

Lookout Mountain, Georgia Comprehensive Plan - 2009



**Background Study
Public Input & Growth Scenarios
The Plan**

December 11, 2009

DRAFT

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PLAN PURPOSE

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a blueprint for the future growth and development of a community. The following types of issues are addressed in a comprehensive plan:

- Natural and historic resources
- Land uses
- Physical development and character
- Public facilities and infrastructure
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic development

Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan should benefit the community in the following manners:

- It should identify the community's most precious resources (environmental, historic and cultural) and address their future protection.
- The land use element of the plan shall serve as the legal basis for future zoning.
- The transportation element shall provide guidance for future decisions related to new streets, street connections, and existing street improvements.
- The future physical development and character of the community should be described in the comprehensive plan and implemented through supportive development regulations.
- The plan should address the future expansion of public facilities and infrastructure such as public water and sewers.

State Requirements for Planning

The State of Georgia has legal requirements for local governments to conduct periodic comprehensive planning. The following is a summary:

A Comprehensive Plan should answer the following questions:

- 1) Where are we now?
- 2) Where are we headed?
- 3) Where do we want to go?
- 4) How do we get there?

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1 "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" went into effect on May 1, 2005 (see Appendix A for a full copy of this regulation). This regulation requires that comprehensive plans feature three components: a community assessment, a community participation program, and a community agenda. The latter component is considered "the most important, for it includes the community's vision for the future, as well as its strategy for achieving this vision." The community agenda should include the following three items:

- A community vision for future physical development of the community expressed in the form of a map
- A list of issues and opportunities identified by the community for further action
- An implementation program for achieving the community's vision

There is also a set of State Planning Recommendations that are intended to help planning efforts at the local level and which may be relevant to local communities and their comprehensive plans. The State's planning requirements are based upon the population and growth rates of each community. Because Lookout Mountain is located within a county with a population exceeding 50,000, the "advanced planning level" applies to the City's comprehensive planning. Consequently, this plan will follow those State requirements, which are necessary for the City to retain its Qualified Local Government status and its associated funding.

PLAN APPROACH

Scope of Work

The following four-step approach was used to create this Comprehensive Plan:

- Task 1.0: Analysis & Visioning
- Task 2.0: Charrette & Alternative Growth Scenarios
- Task 3.0: Preparation of Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Task 4.0: Plan Presentation & Revisions

Public Input

Public input for this plan was solicited through three primary means: a public informational meeting, a set of stakeholder group meetings, a public “kick-off” meeting, and a public charrette. Once the draft plan was prepared, it was presented to solicit further public input. These events are described below:

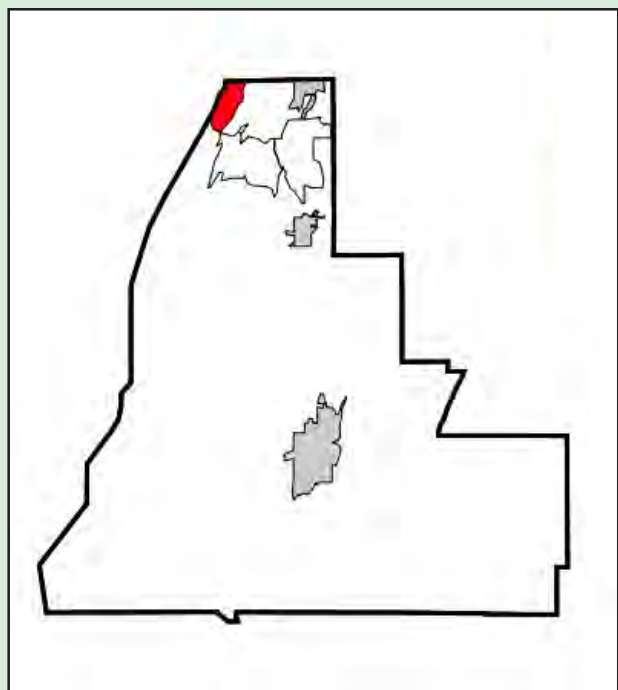
Public Informational Meeting

On the morning of July 14, 2009, a public meeting was held to provide interested citizens and other stakeholders with an introduction to the planning process. After the project’s intent, key steps, and schedule were reviewed, a lengthy question and answer session was conducted with the public.

Stakeholder Group Meetings

On July 14 and 15, 2009, a series of stakeholder group meetings were held to discuss specific issues relevant to each particular group. The consultants met for approximately one hour with the following groups:

- Residents
- Owners of Key Properties
- Business, Real Estate & Economic Development Representatives
- Special Interest Groups (environmentalists, etc.)
- Public Officials



Walker County is located in the northwest corner of Georgia (see map at left). Lookout Mountain is located in the very northwest corner of Walker County (see map at right).
 Source: Wikimedia Commons

Public “Kick-Off” Meeting

A public “kick-off” meeting was held the evening of July 14, 2009. This meeting included an introduction of the planning consultants and project steering committee, an overview of the planning process, a summary of preliminary findings, and a lengthy discussion to solicit the public’s vision for the future based upon a series of specific questions.

Public Input Survey

A survey was created to ask the following four questions:

- 1) What do you love about Lookout Mountain that we need to keep?
- 2) What would you like to change?
- 3) What would you like to see in 20 years?
- 4) What aspects of other communities, if any, should we consider emulating?

Over 300 surveys were completed both in hard-copy form and on-line. The results can be found in Appendix B.

Public Charrette Workshop

On the evening of August 25, 2009, approximately 60 stakeholders participated in a public charrette (an intensive brainstorming session) workshop. The participants were split up into six teams, each of which crafted their own plan for the City. After approximately two hours of planning, each team presented their ideas to the entire group. Those ideas were, in part, used as a basis for the consultants’ plan.

Alternative Growth Scenarios Presentation

On the evening of August 27, 2009, the draft Alternative Growth Scenarios were presented to the public. An audience of over 100 people attended the meeting. The growth scenarios are addressed in detail on pages 52-56 of this plan document. Following the presentation, a lengthy open discussion was held with the public.

Plan Presentation

To be provided once the presentation occurs



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NATURAL RESOURCES

Study Area Overview

Lookout Mountain, Georgia, is part of a mountain range that is oriented along an essentially north-south axis. This range is 83 miles in length. The northern most three miles are in Tennessee, 30 miles are in Georgia, and the remaining 50 miles are in Alabama. The portion of the range comprising Lookout Mountain, Georgia, has an elevation between approximately 1,100 to 2,000 feet above sea level. The area's geology consists of limestone, which is why there are so many rock outcroppings and caverns. Located in Walker County, the City's boundaries entail approximately 2.7 square miles (1,728 acres) of land. The entire community is on an underground aquifer.

Geology

Sand Mountain and Lookout Mountain form most of the Cumberland Plateau region in Georgia. They differ from the mountains of the Ridge and Valley by their flat tops. Both the Cumberland Plateau and the Ridge and Valley provinces are primarily sedimentary rock (formed by marine sediments compressing over millennia) such as shale (formed from silt) and sandstone (formed from sand). Much of the Cumberland Plateau is underlain with limestone, formed from the shells of marine organisms deposited in a prehistoric sea between 300-425 million years ago. Limestone is a soft and porous rock notorious for cave formations. Caves form when limestone is dissolved by weak acids produced when rainwater combines with carbon dioxide. This process of chemical erosion created some of the deepest caves east of the Mississippi, including Ellisons Cave, which has drops of up to 600 vertical feet. Several rivers have eroded deep canyons into the high plateau, forming impressive land forms such as Cloudland Canyon and Johnsons Crock.



Aerial Photograph of Lookout City, Georgia
Source: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Summary

Lookout Mountain entails approximately 2.7 square miles (1,728 acres) of land. The entire community is on an underground aquifer, and the limestone geology features numerous caves.

Elevations

Existing Conditions

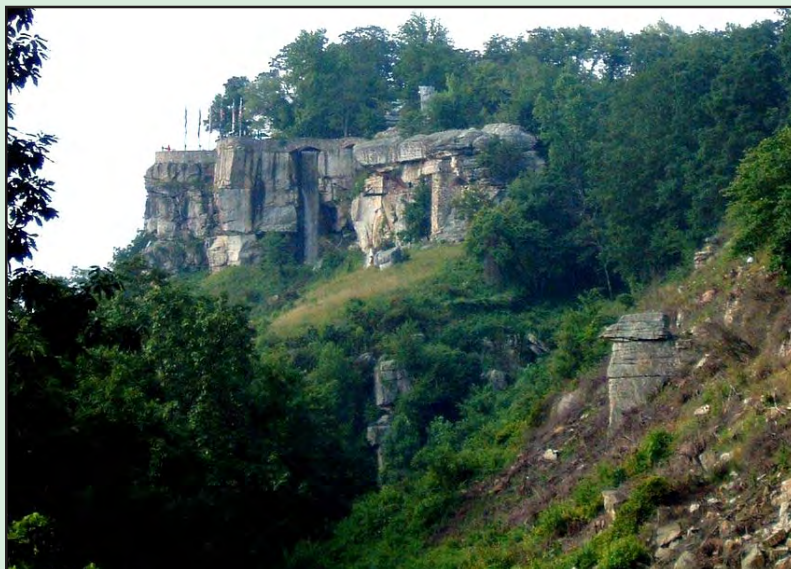
The elevations map at right provides a range of elevation heights measured in feet above sea level. The topography of the city has its lowest elevation along its eastern edge at a height of 1,181 feet above sea level (olive colored line). At the opposite end of the spectrum is the western edge of the city, where the elevation is as high as 1,968 feet above sea level (purple colored line). The rise in elevation from east to west is relatively gradual, as the sequencing of lines on the map at right reveal. For example, the most central portions of the city tend to be at the 1,500 feet to 1,700 feet elevation level.

Planning Implications

In many instances, the topography and dense vegetation limit viewsheds from within Lookout Mountain to other distant parts of the mountain. However, in general, development located on higher elevations will tend to have a greater visual impact on the community's character than lower areas. Some communities, for example, limit or restrict altogether development on certain threshold elevations that would be considered high-visibility hilltops.

Summary

Lookout Mountain slopes downward from west to east. It reaches as high as 1,968 feet above sea level on its western edge, and as low as 1,181 feet above sea level on its eastern edge.

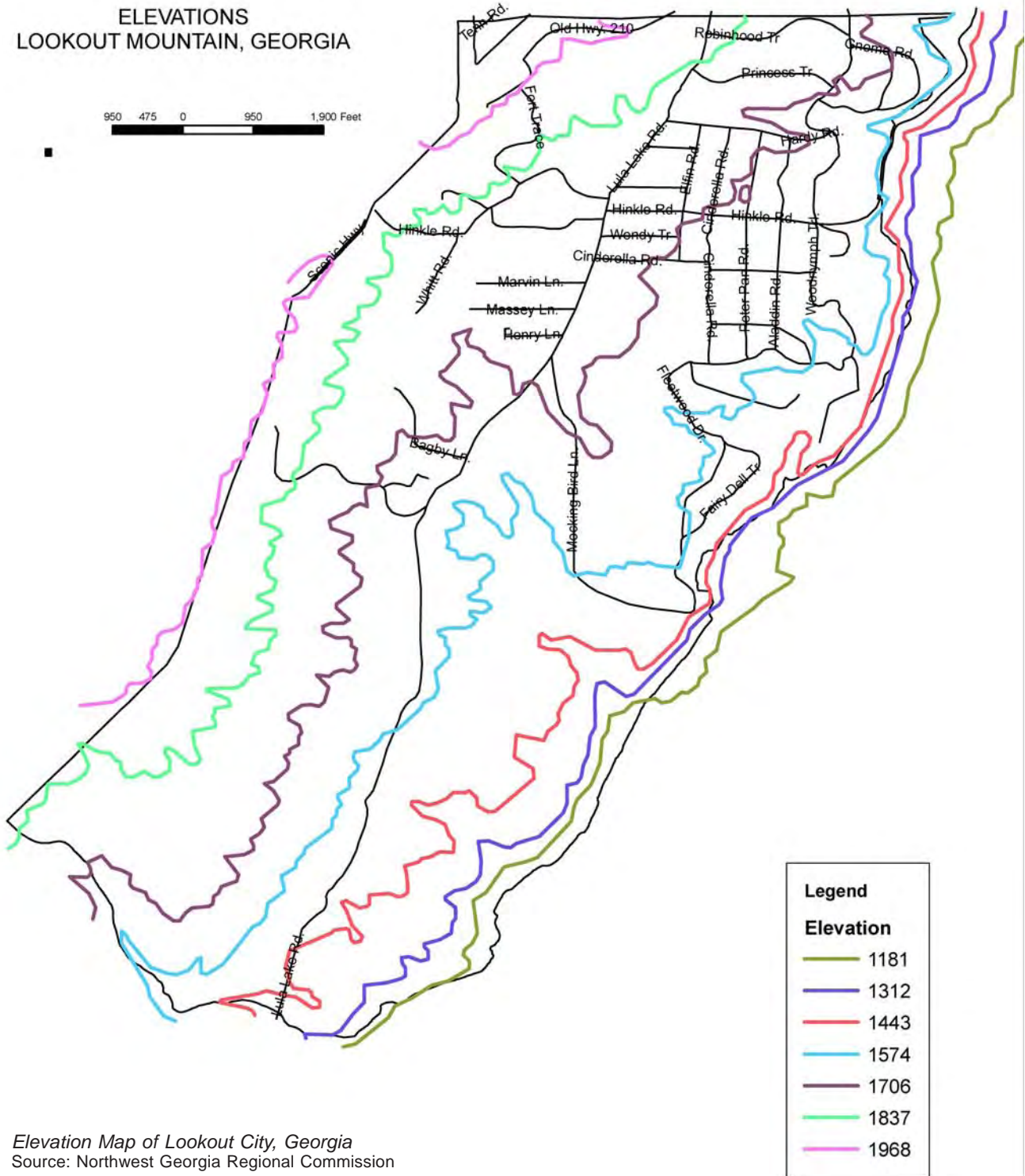


With elevations ranging between roughly 1,100 and 2,000 feet above sea level, Lookout Mountain, Georgia, is perched above Chattanooga, which is located to the east. This photograph of the eastern edge of the city actually features some of the lower elevations of the community, as the elevation increases as one moves toward the west.

