 1.8

Encourage the development of bikeways, walking trails and sidewalks that link the area's natural resources and parks. (see also 4.2, 5.7)

Tucker is a center for numerous bicycle day rides sponsored by Bikeways and other organizations. A bicycle route (or routes) connecting Tucker with the PATH route along Ponce de Leon Avenue is needed. Sidewalks and protected bicycle routes to the parks and the schools are also desirable to establish safe access systems for youth and others who do not want to use the automobile for every trip. Tucker is unique in its attraction to bicyclists. Tucker should find ways to capitalize on this unique opportunity.

Policy 1.9

Identify and interpret historic sites, and districts including the development of walking and driving tours.

The identification and interpretation of historic sites in Tucker should be encouraged through cooperation with the Tucker Historical Society.

Policy 1.12

Preserve and protect the historic character of the county including scenic vistas and highways, historic sites and districts, and historic parks, roads and trails. (See also 3.4, 4.11, and 7.18)

Lawrenceville Highway, Chamblee-Tucker Road, LaVista Road and several others corridors include resources that should be protected as part of the heritage of the Tucker community. Some of the homes along these corridors are the oldest in the area and may represent the original farmstead heritage of the community. Many churches and cemeteries are located along these corridors. The original country stores were replaced by the railroad and highway-oriented commercial uses which followed, and newer commercial uses seek the accessibility provided by these same (albeit wider) roadways. Redevelopment along major thoroughfares and in the center of Tucker's downtown core can be accommodated but should be integrated with heritage properties rather than displacing them.

- Identify historic properties which need to be protected.*
- Develop guidelines for the protection of historic properties including county owned and county maintained properties;*
- Develop signage guidelines.*

Signage guidelines are essential for reducing the clutter and distractions along major road corridors. Most historic sites (churches, cemeteries and older houses) are located along these corridors.

- Develop urban design criteria for historic preservation districts which include guidelines for street lamps, traffic signals, curb and sidewalk replacement; prohibit bike trails and commercial banners within the Olmsted Parks.*

The core area of downtown Tucker provides an opportunity for establishing a unique "sense of place" for residents, workers and visitors. In coordination with church, bank, library and other small-town commercial properties behind Main Street, the one-block strip between First Street and the railroad provides the sense of a small downtown. The sidewalks, storefronts and facades invoke that image. Unique street signs, street lamps and streetscape improvements to the sidewalks can be used to expand this imagery. There seems to be adequate room for narrowing

the street and enhancing pedestrian access through plantings and aesthetic improvements. Personal observation at peak hours indicates that traffic counts are not high and a review of traffic counts and analysis of the impacts on alternates (Lawrenceville Highway and Chamblee-Tucker/Fellowship Roads) should be included in the first stages of a plan to consider this option.

The aesthetic quality of the one-block downtown core area is affected to the north by the modernistic RBC Centura Bank and the split-face block church building on the east and a “Williamsburg-style” office park and a tire store on the west. These varied architectural styles and uses break up any continuity between Tucker High School and the old Main Street buildings. Although the sidewalks are there, they have a different feel. Streetscape improvements are needed to visually tie these two blocks to the core block of Main Street.

To the south of the railroad, Cofer Brothers and Matthews Cafeteria are icons of the community, but both are auto-oriented and neither one currently provides a tie into the “traditional downtown” core block. The other businesses south of the railroad (dry cleaners, auto repair, used van sales and gas station) do not complement the core block either. In addition, any significant changes to the railroad line created by the proposals for commuter rail improvements make it likely that the area to the south of the railroad may be disrupted at some future date. If such a disruption occurs, urban design guidelines based on perpetuating the “downtown” image of Main Street should be pressed forward in any redevelopment of the block between Lawrenceville Highway and the railroad as well as south of Lawrenceville Highway to Fellowship Road. The “Bikeways Building” and the “Antiques Building” at Lawrenceville Highway and Idlewood, as well as the cluster of new entrepreneurial efforts at the north end of Idlewood, would seem to warrant renaming that portion of Idlewood Road (extending from Lawrenceville Highway to Fellowship Road) to Main Street.

The use of an uniquely designed street sign for Tucker’s downtown can be expanded through out the community creating or enhancing real and emotional ties to the downtown core.

- *Create a historic preservation trust fund to preserve and save endangered properties.*
- *Establish a revolving fund to purchase threatened historic properties and to provide low interest loans for renovation and rehabilitation.*
- *Establish and enforce ordinances to control visual pollution of historic areas including restrictions on parking in lawn areas, junk collecting, litter, dilapidation, and signage.*
- *Establish tax incentives for the restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures.*

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Human and Social Development

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Human and Social Development from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 2.4

Encourage the formation of coalitions of neighborhood civic associations for the purpose of coordinating programs and enhancing political self-awareness.

The Tucker Civic Association was established to provide these functions and may serve as one among many such resources in DeKalb County.

Policy 2.6

Encourage the use of vacant buildings and structures by nonprofit organizations to assist with the problems of human and social development.

The community prefers opportunities for community input prior to reuse of any structure to assure alignment with the vision for Tucker included in this Strategic Plan.

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Housing

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Housing from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 3.1

Protect established single-family residential neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible development. (see also 3.6, 3.14, 6.17, 7.6, 7.9, 7.10, 7.18, 7.27)

- Develop design guidelines, through a citizen participation process, for in-fill development consistent with the density, original platting pattern,– and architectural character of the neighborhoods.

- Identify and define contiguous residential areas and update the county development regulations to preserve these communities.

- *Define and maintain defensible boundaries between residential, commercial and other zoning districts upon which homeowners and business persons can rely.*
- *Revise county development regulations to impose lower height restrictions on new development adjacent to residential areas; adopt transitional height limits where office, commercial, and industrial adjoin residential use.*
- *Enforce restrictions on the leasing of rooms in private housing for personal care homes.*
- *Enforce current County zoning regulations to protect residential areas from incompatible development.*
- *Identify and designate local historic districts.*
- *Prepare a map of DeKalb County neighborhoods and a map of Community Councils providing each commission district with 2 councils.*

Tucker residents strongly support the preservation of their single-family residential neighborhoods. It is the overriding goal to be considered in any plans for the future of housing in Tucker. Tucker residents highly value the single-family residential character of their community and seek to protect it from encroachment by incompatible non-residential uses and higher density residential development.

Single-family residential uses along Tucker's major corridors are particularly threatened by non-residential encroachment, more specifically:

- (1) LaVista Road from LaVista Circle to Brockett/Henderson Roads;
- (2) Chamblee-Tucker Road from Tuckersham Lane to Morgan Road; and
- (3) Lawrenceville Highway from Old Norcross Road to the Gwinnett County line.

The Tucker community emphatically desires that these areas remain single-family residential. Conversion of single-family homes into office-professional uses is not desirable along these corridors.

Weighing heavily on the future of Tucker's major corridors is Cofer Crossing Shopping Center. Simply because the shopping center now exists, there is an increased threat to residential uses in the vicinity of the shopping center. Preventing a domino effect of commercial development in the vicinity of Cofer Crossing is crucial to preserving the residential character of Tucker and should be a key consideration for the Tucker Neighborhood Plan.

Policy 3.2

Encourage appropriate transitions between various residential districts by applying appropriate intermediate land uses between radically different land uses and appropriate buffers along adjoining boundaries.

Deep buffers may create some hardships on individual property owners. However, these buffers may be the only thing holding back undesirable land use changes. Public authorities may find it necessary to step in to assemble transitional properties especially when they are small.

Policy 3.4

Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures for residential use. (see 1.7)

- Establish incentive programs for the rehabilitation of historic structures.*
- Develop and adopt alternative building codes for historic structures.*
- Identify, designate, and publicize historic districts and properties.*

Policy 3.5

Reduce cut-through traffic through residential neighborhoods. (See also 5.1-5.12)

- Work with neighborhoods to develop neighborhood traffic programs for areas experiencing speeding and cut-through traffic.*
- Avoid street-widening in established residential neighborhoods.*
- Enforce the county cut-through traffic ordinance.*

Cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods is a significant problem due to speeding and distracted drivers who may not be prepared to stop in time for people using their neighborhood streets as walkways or play areas. Cut-through streets may require sidewalks to segregate drivers and pedestrians. Traffic calming methods and enforcement should be used to reduce speeds and make the thoroughfares preferable to the cut-throughs. Thoroughfares should receive improvements to enhance traffic flow such as reduction of curb cuts, coordinated signalization and stacking lanes for turning movements at intersections. The ecological and tax implications of speed humps should be carefully considered before installation.

Policy 3.6

Protect established single-family residential neighborhoods from encroachment by higher density development. (see also 3.1, 3.14, 6.17, 7.6, 7.9, 7.27)

- Retain the single-family residential character of existing neighborhoods (including but not limited to the ...Montreal Woods, Vista Dale, and... (other) neighborhoods.*

A primary concern should be to assemble the properties that have changed. Redevelopments should internalize access and impacts toward the more intensive uses rather than towards the residential neighborhoods.

Policy 3.8

Create open space areas within one mile or within a twenty-minute leisurely walk from every housing unit in DeKalb County.

-Inform owners of housing built within the flood plains regarding FEMA insurance.

-Prioritize homes that flood severely on a regular basis for purchase and removal and convert land to green space.

-Hold workshops on flood proofing and erosion control.

Policy 3.9

While meeting in-fill/historic guidelines, identify and encourage new and innovative approaches to quality residential development which expand housing opportunities and minimize public and private costs.

- Provide incentives for developers to build quality affordable housing.

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing commercial, industrial, and institutional properties for housing.

The community desires to remain actively engaged in the discernment of what represents “quality.”

Opportunities exist for redeveloping some of the marginal non-residential uses around the downtown core of Tucker as residential and mixed use developments. Such developments should be encouraged as a step to revitalizing the Main Street area.

Policy 3.10

Strive for expanded code enforcement and timely, improved response to enforcement requests. (see 3.11)

- Develop a code enforcement monitoring program for vacant structures, junk cars, garbage (including tires), large trucks, landscapes, and signage.

- Enforce noise ordinances to reduce conflict between multi-family and single-family areas.

Policy 3.14

Develop design guidelines for residential infill compatible with surrounding residential development and encourage open space in established residential areas. (see 3.1, 3.6, 6.17, 7.6, 7.9, 7.18 and 7.27)

- Allow construction of housing for the elderly adjacent to residential areas if the scale and character is compatible with the existing neighborhoods.*
- Preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and develop design guidelines which reflect the standards of the existing community with respect to lot size, setbacks, materials, siding, and buffers for in-fill residential development within established neighborhoods and historic districts.*

TCA's code enforcement efforts are supported by the Property Maintenance Ordinance passed by DeKalb County Board of Commissioners on December 23, 2003.

- Require in-fill development to adhere to the same setback requirements as surrounding development.*
- Use churches, parks, libraries, and natural areas as buffers between areas of different residential density.*

Design guidelines should be used to define the types and density of residential in-fill opportunities in and around Tucker's downtown core. The proximity of the churches, good access and the availability of potential development sites near the new middle school site on Idlewood, in and near the core area, and in connection with any future commuter rail development provide plentiful opportunities.

Policy 3.16

Encourage housing for the elderly that is well planned, soundly financed and located within a pedestrian friendly residential environment. (See 7.18)

- Disperse community care facilities throughout the county.*
- Provide for additional forms of elderly housing such as nursing facilities, adult foster homes, senior apartments, and small group residences as "special use" permits.*
- Monitor the development of personal care homes and consider revised spacing requirements.*
- Review and revise the county zoning ordinance to assess the appropriateness of allowing elderly housing within OI districts.*

Policy 3.20

Restrict the number and density of apartments to a percentage that does not exceed 25% of single-family housing within each Commission District.

Apartments and attached housing are currently concentrated almost exclusively in the quadrant of Tucker bounded by Idlewood Road, Lawrenceville Highway, I-285, and Highway 78 (Stone Mountain Freeway). The development of any additional apartments and attached housing units in this area of Tucker should be prohibited.