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ELEVATIONS
LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA

950 475 0 950 1,900 Feet



Elevation Map of Lookout City, Georgia
Source: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Note: Some of the streets on this map are incorrectly labeled.

Slopes

Existing Conditions

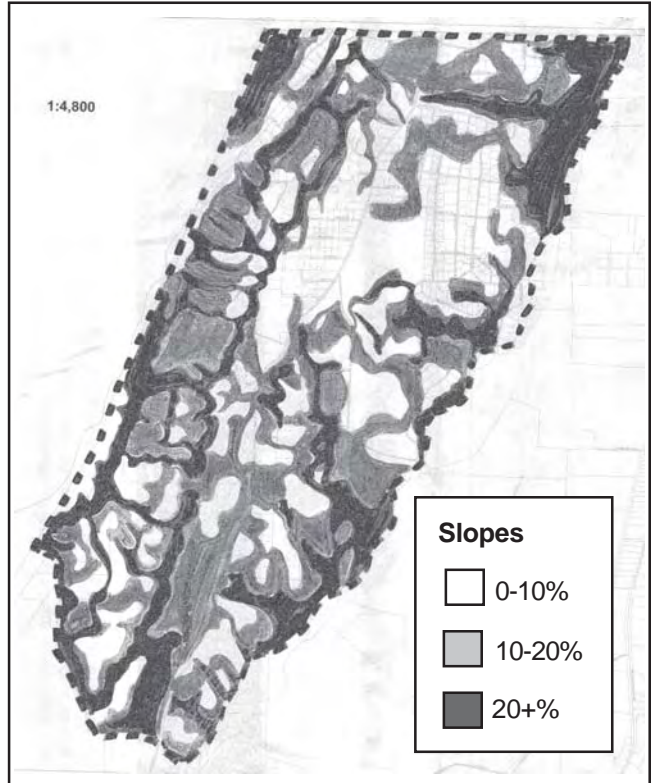
The slope of land is simply the pitch or amount of vertical increase with every increment of horizontal distance. In short, it is the extent to which land is steep. The map at far right features small blue lines representing contours of the land at ten (10) foot intervals. For every ten (10) foot rise in elevation, a line is drawn. Thus, the steepest lands are the areas in which the blue lines are most dense. The small black and white map at the immediate right categorizes slopes into three groups. The lightest colored areas have slopes ranging from 0% to 10%, the gray areas range between 10% and 20%, and the darkest areas feature slopes of 20% or more.

Planning Implications

Slopes are an important issue because the disturbance of steep slopes can result in soil erosion and sedimentation into streams and other lower lying areas. Erosion and sedimentation can have substantially negative consequences for the environment and threaten the health (and even life) of various plant and animal species. Even the use of silt fences during slope disturbance may not be enough to avoid soil erosion and sedimentation.

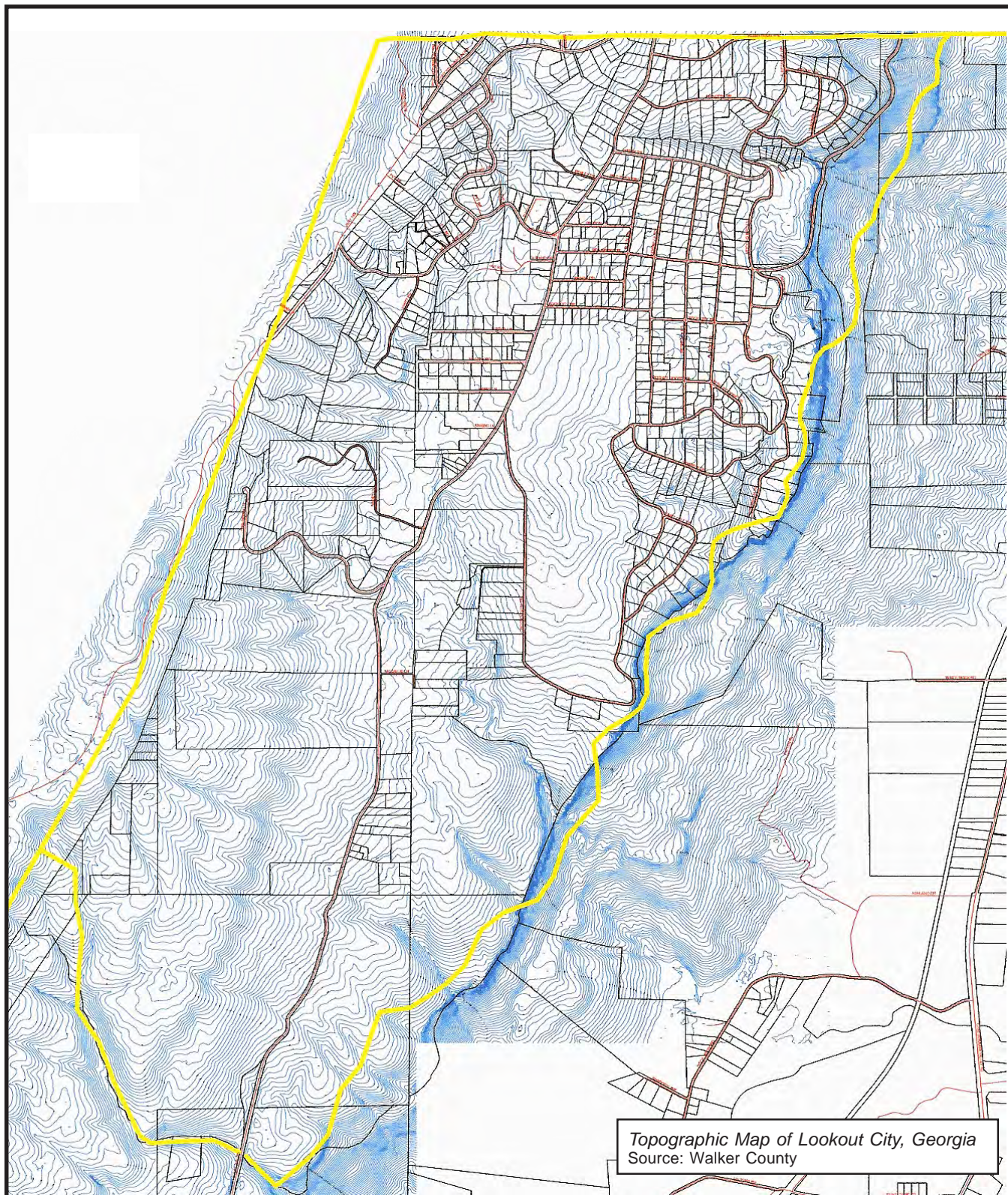
Summary

Approximately 20 percent of Lookout Mountain contains extensive areas of land with slopes of 20 percent or greater. Such areas are extremely constrained for development and are environmentally sensitive.



Development on steep slopes can result in soil erosion and sedimentation, both of which have harmful environmental consequences. While certain construction techniques, such as the use of silt fences, can help to mitigate the impacts of erosion, even these approaches may have limited benefits.





Soils

Existing Conditions

Soils come in a wide range of composition and quality. Some have high percentages of sand and drain well, while others have high levels of clay and do not. Some soil types are well-suited for agriculture and development, while others are not. Soil characteristics are usually related to their associated geology and hydrology. Information in this section of the plan is based upon a report entitled "Soils Interpretation for the Coosa Valley Area," which was prepared in 1969 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service. There are three soil types in Lookout Mountain, and they are described in the green text box below.

Planning Implications

As the soil data above indicates, the vast majority of the city features soils that are considered to have severe limitations for development. The one exception is those few areas with Dekalb - Hartsells - Steekee soil (#13). This soil type is limited to the golf course and an area just west of the golf course on Lula Lake Road.

Summary

The vast majority of Lookout Mountain's soils have significant limitations for development because of their shallow depths and slopes. The most expansive area with soils well-suited for development is the golf course.

Steekee - Dekalb - Hartsells (Soil Association # 9)

Locations: Most of the community is comprised of this soil type.

Slopes: 10-60%

Limitations for residential development: Severe depth to hard rock - 1 to 5 feet / slope

Limitations for foundations for light industrial and commercial buildings: Severe slope

Limitations for trafficways: Severe depth to hard rock - 1 to 5 feet / slope

Limitations for sewage trunk lines: Severe depth to hard rock - 1 to 5 feet

Allen - Holston stony - Bodine stony - Montevallo shaly (Soil Association # 12)

Locations: This soil type is limited to the very northwest and northeast corners of the city.

Slopes: 10-60%

Limitations for residential development: Severe slope coarse fragments / depth to hard rock - 4 to 8 feet

Limitations for foundations for light industrial and commercial buildings: Severe slope

Limitations for trafficways: Severe slope traffic supporting capacity / coarse fragments / depth to hard rock - 4 to 8 feet

Limitations for sewage trunk lines: Severe slope

Dekalb - Hartsells - Steekee (Soil Association # 13)

Locations: This soil type is limited to the golf course and an isolated area located immediately west of the golf course and straddling both sides of Lula Lake Road.

Slopes: 2-10%

Limitations for residential development: Moderate depth to hard rock - 1 to 5 feet / slope

Limitations for foundations for light industrial and commercial buildings: Moderate slope