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Community Facilities

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Community Facilities from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 4.1

Time land acquisition for anticipated future needs as far in advance as economically possible to avoid inflated land prices and reserve appropriate sites for public facility development when needed. (See 1.6, 1.10)

- Develop additional parks for active and passive recreational use and develop a plan for linkage.*
- In the Zoning Ordinance, require the provision of open space and buffers in new development so that green buffers separate commercial parcels and office parcels and so that existing buffers between land uses must have year round sound attenuation vegetation.*

The community encourages creation of a park and gathering place for Downtown Tucker. The community also encourages completing natural and educational development of the newly acquired greenspace opposite Cofer Crossing

Policy 4.2

By January 1, 1997, prepare a countywide sidewalk plan through a citizen participation process, which includes sidewalks, pedestrian walkways and/or bikeways which link MARTA stations, shopping, neighborhoods, schools, libraries, and park, recreation facilities and meet ADA standards. Plan for and provide sidewalks on major and minor arterials, residential arterials, and collectors. (See 1.8, 5.1 - 5.12)

- Develop bikeways and or sidewalks along Briarcliff, LaVista, Clairmont, Houston Mill Road, Clifton Road, and N. Druid Hills Road.*

- Coordinate sidewalk and bikeway projects in historic areas with the Historic Preservation Commission mission.

In alignment with the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Tucker should have comprehensive, interconnected sidewalks and bicycle access. These are essential elements for creating a livable community for Atlanta's and Tucker's future. Currently, Tucker only has segments of sidewalks on LaVista, Chamblee-Tucker, Old Norcross, and Idlewood. Bikeway and pedestrian access are also especially needed on Hugh Howell, Lawrenceville Highway and Henderson Road. Wherever possible, sidewalks and bikeways should interconnect with larger pedestrian systems being developed or already developed.

Policy 4.7

Maintain sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrian traffic.

- Develop a program and schedule for regular maintenance of sidewalks and crosswalks. Immediate repairs are needed in older residential areas (Druid Hills, Johnson Estates).

Policy 4.8

Improve street lighting.

*- Require developers to install lighting in subdivisions during development stages.
- Ensure that new and replacement lighting is appropriate for historic areas through coordination with the Historic Preservation commission.*

Unique lamps for Tucker's core are specifically needed to help confirm the "qualitative" image of the community's center.

Policy 4.10

Consider a Coordinated Utilities Plan for gas, water, cable, electric, telephone utilities. To develop common underground easements, to protect utilities from weather hazards, and to eliminate "lost" street right-of-way.

Policy 4.13

Support the comprehensive effort to address crime prevention and drug problems throughout the county and within neighborhoods.

- Develop additional Police precincts in east central and west central DeKalb (Tucker and the Sage Hills Shopping area) and study neighborhood police mini-precincts concept (in vacant

storefronts along Memorial Drive between Collingwood and South Indian Creek Road and the Candler - Glen- wood area).

- Update Neighborhood Watch Programs on an annual basis to indicate current activity.

Policy 4.20

Encourage the development of services specifically for senior citizens.

Policy 4.21

Encourage the development of volunteer services throughout the county.

Policy 4.22

Improve maintenance of right of ways, increase trash pickup, and enforce anti-littering laws.

- Encourage community groups, and civic associations to beautify and maintain bordering right of ways.

- Increase and improve trash collection, and litter control specifically at entrance and highway ramps.

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Transportation

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Transportation from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 5.1

Assure that pedestrians and pedestrian safety are a top priority;

In alignment with the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Tucker should have comprehensive, interconnected sidewalks and bicycle access. These are essential elements for creating a livable community for Atlanta's and Tucker's future. Currently, Tucker only has segments of sidewalks on LaVista, Chamblee-Tucker, Old Norcross, and Idlewood. Bikeway and pedestrian access are also especially needed on Hugh Howell, Lawrenceville Highway and Henderson Road. Wherever possible, sidewalks and bikeways should interconnect with larger pedestrian systems being developed or already developed.

Policy 5.2

To reduce dependence on the automobile;

A pedestrian core and access to the Tucker downtown via sidewalks, bikeways, and buses (and possibly commuter rail) enhances the image that the community provides a full variety of living, shopping, working and development opportunities. See Policy 5.1 comments.

Policy 5.3

To develop safe, convenient modes of travel other than the automobile;

In alignment with the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Tucker should have comprehensive, interconnected sidewalks and bicycle access. These are essential elements for creating a livable community for Atlanta's and Tucker's future. Currently, Tucker only has segments of sidewalks on LaVista, Chamblee-Tucker, Old Norcross, and Idlewood. Bikeway and pedestrian access are also especially needed on Hugh Howell, Lawrenceville Highway and Henderson Road. Wherever possible, sidewalks and bikeways should interconnect with larger pedestrian systems being developed or already developed.

Policy 5.4

To retain and preserve the county's neighborhoods, sense of community and character, and as a priority in transportation planning, preserve its historic districts and properties;

Policy 5.7

Institutionalize safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs within the county linked to all forms of transportation;

In alignment with the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Tucker should have comprehensive, interconnected sidewalks and bicycle access. These are essential elements for creating a livable community for Atlanta's and Tucker's future. Currently, Tucker only has segments of sidewalks on LaVista, Chamblee-Tucker, Old Norcross, and Idlewood. Bikeway and pedestrian access are also especially needed on Hugh Howell, Lawrenceville Highway and Henderson Road. Wherever possible, sidewalks and bikeways should interconnect with larger pedestrian systems being developed or already developed.

Policy 5.8

To assure a balanced interconnecting transportation system for the county with harmonious and safe co-existence of alternative user groups;

Methods of transportation should be varied while preserving and updating the necessary conventional traffic solutions, for which there will continue to be a need for many of our residents in the foreseeable future.

Policy 5.9

Improve curb appeal through landscaping and streetscaping on major arterials;

Protect neighborhood integrity, character and property values.

- Implement the cut-through traffic ordinance.*
- Develop cost sharing programs or special tax district legislation for the development of sidewalks in existing developments and neighborhoods.*
- Develop a program for maintenance and repair of sidewalks.*
- Establish a clear distinction between high traffic thoroughfares and neighborhood streets.*
- Maintain existing road widths along Columbia Drive near the Forest Hills subdivision, on Briarcliff, LaVista, Clairmont, and North Druid Hills Road(s) and Scott Boulevard/Lawrenceville Highway.*
- Minimize the crossing distance for pedestrian crosswalks if possible with islands or other safe spaces.*
- Install turn arrow signals and lanes in high traffic areas in accordance with neighborhood traffic plans after a public hearing in the affected commission district.*
- Restrict truck traffic from neighborhoods and residential streets*
- Enforce cut through traffic ordinance, with input from affected neighborhood residents, for areas experiencing speeding and cut through traffic.*
- Install signs where necessary in neighborhoods for busses/trucks which say "Slow Vibration."*
- Restrict truck routes in residential areas throughout the county.*
- Enforce countywide cut-through traffic policies which would utilize speed humps, and road tables to control the speed of traffic on residential streets.*
- Develop a plan to restrict neighborhood over-flights of air traffic into and out of PDK airport.*
- Avoid compromising the character of existing historic neighborhoods or districts which may qualify for historic designation.*

Revise Development Regulations and Educate Policy Makers/Administrators about Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation.