Limitations for trafficways: Moderate depth to hard rock - 1 to 5 feet / slope

Limitations for sewage trunk lines: Severe depth to hard rock - 1 to 5 feet

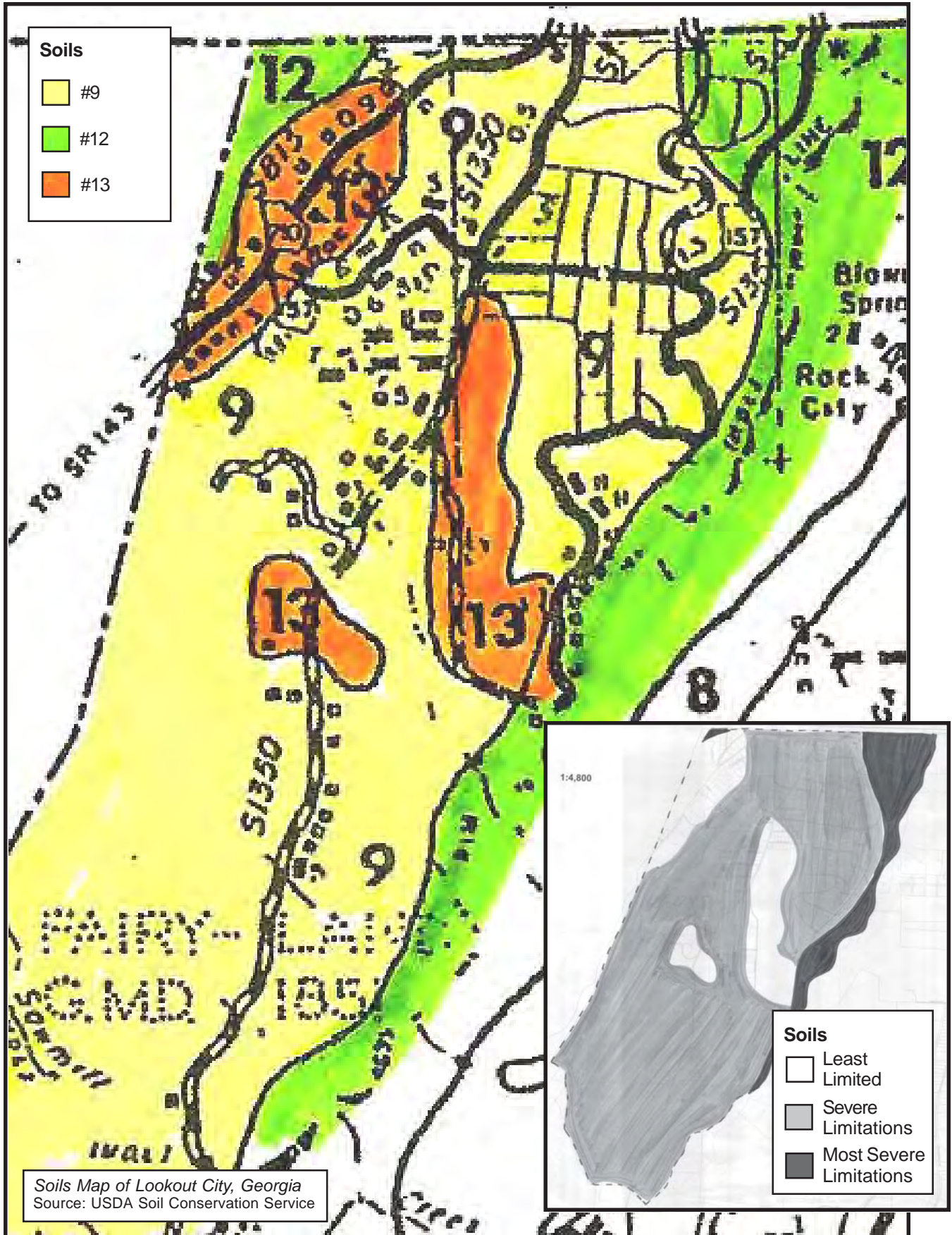
Note: All indications of suitability for residential development are based upon using public sewers, as septic systems are not allowed for new development.

Key to Soil Limitations Rankings

"Slight" - The soil has no limitation or no more than some limitation. The limitation is not serious and is easy to overcome.

"Moderate" - The soil has moderate limitation to use. The limitation needs to be recognized, but it can be overcome or corrected by means that in general are practical.

"Severe" - The soil has severe limitations. Use of the soil is questionable because the limitation is difficult to overcome.



Wetlands & Floodplains

Although there are only limited amounts of wetlands and floodplains in Lookout Mountain relative to many communities, the map at right indicates their locations. Below is a summary of both topics:

Wetlands

The federal regulations implementing Section 404 of the Clean Water Act define wetlands as: *Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water (hydrology) at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation (hydrophytes) typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions (hydric soils). Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.* Wetlands are important to the environment for numerous reasons, including the following:

- Wetlands help to control flooding
- Wetlands filter pollutants from soil and groundwater
- Wetlands serve as habitat for important plants and animals

As indicated by the map at right, there are only three identified small areas of wetlands, although others may exist. One is located just west of the intersection of Lula Lake Road and Wendy Trail at Fairyland School, another is located on the golf course east of Woodnymph Trail, and the third is located south of Turnberry Lane and west

of Lula Lake Road. Should any modifications to these areas be considered, a permit may be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A similar process is required for proposed modifications to streams and adjacent buffers with respect to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). This process can be lengthy and expensive given that mitigation may be required, depending upon the size and quality of each water body. Given the regulatory constraints and the many environmental and human health benefits of these valuable resources, preservation of these areas is recommended.

Floodplains

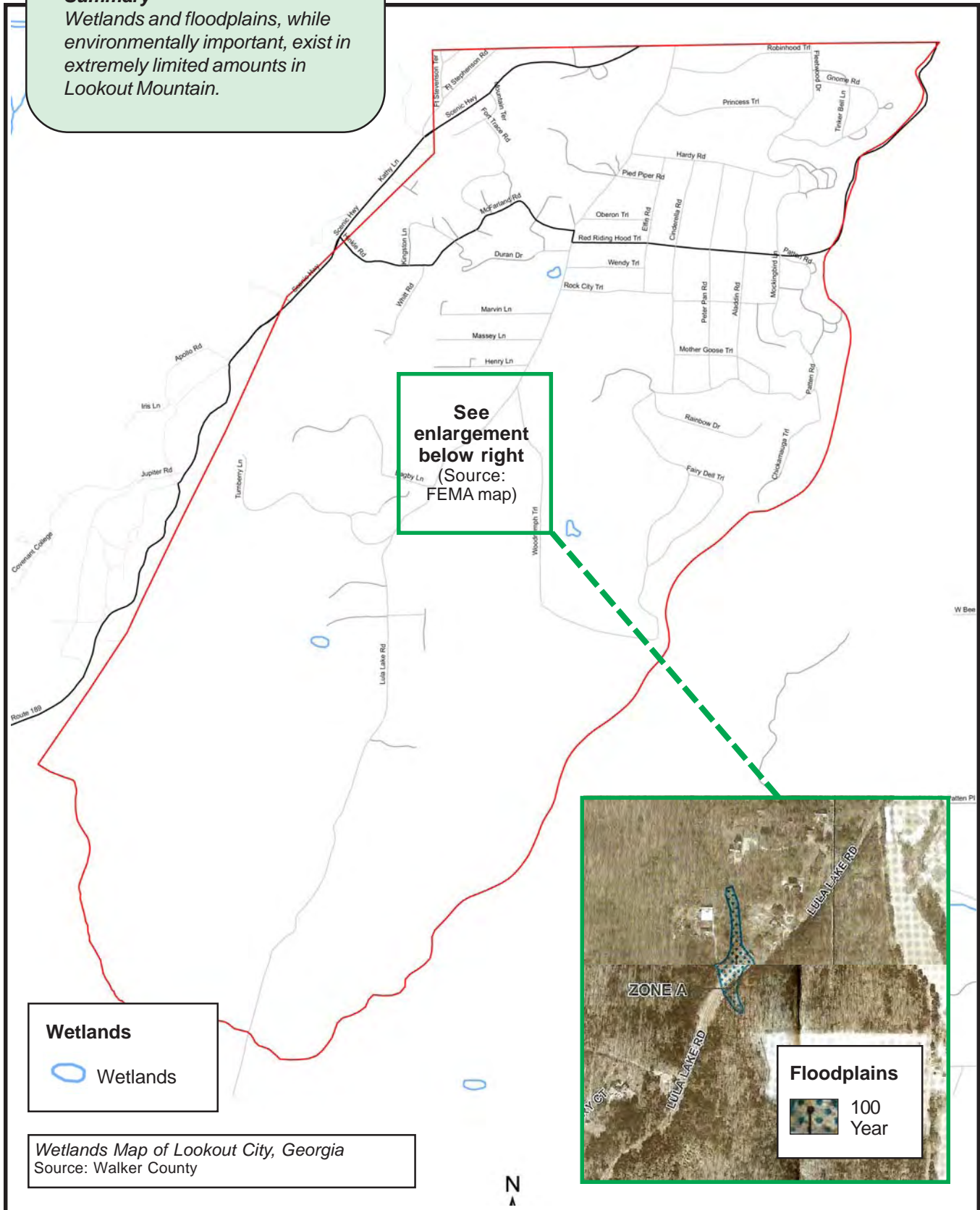
According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there is only one small area within the City of Lookout Mountain that has been designated as a 100-year floodplain. It straddles Lula Lake Road just north of Bagby Lane. See the enlarged map at bottom right for the location. Many communities in Georgia and elsewhere have adopted ordinances to minimize development in current and future floodplains. The Georgia EPD requires the adoption of an ordinance to prevent development in areas identified by FEMA as occurring in the 100-year floodplain. The City of Lookout Mountain will need to adopt a floodplain protection ordinance in the near future to ensure compliance with state requirements and to protect structures and residents.



This small pond is located at Fairyland School. As evidenced by the turtles shown here sunbathing on a rock, freshwater wetlands are an important habitat for Lookout Mountain's diverse stock of reptiles.

Summary

Wetlands and floodplains, while environmentally important, exist in extremely limited amounts in Lookout Mountain.



See enlargement below right (Source: FEMA map)

Wetlands
 Wetlands

Floodplains
 100 Year

Wetlands Map of Lookout City, Georgia
 Source: Walker County

Streams & Drainage

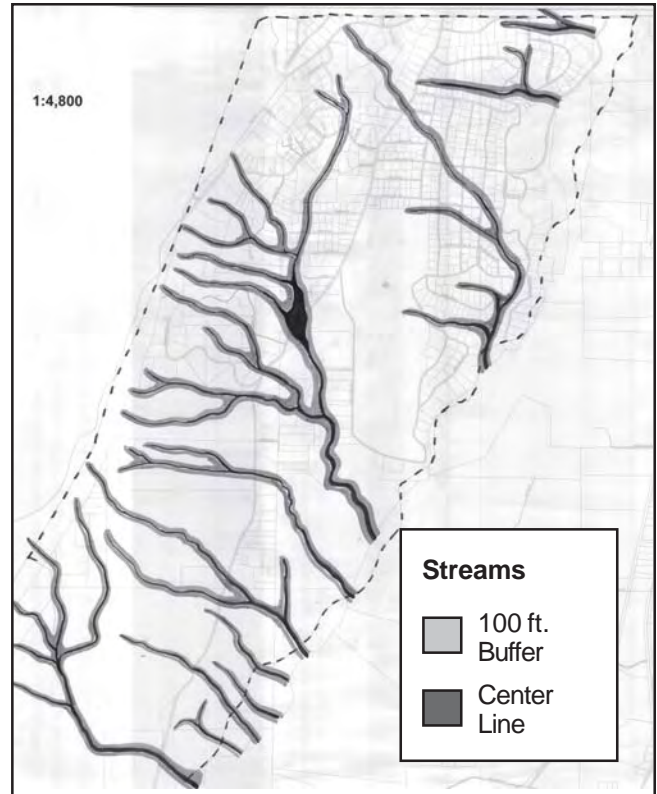
Existing Conditions

As the maps here on pages 14 and 15 illustrate, Lookout Mountain is traversed by a series of streams and drainage ways. Most are oriented along a northwest-southeast axis, although a few have more of a north-south or east-west axis. As with all natural drainage ways, their alignments are quite irregular because they respond to topography and geology. While some of these streams and drainage ways are dry during dry weather, they can have considerable flows during periods of rainfall. The “buffers” delineated on the map at the immediate right represent approximately 100 feet on either side of the center lines. They are shown here for planning purposes and are not regulatory.

Planning Implications

From an environmental conservation perspective, natural drainage ways should be protected. They serve as important plant and animal habitats, and they serve critical drainage functions. When development unwisely occurs on or near such drainage ways, they are sometimes engineered from their natural condition to formally channelized drainage ways using concrete and piping. Because of the delicate nature of ecosystems in general and natural drainage ways in particular, such drastic alterations can prove harmful, as there are often unanticipated negative “domino effects” elsewhere in the drainage system.

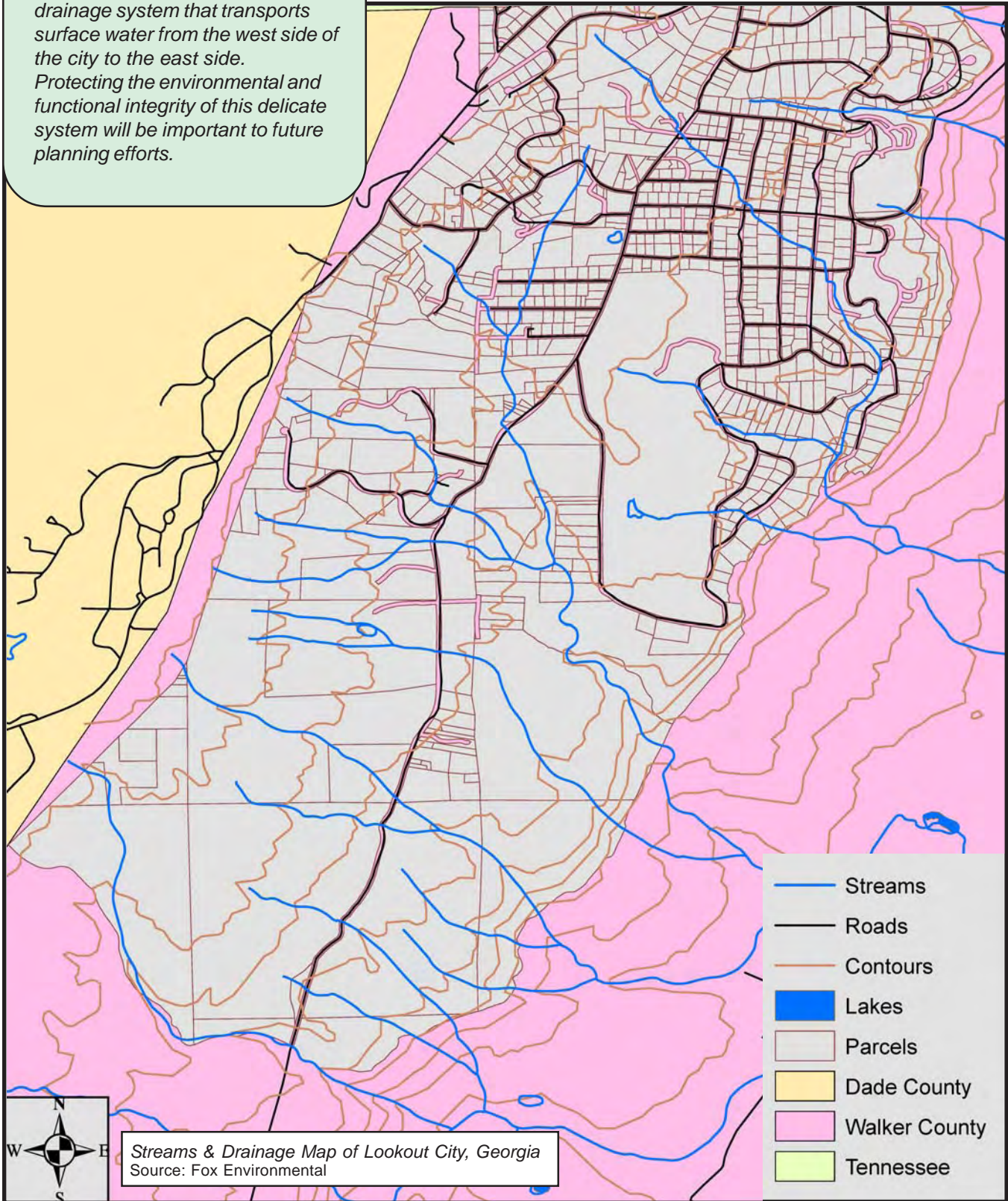
Section 12-7-3(16) of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act includes a definition of “state waters.” Based upon that definition, many (and perhaps all) of the drainage ways mapped below meet that definition. Such drainage ways are required to have a 25 foot protective buffer applied to their banks. Many local governments adopt regulations going far beyond such minimal standards, as Lookout Mountain should consider doing.



The area located behind the Tudor style houses on Mother Goose Village, on the north side of the Fairlyland Club, is an important drainage way. This drainage way is shown on maps as beginning just east of Lula Lake Road and extending along an east-west axis beyond the east side of the city boundaries toward Chattanooga below. As the elevation information would suggest (see pages 6-7), water flows from west to east along this drainage way.

Summary

Lookout Mountain has an extensive natural stream and drainage system that transports surface water from the west side of the city to the east side. Protecting the environmental and functional integrity of this delicate system will be important to future planning efforts.



Streams & Drainage Map of Lookout City, Georgia
Source: Fox Environmental

Forested Areas

Existing Conditions

The vast majority of Lookout Mountain is forested, and that is one important characteristic that gives the community such a strong identity. This quality is also highly-cherished by residents. The only areas without a high density of trees include:

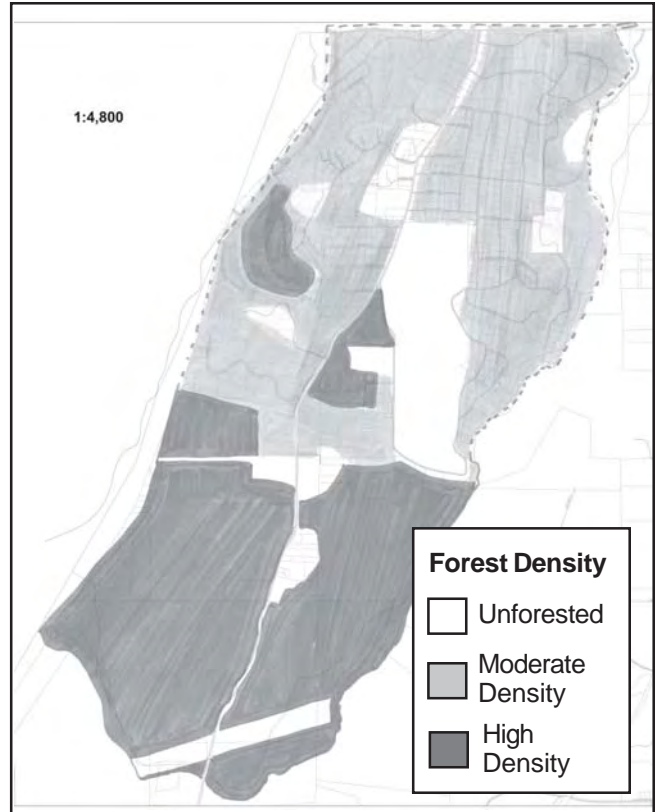
- The golf course
- Buildings, streets and parking lots
- The Town Center area (McFarland & Lula Lake Roads)
- Public / institutional facilities (school, churches, etc.)
- The utility easement along the south end of the city

While the USDA Soil Conservation Service soils surveys indicate that the soils on Lookout Mountain support Loblolly pine and Virginia pine, there is also a variety of deciduous trees. According to the “Georgia Ecoregion Descriptions” of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Southern Table Plateaus, which specifically includes Lookout Mountain, are forested “primarily with mixed oak and oak-hickory communities.” The map at right illustrates existing forest densities.

Planning Implications

Forested lands provide many environmental benefits,

including serving as habitat to a wide range of plants and animals, filtering air pollution, and cooling air temperatures during warm months. Many communities make a concerted effort to preserve existing trees and to replace trees lost to development.



Lookout Mountain’s forested areas feature a combination of Loblolly pine, Virginia pine, and mixed oak and oak-hickory communities. As the map above illustrates, the most densely forested areas are found in the less developed southern half of the city. In general, forested areas are environmentally richer than non-forested areas. Furthermore, trees provide many benefits to the environment, including filtering air pollution and cooling temperatures during warm months.

Summary

The vast majority of Lookout Mountain is forested, with only some specific areas lacking trees. Forested areas are environmentally rich and worthy of preservation to the extent possible.



Aerial Photograph of Lookout City, Georgia
Source: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Plant & Animal Species

According to the Lookout Mountain Conservancy, *“The Cumberland Plateau is one of the most biologically diverse and critically imperiled ecoregions in the world. Large unbroken hardwood forests, rare and unique species, karst geology and significant aquatic resources have led Lookout Mountain to be designated as a “Conservation Opportunity Area.”*”

Plants

The Georgia Natural Heritage Program reports that there are 30 plant species found in the Cumberland Plateau in need of rediscovery. With few exceptions, they represent southernmost range limits for northern species. Most of the taxa are common elsewhere, but not in Georgia. Many of the habitats where these species have been observed in the past are on public lands managed by the US Forest Service. They include high elevation sites (above 3,800 ft.) such as boulderfields, northern hardwoods, beech gaps, and rock ledges, which contribute significantly to plant diversity in Georgia.

Animals

Many animals are restricted to the Cumberland Plateau region in Georgia. Most of them are amphibians that live in and amongst the canyons, cliffs and caves. The Zigzag Salamander (*Plethodon dorsalis*) is one such creature. They live in the mountain forests and are found most often near springs and cave openings. The Tennessee Cave Salamander (*Gyrinophilus palleucus*) resembles many other cave dwelling organisms with reduced eyes and pigmentation. The Green Salamander (*Aneides aeneus*), one of the climbing salamanders, is well adapted for its life on the cliffs and caves, where it can compress itself into narrow crevices to avoid predators and inclement weather.

The Common Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*) resides only in the Cumberland Plateau. These beautifully patterned turtles tend to live in rivers and lakes, feeding primarily on snails and crayfish. Female map turtles grow much larger than males. Pollution and river channelization have led to decreased map turtle populations. Also, in some Southeastern states, populations have decreased due to collection for the pet trade.

Summary

Lookout Mountain is home to a diverse range of plants and animals. Many native species are unique to the area and are threatened by increased development and human occupation. However, planning and development regulations can minimize the potential negative impacts.

Bats often use caves as roosting sites. Two endangered bats are found in northwest Georgia, the Gray Bat (*Myotis grisescens*) and Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*). These species have only been found in a small handful of caves in the Cumberland Plateau.

Historic records suggest that Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) once nested on the Cumberland Plateau. Much effort was expended to reintroduce this impressive raptor to Georgia without much success.

Other Key Species:

- Northern Spring Salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*)
- Northern 2-lined Salamander (*Eurycea bislineata*)
- Cave Salamander (*Eurycea lucifaga*)
- Cumberland Pond Slider (*Trachemys scripta*)
- Southern Cavefish (*Typhlichthys subterraneus*)



Pictured here are a plant and animal both native to Lookout Mountain, Georgia - the Luna Moth sitting on a Rhododendron flower.

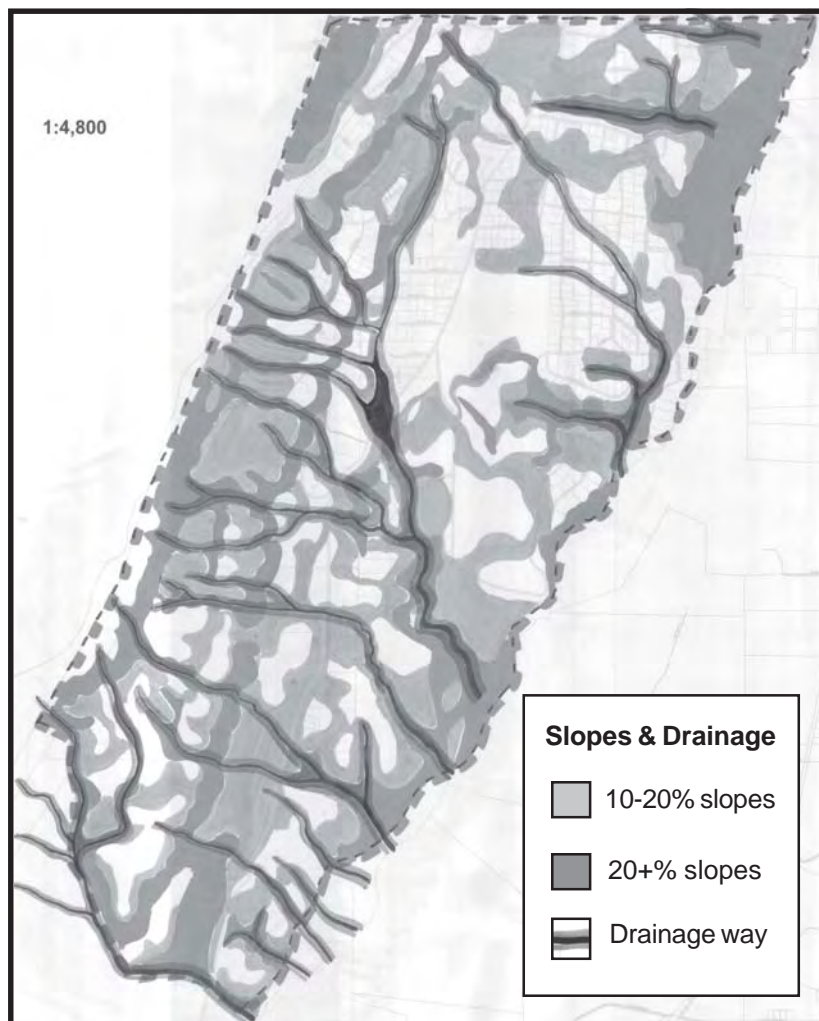
Photo courtesy of Brad Haven

Composite Environmental Constraints

In considering the many environmental constraints existing in Lookout Mountain that might impact the location and form of future growth, some are more significant than others. For example, the existence of wetlands and floodplains, as described on pages 12-13, are limited to only a few specific locations and in small volumes. Because nearly all of Lookout Mountain features forested lands and soils with considerable development limitations, those two considerations are not ones that will help distinguish between areas that should clearly accommodate growth and those that should not. However, there are two types of environmental constraints, in particular, that can help to identify appropriate and inappropriate locations for future development - slopes and drainage ways. Not only are they both significant issues, but there is some geographic variation to their patterns, as illustrated by the map at right. Unfortunately for those who would like to see the community accommodate considerably more growth, that geographic variation is fairly random and fails to yield cohesive areas of unconstrained land. In fact, the only clear pattern that is easily discerned in studying this map is the fact that the least constrained land has already been developed with a golf course, residential development and other uses.