- Adopt revised road construction standards to integrate bicycle and pedestrian facilities in*

transportation corridors, including adequate rights-of-way, grading and drainage, utility location and facility placement.

- Adopt a revised standard utility easement contract to include bicycle and pedestrian access rights in easements and at crossings.

- Develop public facilities or properties to encourage bicycle transportation

Design Protected Bicycle Lanes in Order to Provide Alternative Forms of Transportation and Recreational Options. (see 1.8, 4.2)

- Expand ongoing bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways planning and implementation process.

- Provide a protected bicycle way or sidewalk along Briarcliff and LaVista Roads within the existing right of way.

- Implement the proposed multi-use trail along South Peachtree Creek.

- Coordinate bike trail routing and design features with all affected neighborhoods.

- Provide adequate lighting and signage to promote safety

Pursue an Innovative Financing Program to Finance the Development of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Facilities.

- Actively pursue federal transportation funds available for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and commit to leveraging successful proposals with local funds.

Some traffic related items that are needed include the following recommendations:

- Adjust timing on Pleasantdale Road traffic signals at Chamblee-Tucker Road, Britt Road and Tucker-Norcross Road, and at the intersection of Idlewood Road and Fellowship Road;
- Make the southbound right lane of Fellowship Road a right-turn only lane onto westbound LaVista Road and create a turn lane at the intersection of Idlewood Road and Fellowship Road;
- Prohibit thru-truck traffic on Main Street.
- Monitor and periodically adjust light timing at all Tucker intersections to respond to changing traffic patterns and conditions.

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Economic Development

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Economic Development from the DeKalb County

Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 6.27

Organize a holistic approach to the reuse and redevelopment of declining business and industrial areas, combining job training activities, physical redevelopment of obsolete facilities, and aesthetic improvements through signage and landscaping controls. (see 7.20)

Many auto-oriented uses have located on Lawrenceville Highway. Fast food restaurants, quick-stop drug stores, and numerous automobile repair shops have chosen to locate along the corridor to serve the residents of Tucker, Stone Mountain, Lilburn and other nearby communities who use the thoroughfare as a travel route every day. Relatively marginal properties located along the corridor can attract substantial rents from small businesses such as auto body shops and transmission repairs that like the location but have little concern for the appearance of the property. The number and marginal upkeep of some of these facilities have a significant “negative” impact on the adjacent community. This impact can be minimized by uniform streetscaping, which the Tucker community strongly encourages. However, as automobile dependence decreases and as new environmental regulations erode the ability of small businesses to service automobiles in structures that do not meet increasingly sophisticated codes, these uses can be expected to gradually relocate.

As grocery stores and other shops move out of the existing strip shopping centers, new shops move in. However many of the new shops are marginal businesses that choose to locate along the corridor to take advantage of the relatively low rents. The proximity of the corridor to the Northlake regional center and a revitalized Tucker and the marginal nature of some of these businesses may present an opportunity to consider redevelopment of some of these strip commercial centers to other uses such as office parks or residential developments. The community strongly encourages redevelopment of declining businesses rather than developing vacant or residential lands into business uses.

Policy 6.35

Develop streetscape enhancement projects for specific non-interstate, commercial, office, institutional, and multi-family traffic corridors. (see 6.36, 7.20)

- Install sidewalks, lighting, trees, and vandal resistant street furniture along corridors such as Ash- ford - Dunwoody, Mount Vernon, etc.

- *Develop corridor design guidelines for architectural design and signage.*
- *Develop a corridor maintenance program.*
- *Work with the business community to construct permanent markers to designate the perimeters of commercial districts.*

Tucker should encourage community center streetscape projects to improve sidewalks, pedestrian access, lighting, signage, tree plantings, and other features to enhance the quality of life. The public and private assets in Tucker's downtown core have the capability of creating a synergy with a streetscape project that provides a unifying theme for the community.

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Land Use

Objectives, Policies and Action Strategies for Land Use from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan which are specifically pertinent to the Tucker Neighborhood Area include the following:

Policy 7.2

Encourage existing and new commercial establishments along LaVista and Briarcliff Roads to provide landscaping which maintains the parkway character of the two corridors. (see 6.35, 7.20)

The purpose of this policy is to emphasize the character of the corridors. The LaVista Road corridor serves Toco Hills, Northlake and Tucker, yet the majority of the corridor has been held in residential land uses which are successful and reinforce the corridor as a quality place to live. The segment between Vista Dale Court and Brockett Road is a pleasant, albeit broad residential corridor. Any future development should retain this flavor rather than be redeveloped into auto-oriented commercial uses. Some office professional uses may be unavoidable from Brockett/Henderson Roads to Lawrenceville Highway, but these properties should retain a residential "character" or "appearance." County participation in providing trees in these areas, wherever possible, is encouraged.

Policy 7.4

Encourage commercial establishments to incorporate adequate site design standards in regard to off-street parking and loading, signs, buffers, building locations, and landscaping to ensure minimal interference with traffic movements and impact on adjacent land uses. (see 7.22)

- *Provide enforcement capabilities for the preservation of buffers.*

- *Develop pedestrian friendly design standards for commercial establishments.*
- *Work with large commercial shopping centers to institute methods to prevent patrons from removing shopping carts and abandoning them in adjacent neighborhoods.*

Policy 7.6

Ensure that new development and redevelopment is compatible with existing residential neighborhoods. (see 3.1, 3.6, 3.14, 6.17, 7.9, 7.18, 7.27)

- *Develop a residential subdivision infill ordinance that requires new buildings on in-fill lots to reflect the surrounding lot size, setbacks, material and building square footages of the existing neighborhood.*

It is the intent and preference of the community to maintain the existing residential neighborhoods by requiring new development and redevelopment be compatible with the lot size, architectural character, setbacks, square footage, and materials of the surrounding homes in the existing neighborhoods.