Summary

Of the various environmental constraints found in Lookout Mountain, slopes and streams / drainage ways are the two that offer the greatest distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate locations for development based upon their geographic distributions. Nevertheless, the only clear pattern easily discerned is the fact that the least constrained land has already been developed with a golf course, residential development and other uses.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

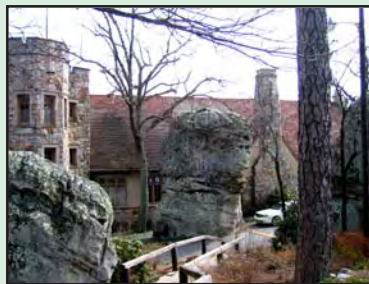
There are several good sources on the history of Lookout Mountain. One is entitled *Lookout: The Story of a Mountain* (Walker, 1941). A broader source on the Chattanooga area in general is *The Chattanooga Country* (Govan & Livingood, 1963). The community clearly has a rich history starting with its “prehistory” when Native Americans occupied the area. In 1782 a fight between settlers and British-inspired Cherokees occurred on the north slope of the Mountain. As the surrounding National Park reflects, the area was also important during the Civil War. Following the Battle of Chickamauga in September of 1863, the Union forces occupied Chattanooga while the Confederate forces were positioned on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge to the east. In November, the Union forces made advances toward Lookout Mountain that caused the occupying Confederates to withdraw to Missionary Ridge, where the North was ultimately successful in victory. While specific locations of encampments and military engagements within the City boundaries are not known, locals have reported finding Civil War artifacts. Likewise, the Walker book indicates that Confederate earthworks existed on either side of Scenic Highway at its most northerly point in the community.

National Register Property

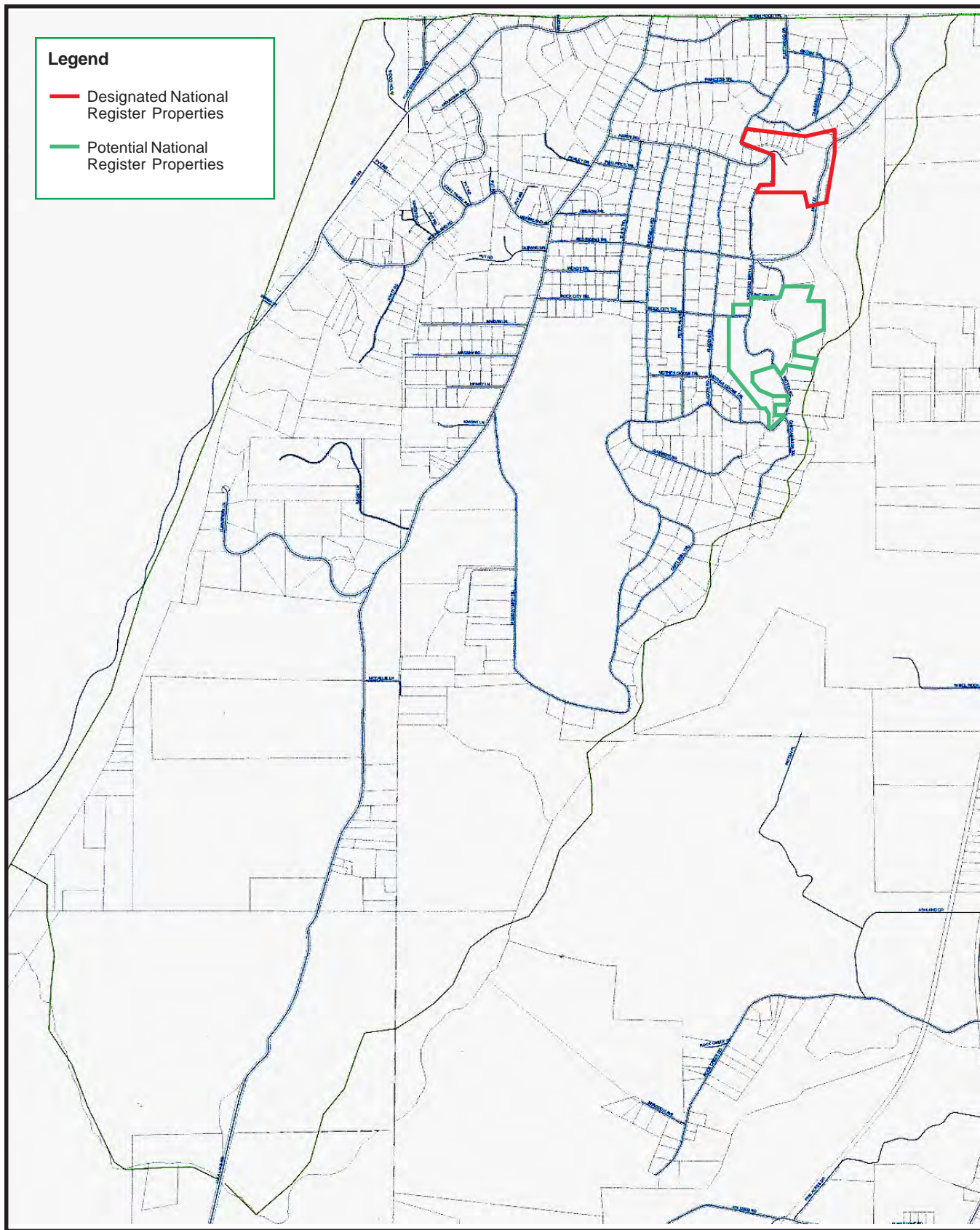
The Fairyland Club’s clubhouse was built in 1924, while other components of the property were constructed within the next few years. The only National Register of Historic Places property in Lookout Mountain, it was listed on the National Register in 1990. Although National Register properties have the advantage of being eligible for the federal investment tax credit for qualified historic rehabilitations, such designation offers no protections to properties unless threatening activities are federally funded or licensed. In such a case, “Section 106 Review” provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act would apply so that alternatives and/or mitigating measures might be identified.

Potential National Register Properties

Established in 1932 and now a world famous attraction, Rock City is undoubtedly eligible for the National Register based upon its national historic significance alone. Also having potential for designation are the older portions of the Fairyland residential development, as well as the Lookout Mountain Golf Club, designed in 1925. Other eligible properties may exist elsewhere in Lookout Mountain.



The Fairyland Club’s clubhouse was built in 1924 and other components of the property were constructed within the next few years. This site was formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990, and it is the only National Register property in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. Nevertheless, other places in the community may be eligible.



EXISTING BUILT CONDITIONS

The previous section of this Background Study addressed the natural and historic resources of Lookout Mountain. This section will now focus on man-made conditions, including the following:

- Land Use and Development
- Transportation
- Public Water
- Public Sewer
- Community Facilities

Land Use & Development

Below is a summary of the existing land use map at right, as well as a description of general development forms:

Residential

The northern half of the city is dominated by detached single-family houses. The northeast corner of the city features an interconnected, but curvilinear, street system. The neighborhood area to the immediate south and extending past Rock City features a more rectilinear grid system of blocks and lots. Architecture consists of frame and brick cottages, as well as ranch style houses from the 1950s and 1960s. Lot sizes in this area average approximately 15,000 square feet. The only exception to this single-family housing is two apartment complexes, both located in the vicinity of the intersection of Lula Lake and McFarland Roads. Residential uses occupy approximately 35% of the city's land area, which translates to roughly 605 acres.

Commercial

There are very few commercial land uses in Lookout Mountain. Among the most notable are those businesses associated with the existing town center at Lula Lake and McFarland, as well as the coffee shop and adjoining gift shop across from Rock City. There are also two bed-and-breakfast style lodging businesses. The commercial properties within the town center are suburban in form, in that they feature one-story buildings with parking lots

between them and their associated street. The exception to this rule is the coffee house and gift shop located across from Rock City. These businesses represent one of the few urban forms in the community, as they are housed in a two-story building fronting directly onto the street with outdoor dining/sitting areas. Commercial uses occupy approximately 2% of the city's land area, equaling roughly 35 acres.

Public / Institutional

There are currently only four public and/or institutional properties within the city - City Hall, the elementary school, and two churches. Public / institutional uses occupy approximately 3% of the city's land area, which translates to roughly 50 acres.

Park / Recreation / Conservation

The key properties that comprise this existing land use category include the golf course, Rock City, the Fairyland Club, the Carter Field soccer fields, the recreation fields behind the elementary school, and the small passive park on Lula Lake Road across from the town center. This land use category occupies roughly 15% of the city's land area, which translates to approximately 260 acres.

Transportation / Communications / Utilities

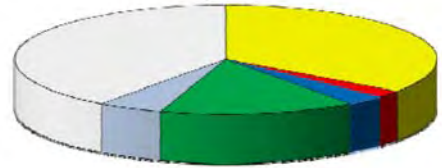
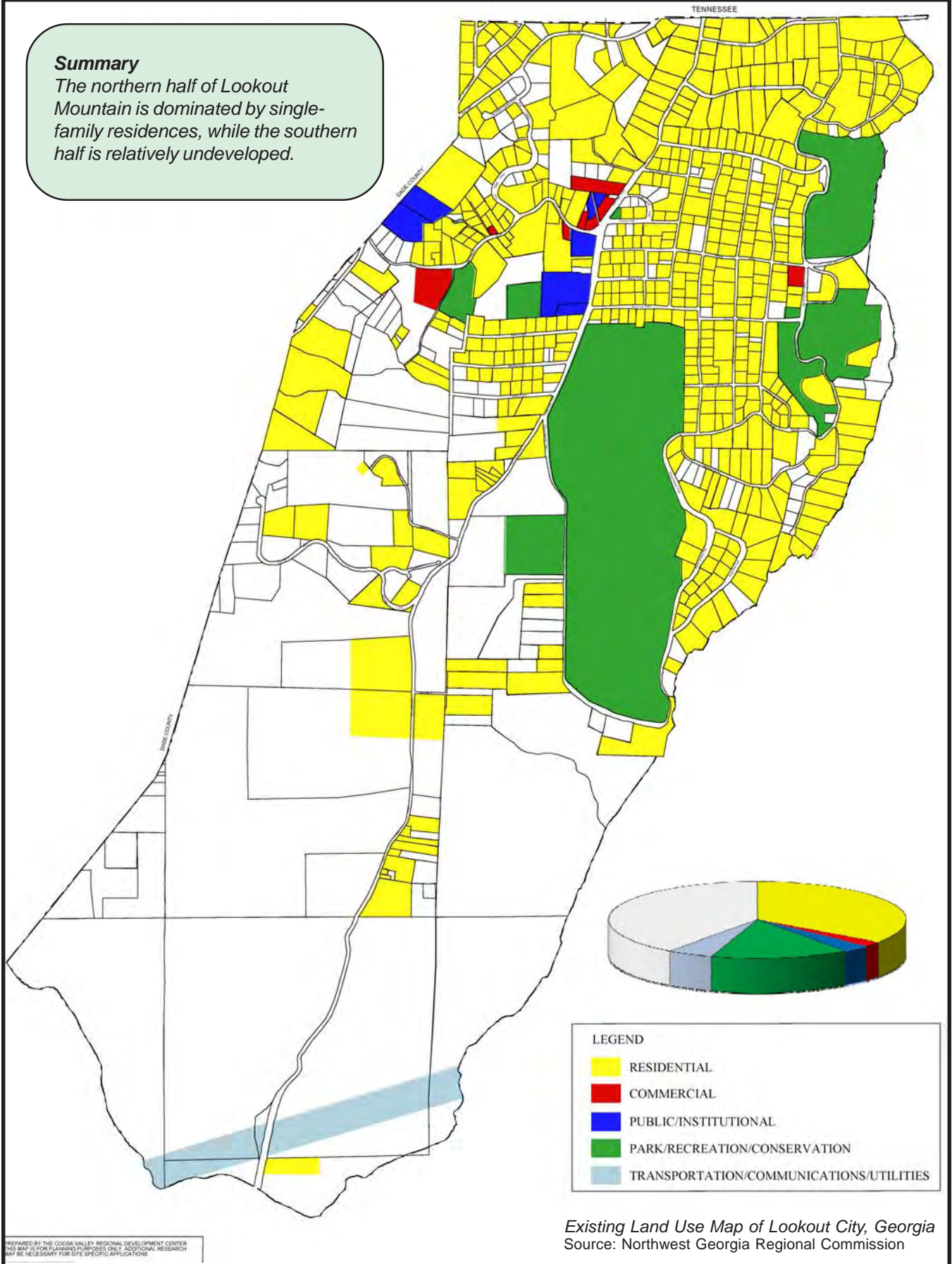
Only one specific area has been designated for this land use on the map at right - the power line easement that traverses the very southern portion of the city. Oriented along an east-west axis, this land use occupies roughly 5% of the city's land area, which equals approximately 85 acres.

Undeveloped

The balance of the city features undeveloped land. Although this land use category comprises the vast majority of the southern half of the city, there are also many random vacant lots among otherwise developed areas. Undeveloped land occupies approximately 40% of the city's land area, which translates to roughly 690 acres.

Summary

The northern half of Lookout Mountain is dominated by single-family residences, while the southern half is relatively undeveloped.



LEGEND	
■	RESIDENTIAL
■	COMMERCIAL
■	PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL
■	PARK/RECREATION/CONSERVATION
■	TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATIONS/UTILITIES

Existing Land Use Map of Lookout City, Georgia
 Source: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

PREPARED BY THE COOSA VALLEY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
 THIS MAP IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. ADDITIONAL RESEARCH
 MAY BE NECESSARY FOR SITE SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS

Transportation

Road Network Overview

The City is primarily accessible by vehicular travel along rural two-lane undivided roadways. On the west side of the City, Scenic Highway (SR 189), designated as a major arterial, provides connections to the northeast via Cummings Highway and Broad Street to downtown Chattanooga and Interstate Highways 75 and 24. Scenic Highway also provides access to southwest. McFarland Road, a major arterial, and Red Riding Hood Trail (SR 157), a major arterial, provide the east-west route through the City from Scenic Highway in the west to continue as Ochs Highway into Chattanooga. Lula Lake Road, designated as a collector, provides a north-south route through the center of the City from Scenic Highway to the north in Tennessee and to the south to end at SR 157.

The Town Center area roadway network forms a grid of residential streets connecting to these thoroughfares, with the addition of Wood Nymph Trail bordering the golf course. Many of the roads in the City, outside of the Town Center, are narrow with ditch style drainage. Often they are curvy with limited sight distance with traffic travelling in excess of the posted speed limit.

Non-Vehicular Access

According to the 2006 Joint City-County Comprehensive Plan Update¹ community streets do not encourage pedestrian and bicycle use due to lack of sidewalks and bikeways along with high speed motorized traffic. It also cites a lack of parking facilities in busy activity centers. Multi-use and pedestrian trails, where they exist, are not connected to form an accessible network within the City and do not connect to existing recreational trails outside the City's limits.

Traffic Levels

Lula Lake Road to the north of Red Riding Hood Trail is the most heavily traveled with approximately 8800 vehicles per day (GDOT 2008 AADT); while Scenic Highway to the north of the City carried less than 1000 vehicles per day. The next highest traffic volumes were reported on McFarland Road between Lula Lake Road and Scenic

Highway as 6870 vehicles per day. Scenic Highway to the south of McFarland Road carried 3360 vehicles per day and Red Riding Hood Trail to the east of the Town Center area carried less than 2500 vehicles per day.

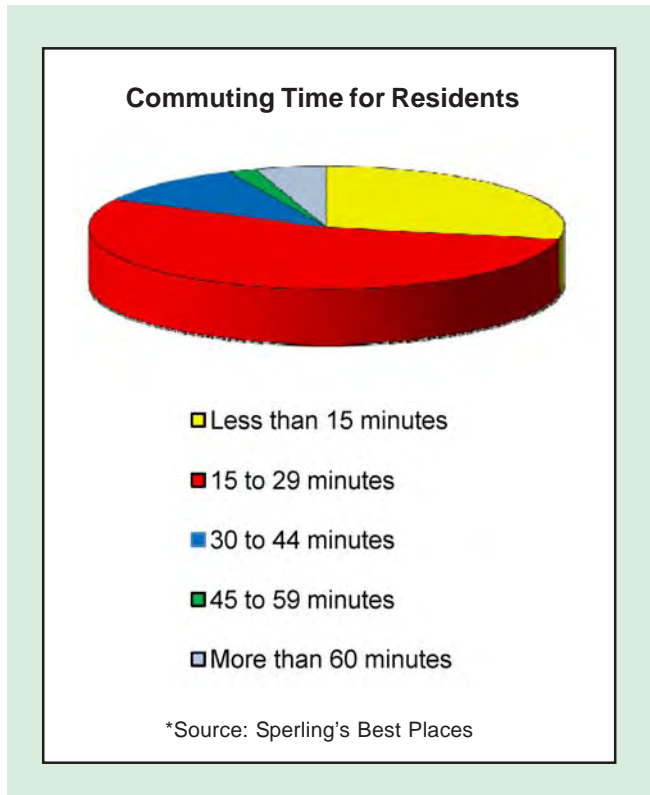
¹ 2007-2027 Partial Plan Update prepared by the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center, Walker County Staff, and City Staff.

Existing Travel Characteristics

The average one-way commute time for Lookout Mountain residents is 21.4 minutes. Of the city's commuters, 82 percent drive alone, while 7 percent carpool. None utilize mass transit, and 8 percent work out of their homes.*

Commute Times	Percentage
Less than 15 minutes	29
15 to 29 minutes	56
30 to 44 minutes	11
45 to 59 minutes	2
More than 60 minutes	5

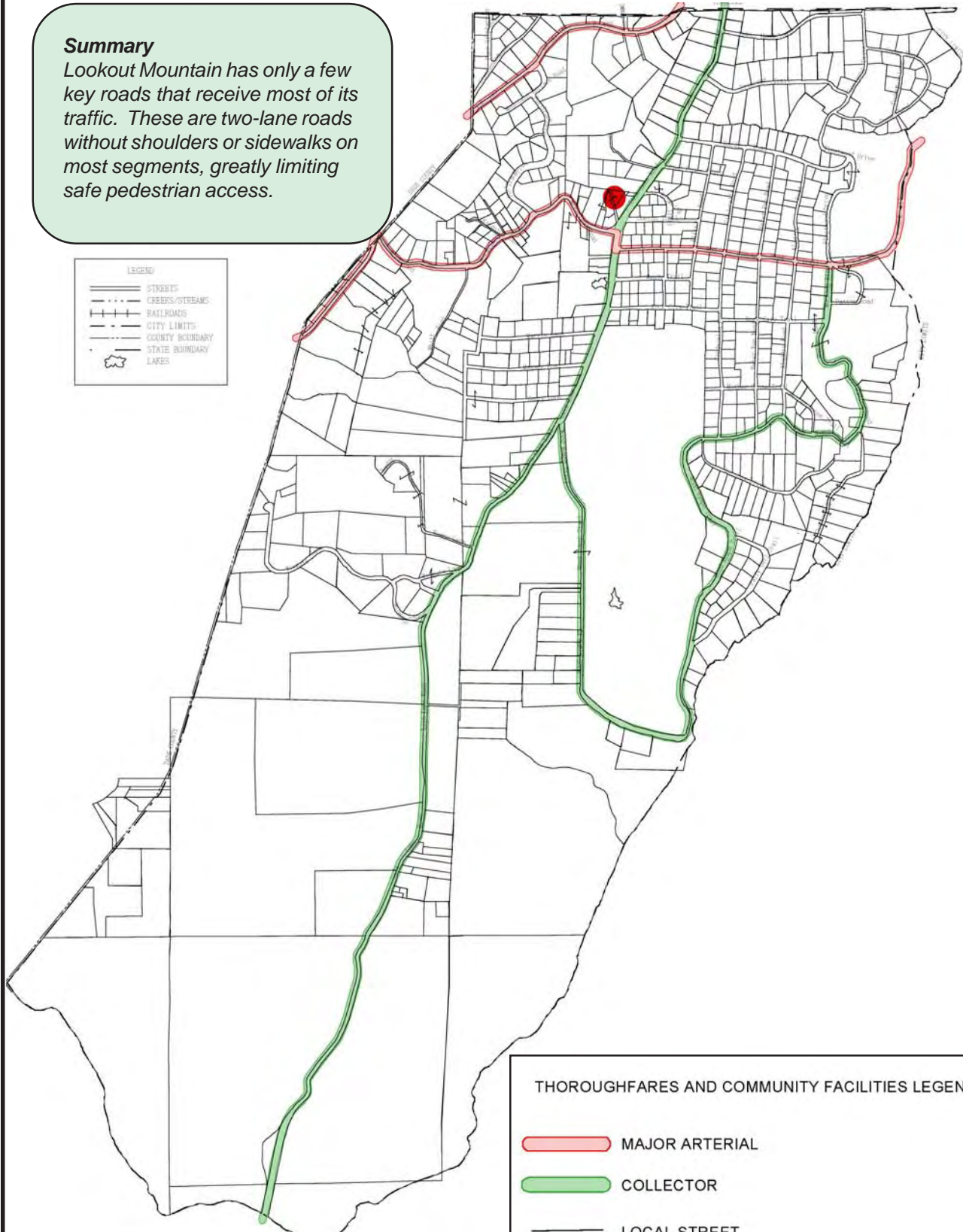
*Source: Sperling's Best Places



Summary

Lookout Mountain has only a few key roads that receive most of its traffic. These are two-lane roads without shoulders or sidewalks on most segments, greatly limiting safe pedestrian access.

LEGEND	
	STREETS
	CREEKS/STREAMS
	RAILROADS
	CITY LIMITS
	COUNTY BOUNDARY
	STATE BOUNDARY
	LAKES



THOROUGHFARES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES LEGEND	
	MAJOR ARTERIAL
	COLLECTOR
	LOCAL STREET

Existing Streets Map of Lookout City, Georgia
 Source: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Traffic Accidents

The roadways in Walker County are characterized as relatively safe in comparison to similar roadways in Georgia. The overall vehicular crash, fatality, injury, and pedestrian involvement rates are substantially below the average Georgia rates for the years 2000-2006 (GDOT CASI Report).

Georgia's Accident Rate for rural local roadways for 2006 is 156/100 million vehicle miles (MVM) and for 2007 is 168/100 MVM; the 2008 accident data is not currently available. To be compared to the statewide Georgia Accident Rates, Table 1 shows the Accident Rates for Lula Lake Road, McFarland Road, and Red Riding Hood Trail in Lookout Mountain. Table 2 shows the total number of accidents per Roadway for Years 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Table 1. Accidents Rates for Years 2006-2008 (in 100 MVM)

Road Name	2006	2007	2008
Lula Lake Rd	1071	861	450
McFarland Rd	810	1839	797
Red Riding Hood Trail	242	53	108

Table 2. Number of Accidents per Roadway for Years 2006-2008

Road Name	2006	2007	2008	Total
Lula Lake Rd	21	19	11	51
McFarland Road	11	11	12	34
OCHS Hwy	7	7	16	30
Patten Road	8	1	7	16
Red Riding Hood Trail	6	2	4	12
Fleetwood Drive	1	3	2	6
Scenic Hwy	1	1	5	7
Mockingbird Lane	1	1	3	5
Wood Numph Trail	0	3	1	4
Rock City Trail	0	2	0	2
Wendy Trail	0	2	0	2
Turnberry Lane	1	0	0	1
Peter Pan Road	1	0	0	1
Mockingbird Trail	1	0	0	1
Dunrand Drive	1	0	0	1
Tinkerbell Lane	1	0	0	1
Chickamauga Trail	0	1	0	1
Hardy Road	0	0	1	1
Mother Goose Trail	0	0	1	1
Cinderella Road	0	0	1	1
Fort Stephenson Road	0	0	1	1
Princess Trail	0	0	1	1

Transit

The Walker County Transit Authority provides public, wheelchair accessible, transportation to the area upon specific requests. The City is serviced by Chattanooga's railroad, water, and air terminals and connections.



Lula Lake Road



Posted at 25 mph



Posted at 30 mph

Public Water & Sewer

Public Water

Public water in Lookout Mountain is provided by the Tennessee American Water Company. The map at right illustrates all water lines that are 8 inches in diameter or larger. Water lines are run along the city's roads. As the main north-south corridor, a water line runs from the very northern end of Lula Lake Road to a point not far from the south end of the city. From this line other water lines extend along key roads that extend from Lula Lake to the east and west. Because of the relative ease of extending water lines where needed, public water does not appear to be a limiting factor for future growth.

Public Sewer

A "Feasibility Study Sewer Service Extension" was prepared by Consolidated Technologies, Inc. in June 2007. The intent was to determine whether five potential new developments totaling 204 residential units can be supported by the current system. That report is the primary source of information for this plan section.