On a case by case basis, and only with the support of the surrounding neighborhood(s), certain properties along corridors and in transitional areas may be considered for higher density, single-family detached, infill residential that maintains the character, square footage, size and height of surrounding residential homes so that there is compatibility within the total neighborhood. Any new development connecting to sewer lines near the head of an existing low density residential sewerage must also be a low density residential development where existing lines are not designed for larger flows.

Policy 7.9

Preserve the single-family, low density residential character of all established neighborhoods within the County. (see 3.1, 3.6, 3.14, 6.17, 7.6, 7.27)

- *The County will assist neighborhoods in preparing neighborhood preservation plans.*

Policy 7.10

Define and maintain defensible boundaries for residential, commercial and other zoning districts upon which homeowners and business persons can rely.

- *Define "hard edge" as the boundary around a protected district which can be marked at the area's entrances with signs or monuments. Include definition in zoning ordinance.*

The use of unique signs and design elements creates the sense of place needed to protect existing development (commercial as well as residential) from encroachment.

Policy 7.13

Provide appropriate land use transitions from higher intensity at the center of activity nodes to lower intensity office, institutional and owner occupied multi-family uses at the edge of nodes. Existing LDR and LMR in established neighborhoods are to be protected from transition encroachment. Transition encroachment removes key properties originally platted as part of a neighborhood or sub-division from neighborhoods which the county proposes to protect. (see 5.1 - 5.12, 7.11, 7.18)

Policy 7.17

Prohibit the spread of strip-type commercial development.

Specifically, this plan recommends prohibition of the spread of strip-type commercial development along both sides of Lawrenceville Highway between the LaVista Road intersection in Tucker and the Gwinnett County line and between I-285 and Cooleage Road. The Plan also recommends prohibiting the expansion of strip commercial development along the LaVista Road corridor between Brockett/Henderson Roads and Vista Dale Court. Furthermore, the Plan recommends limiting any potential expansions of commercial uses along Chamblee-Tucker Road in Tucker (north of LaVista Road), Pittsburgh (south of Tuckersham Road or west of the cemetery) and Embury Hills (east of Henderson Mill Road).

Policy 7.24

Promote appropriately scaled and designed local office development which is compatible with the location, economic needs, accessibility, infrastructure and aesthetics of the local community or neighborhood.

Redevelopment of Tucker's downtown core must be done at appropriate scales. Heights should not exceed three floors.

Office redevelopment around Northlake should effect a transition to the residential communities which surround the regional center.

Greater opportunities for positive growth of the regional center may be created by redeveloping

the older one and two-story office buildings within the center than by expanding into the residential surroundings.

Policy 7.25

Promote the maintenance of existing commercial and mixed-use office centers as strong and dynamic business districts for retail, office and entertainment activities.

Redevelopment of declining commercial areas should be strongly encouraged. See the response to Policy 7.24

Policy 7.27

Prohibit the encroachment of commercial, institutional, industrial and mixed-use office development into established residential areas. (see 3.1, 3.6, 3.14, 5.1-5.12, 6.17, 7.6, 7.9)

A case in point is the Peters Community, a long established community dating back many years. Though surrounded by commercial properties and highways, they have an active neighborhood organization & are concerned with protecting the residential character of their community. It is recommended that TCA continue to support their efforts in the future.

Again, see the response Policies 7.24 , 7.17, 7.10 as well as other statements above that support this policy as it pertains to Tucker.

- Prohibit the development of adult entertainment facilities adjacent to or within any residential areas.*
- Restrain the development of businesses as check cashing stores, pawn shops, cheap hotels and liquor stores.*

The Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan endorses County efforts to restrain these uses from proliferating anywhere in the County and specifically within the Tucker community.

- Develop a process of citizen input for neighborhood buy-out projects that involves affected and adjacent neighborhoods.*
- Stop the expansion of commercial strip development along corridors such as LaVista Road, Shallowford Road, Memorial Drive, Lawrenceville Highway, North Decatur Road and Candler Road; and determine alternatives.*
- Prohibit truck routes in residential areas throughout the county.*

Also, discourage thru-truck traffic on Main Street.

Policy 7.31

Encourage the adaptive reuse of other structures for office use when they are appropriately located and suitable for adaptation.

Policy 7.35

Encourage the redevelopment of older industrial areas to accommodate new technological and industrial development.

Although the Royal Atlanta and Hammermill industrial developments are relatively new industrial developments, built with extensive flexibility for re-use, it is expected that as these facilities age they will need to be replaced. New technologies should be welcomed, especially if they offer greater environmental protection to surrounding communities. The industrial sites along Stephens and Moon Streets behind the Tucco plant have a number of uses which may have impacts on the subdivisions that face LaVista Road. Vegetation helps to screen the residences from industrial facilities adequately during the summer, but noise, odors, (possibly vermin) and, in winter, visual pollution make it imperative to consider that land use conflicts may occur. Economic circumstances could swing redevelopment options to either residential or industrial use. However, the Comprehensive Plan's commitment to retaining LaVista Road as a viable and attractive residential corridor supports emphasis on seeking positive redevelopment of this industrial enclave into more compatible land uses.

Policy 7.36

Protect existing and zoned industrial lands from unnecessary intrusion by conflicting land uses.

Policy 7.38

Prohibit the development and expansion of industrial uses which produce excessive noise, smoke, dust, or other particulate matter, vibration, toxic, radioactive or noxious waste materials, odors, fire and explosive hazards or other detrimental impacts.

Policy 7.41

Respect floodplain areas as green space overlay zones and do not permit development in floodplains regardless of previous construction.

Green space overlay zones provide a means for identifying areas where public or private recreational or other uses can be accommodated, but where no buildings or other structures should be built. They also provide extraordinary buffer zones for segregating incompatible land uses.

Policy 7.42

Develop subdivision plans that consider their effect upon the landscape.

Although there are only a few vacant sites where new subdivisions can be built in the Tucker area, the existing landscape is paramount. Several new subdivisions are expected to be created by assemblage of underdeveloped residential lots where the use can be one unit on an acre to four detached single-family units per acre. Building location lines, building materials, concepts for design, and other parameters should integrate attention to the landscape and adjacent properties as part of the design.