Lookout Mountain owns and operates a low pressure grinder pump (LPGP) collection system. According to the report, wastewater is collected by individual grinder pump units and conveyed to a centralized pump station on Chickamauga Trail. From there it is conveyed to Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, and ultimate treatment and disposal occurs at the Moccasin Bend regional wastewater treatment plant in Chattanooga. The key sewer system facilities locations in Lookout Mountain are illustrated on the map at right. Roughly 570 individual grinder pump units are connected to the city's system. There are also three larger commercial pump units: Covenant College, Rock City and the Flintstone Subdivision. Covenant College, the "single largest customer," abandoned its own wastewater treatment plant and connected to the city's system. That old system is considered to be obsolete, and it does not appear to be feasible to redevelop it into a functioning system.

Chickamauga Trail Pump Station

This facility is located in a residential neighborhood just south of Rock City. It has experienced overflows during

extremely wet weather. There have also been odor problems during dry weather and when Covenant College is not in session (flows are lower, which decreases the amount of chemical odor treatment added to the college's pump station). The City has made efforts to correct the odor problem to the extent that it can with odor controlling chemicals. The study determined that, for a variety of reasons, this facility cannot be expanded to accommodate significantly greater volumes of wastewater.

Flintstone Subdivision System

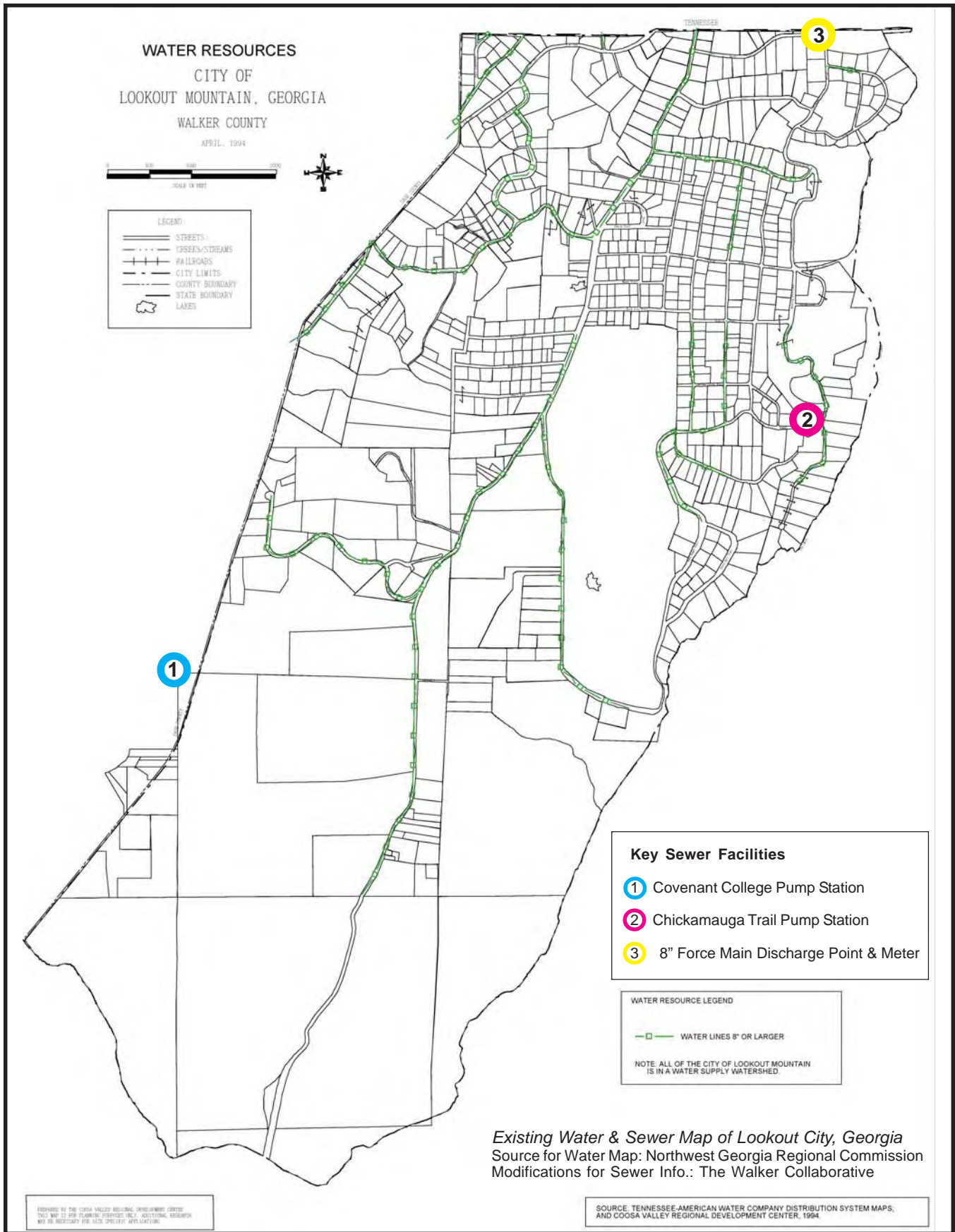
This residential subdivision is located south of Covenant College and immediately west of the city's limits. This system experiences inflow/infiltration problems during wet weather, which cause the pumps to operate almost continuously. According to the report, "The Chickamauga Trail pumps cannot keep up with the combined pumping rate from Flintstone Subdivision and Covenant College plus the routine domestic flow in the system."

Conclusions of the Study

The study concluded that the existing wastewater treatment system can handle the proposed new 204 housing units if the extraneous flows in the Flintstone Subdivision are reduced. It also determined that the best route for serving the proposed 150 units associated with a new retirement village would be to connect at Lula Lake Road to the east. A new fallout line would eventually be needed, although the first phase of development might utilize an existing system along Lula Lake Road to the north to the McCallie Lane area. Finally, potential funding sources for an expanded system might include the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA).

Summary

The provision of public water to future development does not appear to be an issue. However, even with remedial improvements to the current sewage treatment system, it appears that only a limited amount of future growth can occur without a substantial expansion of facilities.



Public / Institutional Facilities

Lookout Mountain’s various public and institutional uses are important in adding to a strong sense of community. Below is a summary of each:

Covenant College

Covenant College is a Christian liberal arts school established in 1955. Located on Scenic Highway, most of the campus is on the west side of the road, although portions also exist on the east side. Current enrollment is at approximately 1,000 students, of which 87 percent live on campus. There are currently 64 full-time teaching faculty. The 300-acre campus features five classroom buildings, four residence halls, one library, and two athletic buildings. According to representatives of the college, there are no current plans for substantial future growth.

Fairyland School

Fairyland School is located at 1306 Lula Lake Road, which is at the west end termination of Rock City Trail. It is a pre-K through 5th grade school with a student population of 300. The school building consists of multiple segments built at various times. There is a parking lot on the south side of the property, and a recreational area with a baseball field to the rear (west of the school building). A key issue for the school is the need for more sidewalks and overall improved pedestrian safety. While many students walk to school, surveys suggest more

would with improved pedestrian safety. Also, according to school system officials, the school could physically accommodate roughly 100 to 120 more students within the current facilities. However, that does not mean that the quality of education would continue if additional teachers were not hired.

Municipal Complex

The city’s existing town center area near Lula Lake and McFarland Roads includes City Hall, the fire department, the police department, and public works. Public works is about to move to a property to the south on Lula Lake Road where more space exists for the department’s vehicles and equipment. The recently completed Town Center Plan proposes new buildings for these various City departments and functions (see page 38).

Churches

There are two churches located in Lookout Mountain:

Lookout Mountain United Methodist Church

Located on Lula Lake Road at the western termination of Red Riding Hood Trail.

Our Lady of the Mount Catholic Church

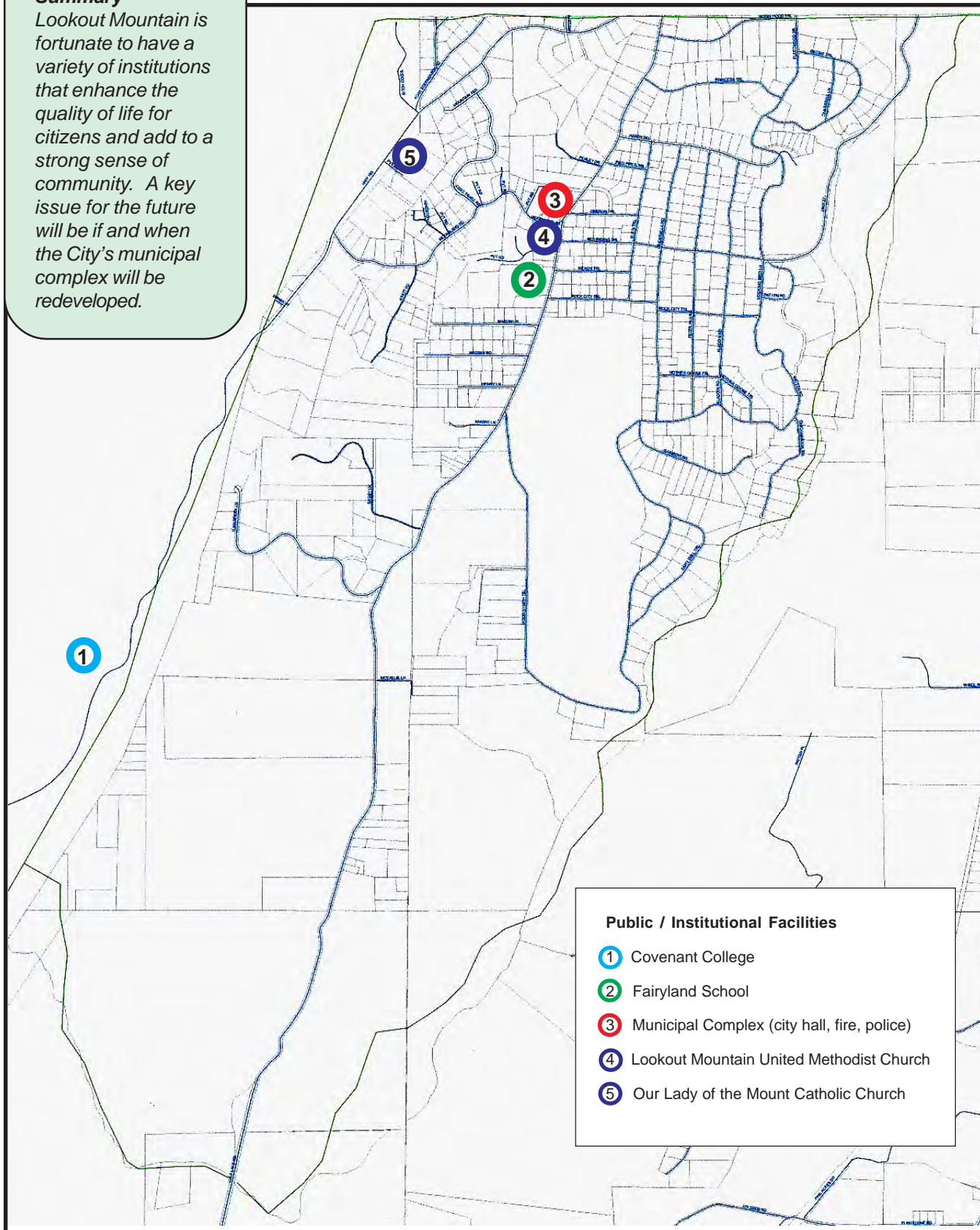
Located on Scenic Highway north of the intersection of McFarland Road.



Fairyland School is a highly-treasured resource in the community. Although many children are able to walk to school, pedestrian safety is a major issue in need of attention. Among the needed improvements are sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, and signage.

Summary

Lookout Mountain is fortunate to have a variety of institutions that enhance the quality of life for citizens and add to a strong sense of community. A key issue for the future will be if and when the City's municipal complex will be redeveloped.



Parks, Recreation & Attractions

Although Lookout Mountain’s parks and recreational facilities are intended primarily for city residents, the sole major attraction - Rock City - relies upon an external market for support.

Parks

Lookout Mountain has two public parks. One is a conventional park and the other is a linear park - a greenway.

City Park

This small park located on Lula Lake Road across from the Town Center was established in 1991. It is intended for passive activities.

Greenway

The city’s greenway is a new and welcomed addition to the community. Funded primarily by federal transportation enhancement money and orchestrated by the City, the greenway follows Lula Lake Road from the City Park to Fairyland School. Expansions to this initial segment are in the planning stages.

Recreation

Some of Lookout Mountain’s recreational facilities are limited to paying members, but even those are viewed by many as community resources.

Lookout Mountain Golf Club

Designed in 1925, this private club features an 18-hole course and a club house fronting onto Wood Nymph

Trail. A driving range is the only portion of the facility located west of this road.