Section 2:

Tucker Land Use Planning Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations for planning in the Tucker Neighborhood Area are organized under four main headings: Tucker Neighborhood Identity, Land Use Areas and Edges, Key Parcels and Key Corridors.

Tucker Neighborhood Identity

Of particular interest to the Tucker Civic Association and residents of the Tucker Neighborhood Area who have participated in this strategic planning process is the further development of the identity of Tucker as a cohesive community in DeKalb County. Questions such as “what defines the Tucker Neighborhood?” and comments such as “Tucker needs a recognized heart of the community...” have surfaced in the planning process. Answers to these questions may not have a specific bearing on land use and development recommendations, but the issue of community identity is important to many residents and for many reasons.

The general boundaries of the “Tucker Neighborhood Area” have been estimated with community input and are depicted in Figure 1. The area currently understood as Tucker is generally bounded by Interstate 285 to the west, Stone Mountain Freeway to the south, the DeKalb County line to the east and Chamblee-Tucker Road to the north. Residents within this area tend to consider themselves as residents of Tucker and frequent commercial and institutional establishments in Tucker more than elsewhere. It is important to note that the delineation of boundaries for the Tucker Neighborhood Area is intended not to be exclusive, but rather to be inclusive and descriptive. The specific definition of this area will be defined in the Tucker Civic Association By-laws.

Of great importance to the Tucker community is the downtown Tucker area. It is agreed among residents that this area is the heart of Tucker and should be promoted as such. Improvements to downtown Tucker will serve to bolster residents’ sense of identity and ownership of their community. There are numerous specific aspects to the desired improvement of downtown Tucker such as streetscape improvement and redevelopment of quality commercial and professional entities which resonate strongly with residents. As a beginning point, however, it is important to establish a general definition of the downtown area’s extent and nature.

The area defined as “downtown Tucker,” as depicted in Figure 2, includes many of the

commercial and institutional entities which serve Tucker residents. At its center is the Main Street area, including local institutions such as Tucker High School and Matthews Cafeteria with numerous smaller shops and offices arranged in a traditional small-town-main-street fashion. A railroad line currently operated by CSX Corporation crosses Main Street and has been a primary organizing feature for the development of the downtown area. Extending from the Main Street vicinity are the major corridors of LaVista Road, Lawrenceville Highway and Hugh Howell Road which have been developed to include commercial, office and institutional uses. Though these corridors follow a strip commercial development pattern rather than a traditional downtown pattern, they are decidedly a major part of the downtown activity node. And, though Lawrenceville Highway is maintained as a commercial corridor to the west from the downtown Tucker area to the Northlake Parkway area, the corridors in other directions do not maintain commercial use. Thus, a general definition of downtown Tucker as including the area depicted in Figure 2 and promotion of its identity as such seems appropriate at this time.

Land Use Areas and Edges

The Tucker Neighborhood Area includes a full range of land uses, from single-family residential to industrial. The current distribution of land uses has resulted from development trends and past land use planning activities. As the community has developed to the point that there is little “undeveloped” land remaining, it is important for the health of the community to consider the locations of various land uses and specifically the transition areas from one type of land use to another.

The majority of Tucker is comprised of single-family residential subdivisions. There is some variation in the nature of these subdivisions, but single-family detached housing on approximately 1-acre lots is most common. Of the broadly defined Tucker Neighborhood Area, there are three large areas of single-family residential land use which are divided from one another by commercial and industrial land uses. The northern residential area extends north to Chamblee-Tucker Road from LaVista Road and Lawrenceville Highway east of downtown. This area includes Evansdale, Livsey and Midvale Elementary schools. The southwest residential area is bounded generally by Lawrenceville Highway, I-285, Stone Mountain Freeway and the industrial park area along Mountain Industrial Boulevard. Brockett and Idlewood Elementary Schools are located in this area. The southeastern residential area reaches east of the Mountain Industrial area and south of the CSX rail line, including Smokerise Elementary School.

Serving to geographically separate the general residential areas of Tucker are corridors of primarily commercial and industrial land uses. The Mountain Industrial Park area is a planned industrial area established in the 1970's. Though an industrial park, this area is generally light industrial in nature, accommodating primarily distribution facilities. The downtown Tucker area abuts the Mountain Industrial area along Tucker Industrial Road. As previously described, downtown Tucker includes a concentration of commercial, office and institutional entities. Commercial uses extend west out of the downtown area along the Lawrenceville Highway corridor, which is commercial and industrial to the Northlake area at I-285 with some notable established exceptions.

Transition areas from one land use type to another, or edges of land use type areas, are generally the most sensitive areas for land use planning. There are certain levels of compatibility and incompatibility among land uses that make this so. For example, it is generally more compatible for office/professional land uses to locate adjacent to residential than it is for industrial uses to locate next to residential. In order to identify these sensitive areas within Tucker, Figure 3 includes approximate locations of "hard" and "soft" land use edges. Hard land use edges are those which involve more intensive general commercial or industrial uses and residential land uses. Soft land use edges are those which involve less intensive office/professional/institutional uses and residential uses. There are more specific edges which can be defined between different residential densities, for example, but the primary concern is with incompatibilities of use.

Recommendations

- Maintain land use breaks from commercial to residential along major corridors at the edge of downtown Tucker: LaVista, Lawrenceville Highway, Chamblee-Tucker, Idlewood, Brockett, Fellowship, etc. to prevent extension of commercial corridors.
- Contain minor commercial nodes at residential edges: Pittsburgh area, Brockett and Cooledge, Indian Trail Drive and Lawrenceville Highway (near the County line), Hugh Howell Road and Lilburn Stone Mountain Road, etc.
- Encourage Northlake area office development to develop westward from LaVista Circle toward I-285 and not intrude further into residential areas in Tucker.
- Maintain existing boundaries of Mountain Industrial area and consider allowance of transitional uses from industrial to residential such as institutional (INS: churches, etc.). Light intensity commercial (LIC) is not appropriate as a transitional use.

Key Areas

The upswing in development and construction which has impacted Metro Atlanta over the past several years has also created development interest and pressure in the Tucker Neighborhood Area. Recent developments such as the Wal-Mart/Kroger shopping center on Lawrenceville Highway and new residential subdivisions such as Browning Mill Chase on Idlewood Road are indicative of the strong local market for retail and housing. Both of these developments took advantage of previously undeveloped land parcels to develop at a large scale. Such developments have the potential to significantly impact the surrounding area and community as a whole. Therefore, it is important to consider similar existing circumstances and strategically plan for them and to consistently follow and implement the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and the Tucker Neighborhood Plan. Following are descriptions of identified “key” parcels or areas and recommendations regarding each based on the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and Tucker Neighborhood residents’ input.

Downtown Tucker Core

Downtown Tucker holds an historic and geographic claim to being the heart of the Tucker community. The Main Street Tucker Alliance (MSTA) has taken the responsibility of coordinating the revitalization of Main Street and the Downtown Core (Figure 2). As part of that effort, they have secured and will continue to seek grant funding, including a 2002 HOST grant, to support the downtown efforts. Basic infrastructure is in place to support this area as an active traditional town center. Opportunities for redevelopment in the downtown should be encouraged but regulated by that which is appropriate and desired in the community.

Implementation of a detailed Planning Study should be encouraged which addresses the Downtown Core roughly illustrated by Figure 2 incorporated in the Appendix of this document. This area is a diverse commercial area with opportunity for infill and redevelopment. A private consultant should be engaged to develop a format and schedule of public forum meetings and the base information for reviewing the study area, identifying proposed changes and reaching community goals. The development and synthesis of alternative scenarios and recommendations should be conducted in open meetings to ensure community-based input and to develop broad based support for the study’s recommendations.

There are Federal, State and County grants and programs designed to help communities accomplish similar studies and implement the goals of those studies. There are many business and community based organizations in the Tucker area which are capable of sponsoring such a study. A consensus should be reached among the primary organizations as to which organization should sponsor such a study and all organizations should then collectively work together to ensure the success of the program.

Several issues should be addressed in future planning for a successful downtown Tucker:

- Redevelopment areas and opportunities exist in several areas, specifically along Main Street. The area south of the railroad along Main Street and Idlewood to Fellowship should be considered for more dense office and commercial development with allowance of structures reaching three stories.
- Streetscape improvements should improve the infrastructure and identity of downtown Tucker.
- A gathering space or spaces should be developed in downtown to better serve a variety of festivals and celebrations.
- Mixed land use including residential, commercial, office and professional uses that commonly coexist in traditional downtowns should be encouraged to develop in downtown Tucker. Additional parking spaces should be located behind buildings and hidden from view wherever possible. Establishment of a special zoning overlay for the downtown Tucker area should be considered as a way to address these issues. Development standards for the number of parking spaces required for a commercial or office development in downtown Tucker should be flexible, allowing for consideration of fewer than the required number of spaces in exchange for improved pedestrian/cyclist accessibility.
- The potential to have a commuter rail station in or adjacent to downtown Tucker should be carefully studied and evaluated. Any such facility should be used to bolster the area as a pedestrian friendly and mixed use environment.

LaVista Road/Fellowship Road/Brockett Road Area

This area at the edge of downtown Tucker is bounded by LaVista Road to the north, the railroad tracks to the south, Fellowship Road to the east and Brockett Road to the west. With the current mixture of small-scale commercial and transitional land uses along the LaVista Road frontage, there is the potential to develop a traditional (or neo-traditional) mixed-use, pedestrian friendly

environment in the entire area. Medium densities of residential along with office/professional uses should be encouraged here. The Bancroft Circle area from Adrian Road to the railroad tracks is a unique area of smaller homes, used as residences and businesses nestled in a tall canopy of mature oaks, maples and other hardwood trees creating a park like setting. This haven within the Tucker Business Core should retain its character of quaintness, uniqueness and diversity of use. This area provides peace and quiet, offers tranquility and invites a leisurely stroll to sojourn from the adjacent hustle and bustle. This is the type of area ideal for restaurants, artisans, small craft and boutique shops and a natural park. Development of large structures should be discouraged as well as structures that do not reflect the architectural and neighborhood character.

The area might ideally be connected to Main Street Tucker and the Burns property development east of Main Street by a meandering pedestrian green space walk, crossing over Fellowship Road adjacent to the railroad tracks. This would provide the much-needed green space/park that the Tucker Core has been seeking. This will set Tucker apart from the Northlake business hub. This would offer the Tucker community a place to shop and relax that cannot be found in other nearby areas.

LaVista and Lawrenceville Highway Corridor from Pine Lake Road to Cofer Circle

This corridor area has been dramatically changed over the years by road widenings and commercial development. Parcels on the north side of Lawrenceville Highway should remain single-family residential, using the road as a break from commercial development. Redevelopment in this area to include single-family detached houses at up to four (4) units per acre is preferable to allowing conversion of houses and parcels to OPR or LIC. Residential development at densities higher than four (4) units per acre and in configurations other than single-family detached housing, however, is unacceptable to neighborhood residents. The same dynamics and preferences that cover this area also apply to the area from Pine Lake Road to the Gwinnett County Line area, including the development of condominiums and R-50 homes at Cofer Circle.

LaVista, Lawrenceville and Burns Avenue

A sizeable undeveloped parcel across from the Kroger shopping center is planned for low intensity commercial in a key location at the confluence of major arterials. It is highly desirable that development on this parcel be sensitive to the existing traffic congestion.

Dillard Street

The several large parcels at the end of this older residential street are in the process of being developed into an attached townhome community. . These parcels are adjacent to low density single-family detached residential properties to the west, north and east, and industrial property to the south. Currently, Dillard Street is a narrow, dead-end street in need of special attention. Based on these issues of adjacent land use and transportation access, the highest consideration for residential redevelopment on Dillard Street should be LMR single-family detached residential development.

Idlewood at Fellowship

The community appreciates the redevelopment of the former Doctor's Hospital property as Tucker Middle School.

Given the proximity to Main Street services, planned developments of small facilities for elderly housing as well as middle school age children from the nearby Tucker Middle School seem appropriate in this location.

Seamless sidewalk access to neighboring communities, shops and businesses, and Main Street would be very desirable. Any residential development or redevelopment in this area would ideally be LDR or MDR.

Idlewood below Fellowship

A few large parcels on the west side of Idlewood and several rather large residential parcels on the east side offer future potential as residential subdivision developments. It seems most preferable to maintain this area as LDR, consistent with surrounding residential subdivisions.

Lawrenceville Highway at Cooledge Road

Two large parcels on the south side of Lawrenceville Highway west of Cooledge Road may be developed as detached LMR single-family. If so developed, it must be ensured that there are acceptable site plans for single-family detached housing that is compatible with the character of adjacent older subdivisions. Additionally, the historical significance of structures in this area should be considered. Any sites or buildings that are determined to be of historical value should be preserved as publicly accessible resources.

LaVista at Midvale

A few estate residential parcels offer opportunities for subdivision and development. This area should probably be allowed to split among LDR and LMR density single-family redevelopments, with LDR locating to the northwest adjacent to similar residential and LMR locating in the area nearer downtown Tucker and the intersection of LaVista and Henderson. LMR-density development along LaVista could include single-family housing conditioned to a site plan with allocation for open space preservation in keeping with the LaVista corridor.

Northlake Parkway North of LaVista Road

The commercial and office/industrial (C-O/I) properties on the east side of Northlake Parkway north of LaVista Road to Northlake Center Drive and Habersham at Northlake, border on the western residential properties inside Winding Woods Subdivision which are zoned R-85 and designated as LDR in the DeKalb County Land Use Plan. Expansion of C-O/I development into this subdivision should be prohibited. Furthermore, the 100-foot, R-85 buffer between Winding Woods Subdivision and the current C-O/I properties should be preserved.

For any properties which are adjacent to the subdivision, development or redevelopment of the existing C-O/I properties should include height restrictions and adequate buffers and setbacks. Buildings closest to the subdivision should be limited to two or three stories. A step-up to five stories could be allowed for properties on the east side of Northlake Parkway and the east and north sides of the Northlake Center Drive and Habersham at Northlake areas.

Chamblee-Tucker/Tuckersham Lane

Parcels in this area fronting Chamblee-Tucker Road are very deep lots which may be assembled and redeveloped at a higher intensity. It is important to prevent commercial land use from spreading south along Chamblee-Tucker in this area. Therefore, based on general community input, this particular area is appropriate for single-family detached development as a means of curbing the conversion of residential to commercial. A planned unit development compatible with the neighborhood is encouraged. Attached housing is not acceptable on Chamblee-Tucker Road outside of downtown Tucker.

Stone Mountain Parkway

Though a large area of land extending along Stone Mountain Parkway between the Mountain Industrial area and Silver Hill Road is topographically challenging, the Smoke Rise Golf and Country Club provides an admirable community solution to this challenge. This land acts as somewhat of a buffer between Stone Mountain Parkway and the Smokerise community. The

buffer should be preserved where possible, and LDR and institutional uses are appropriate as indicated in the DeKalb County Future Land Use map.

Key Corridors

The Lawrenceville Highway, LaVista Road, Chamblee-Tucker Road, Hugh Howell and Brockett Road corridors have special importance to the Tucker community. The section of Lawrenceville Highway from Northlake Parkway to Hugh Howell Road is commercial in development. Here, measures should be taken to ensure higher quality commercial development and limits on new strip development. The array of commercial signage detracts from the corridor's appeal and property and business owners should be encouraged to use fewer and more attractive signs.

The two decidedly residential sections of Lawrenceville Highway, from Old Norcross Road to the Gwinnett County line and from I-285 to Cooledge Road should retain their single-family residential character. The stretch from Old Norcross to North Royal Atlanta demands special emphasis. When Lawrenceville Highway in this area was widened, lots were reduced to a depth that makes redevelopment challenging and a number of the properties have not been maintained. Pressure for more commercial development could arise over time, making it imperative that a planning group develop a cohesive "master plan" for the area. Such a group should include representatives from the Tucker Civic Association, the property owners and the DeKalb Planning Department.

On LaVista Road, the residential character of existing residentially zoned property between the Northlake area and Downtown Tucker should be preserved. The single-family residential character of Chamblee-Tucker Road from Tuckersham Lane to Morgan Road should also be preserved. Hugh Howell Road, as the chief arterial extending into the Smokerise residential community, must not become a location for commercial or higher density residential intrusion into that community, and Brockett Road, a decidedly single-family residential corridor, must be prevented both from becoming a location for commercial intrusion as well as a cut-through corridor.

General Recommendations

The following general recommendations are intended to direct residents of the Tucker Neighborhood as well as members and leaders of the Tucker Civic Association to implement the Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan in the current planning context. These

recommendations focus on the process of effecting change and achieving planning goals that the TCA and Tucker residents should continue to be involved in.

1. Continually promote, revise and update the Tucker Neighborhood Strategic Plan.

Similar to the County's Comprehensive Plan, this strategic plan should be a "living document" that remains current as the planning and development climate changes. If the plan is not promoted as a statement of policy from the TCA, or if it is allowed to become dated, then it will

not be useful as a planning tool. Officials with DeKalb County as well as area developers should be encouraged to become familiar with the plan's recommendations.

2. Study development proposals on a case-by-case basis, using the Strategic Plan as a basis for analysis.

The planning process must operate at the level of individual land use decisions but is guided by larger, comprehensive plans.

3. Insist on the preparation of specific development and site plans by prospective developers.

In Tucker, density requirements alone are not sufficient to determine the appropriateness of a development. The TCA and Tucker residents should expect specific development plans from developers and changes to the Land Use Plan should only be supported with accompanying rezoning applications that are conditioned upon a specific site plan.

4. Actively promote the development/redevelopment of the Tucker Downtown Core (fig. 2) as a mixed-use, pedestrian/cyclist friendly area.

Development in the Tucker area should be encouraged to focus in the Tucker Downtown Core. This area is the preferable location for new commercial, educational, mixed-use and appropriately integrated residential development. A plan for the recruitment of desired businesses, restaurants and office developments to downtown Tucker should be encouraged. Work to implement plans for Main Street streetscape improvements should proceed to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and to encourage Main Street businesses to grow

5. Protect established single-family residential neighborhoods from intrusion of incompatible land uses.

The majority of Tucker is comprised of established residential neighborhoods which must be preserved. Commercial development along traditionally residential corridors must be contained and in-fill development must be consistent with adjacent areas.

- 6. Encourage shared, back lot parking for on-site parking in commercial areas.**
- 7. Study, access and implement any desired overlay districts for Tucker Downtown and its major corridors.**
- 8. Study, access and implement, if deemed desirable, a community foundation for Tucker.**