Fairyland Club

This private club, located just north of Rock City, has a swimming pool and six tennis courts, in addition to other club facilities.

Carter Field

Carter Field - a soccer facility - is located on McFarland Road at its intersection with Whitt Road.

Fairyland School Recreation Facilities

The recreational facilities located behind the school include a baseball field, an adjacent multi-purpose field, and a peripheral paved trail.

The main portion of Covenant College’s campus is located just beyond the city limits, but the school is generous enough to make their recreational facilities available to local residents.

Attractions

Although the term “attraction” can be applied loosely to many places, Rock City is unquestionably “the” attraction in Lookout Mountain, Georgia.

Rock City

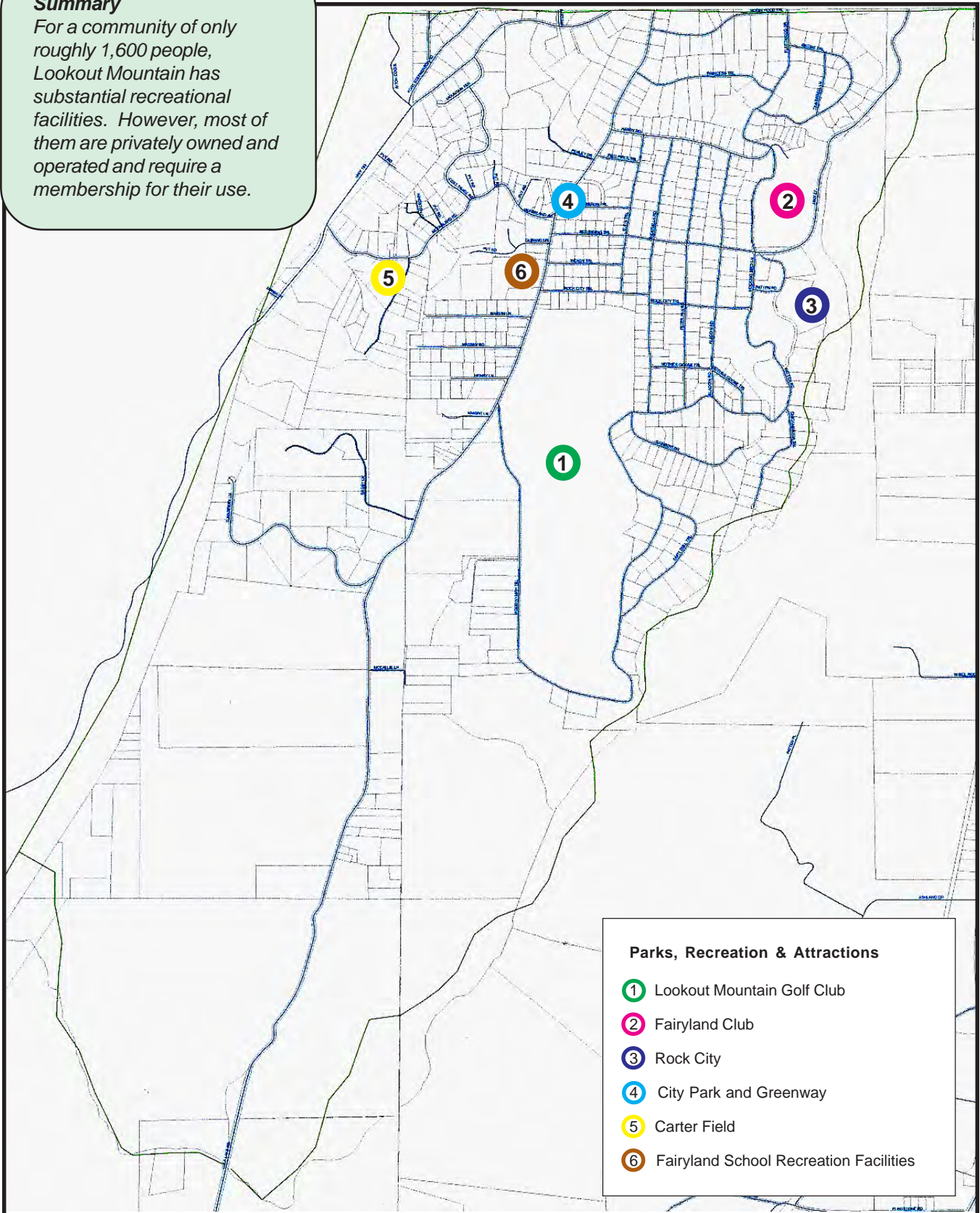
Rock City Gardens formally opened to the public in 1932 and now attracts nearly a half million visitors each year. It features a 4,100 foot walking trail through various rock formations and other items of interest.

The City’s new greenway has been very well received by Lookout Mountain citizens. Not only is it well designed, but it leveraged the City’s dollars by tapping into federal funds to finance most of its construction. Extensions to this initial segment are in the works.



Summary

For a community of only roughly 1,600 people, Lookout Mountain has substantial recreational facilities. However, most of them are privately owned and operated and require a membership for their use.



SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Demographics

Unless otherwise indicated, the data on this page is from City-Data.com

Population

2008 - 1,524

Change since 2000 - 5.8% decrease

Gender

Males - 737 (48.4%) / Females - 787 (51.6%)

Age

Median Lookout Mountain resident - 37.4 years

Median Georgia resident - 33.4 years

Race

White (Non-Hispanic) - 98.5%

Hispanic - 0.8%

Two or more races - 0.6%

Education (25 years and older)

High school or higher - 96.4%

Bachelor's degree or higher - 70%

Graduate or professional degree - 26.9%

Average Household Size

Lookout Mountain - 2.6 people / Georgia - 2.6 people

Summary

Because the last US Census data was gathered in 2000, it is not current, and more recent data is less reliable. Regardless, Lookout Mountain's average income levels are well above those for the rest of the state.

Income & Employment

Median Household Income (2007)

Lookout Mountain - \$71,252 (\$62,045 in 2000)

Georgia - \$49,136

Per Capita Income (2007)

Lookout Mountain - \$36,953

Georgia - \$24,928

Residents with Income Below Poverty Level (2007)

Lookout Mountain - 5.6%*

Georgia - 13.0%

Unemployment */**

Lookout Mountain - 11.2%

United States - 8.5%

Recent Job Growth**

Lookout Mountain - 7.5% decrease

United States - 3.1% decrease

Future Job Growth**

Lookout Mountain - 13.7% increase

United States - 26.4% increase

Population by Occupation**

Management, Business and Finance - 20.48%

Professional and Related Occupations - 34.04%

Services - 5.72%

Sales and Office - 33.28%

Farming, Fishing and Forestry - 0.30%

Construction, Extraction and Maintenance - 2.86%

Production, Transportation and Material Moving - 3.31%

* These statistics are questionable and likely incorporate areas beyond the Lookout Mountain city limits

** Source: Sperling's Best Places



Source: Sperling's Best Places

Population by Occupation

- Management, Business and Finance
- Professional and Related Occupations
- Services
- Sales and Office
- Farming, Fishing and Forestry
- Construction, Extraction and Maint.
- Production, Transport. and Material Moving

GENERAL HOUSING DATA

	LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN	UNITED STATES
Median Home Age	50	27
Median Home Cost	\$278,900	\$202,300
Home Appreciation	-4.80%	-4.60%
Homes Owned	78.75%	64.07%
Housing Vacant	5.70%	14.48%
Homes Rented	15.62%	21.45%
Property Tax Rate	\$7.36	\$13.28

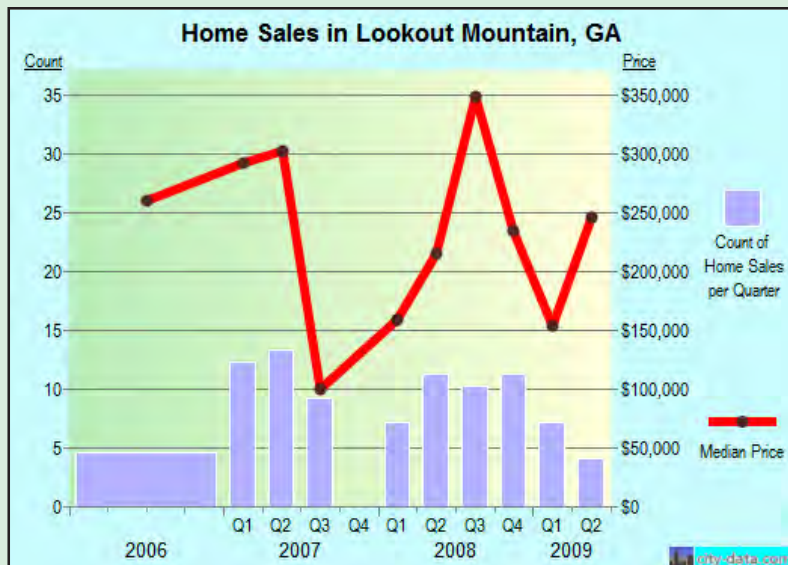
OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY VALUE

Less Than \$20,000	0.83%	3.01%
\$20,000 to \$39,999	0.00%	4.37%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	0.21%	5.74%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	2.08%	7.07%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	0.83%	8.41%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6.46%	19.74%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	21.46%	14.06%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	31.88%	16.59%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	16.88%	8.21%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	9.38%	4.53%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	4.79%	4.75%
\$1,000,000 or more	2.50%	1.86%

HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

1999 to October 2005	0.65%	10.15%
1995 to 1998	0.98%	6.69%
1990 to 1994	3.44%	6.70%
1980 to 1989	8.18%	14.75%
1970 to 1979	10.15%	17.11%
1960 to 1969	16.69%	12.78%
1950 to 1959	23.90%	11.64%
1940 to 1949	17.68%	6.64%
1939 or Earlier	18.33%	13.55%

Source: Sperling's Best Places



Given the relatively small pool of home sales from which to draw statistics, it is not surprising that the pattern of home sales in Lookout Mountain during the past three years is erratic. The third quarter of 2008 stands out with a median sales price of \$350,000.

Source: City-Data.com

EXISTING PUBLIC POLICIES

Future Land Use Plan

Lookout Mountain's most recent comprehensive plan was prepared in 2006 as part of the broader "Joint City-County Comprehensive Plan Update 2007 - 2027." This "partial plan update" was prepared jointly by the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center (now the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission), Walker County, and the various municipal staffs. In addition to addressing Walker County, it also featured the cities of Chickamauga, LaFayette, Lookout Mountain, and Rossville. Within this nearly 200-page document is a 27-page section on Lookout Mountain starting on page IV-1. It is comprised of the following plan sections:

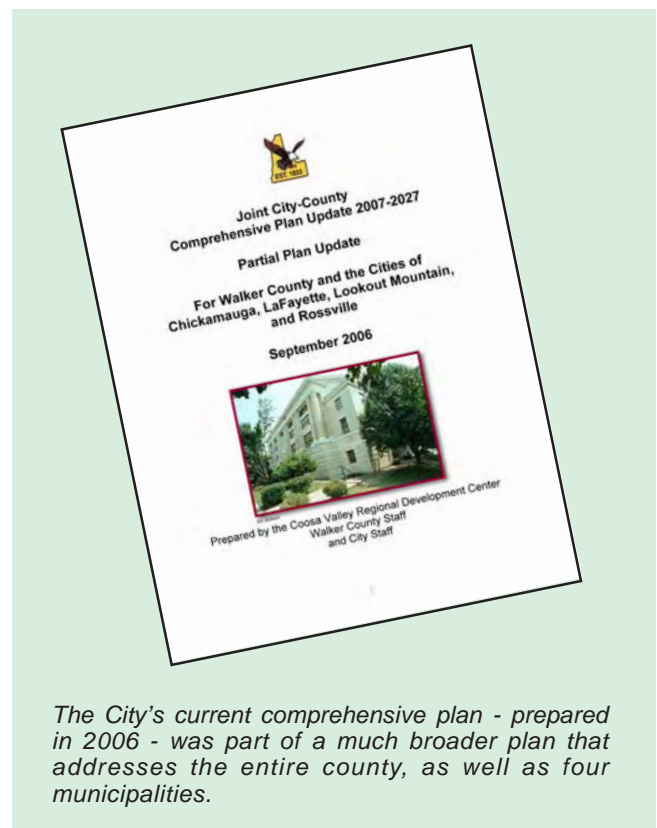
- Vision Statement
- Priority Issues
- Analysis of Areas Requiring Special Attention
- Future Development Narrative
- Quality Community Objectives
- Short Term Work Program
- Accomplishments from the Previous Work Program

General Findings

This plan points out many deficiencies with the community's existing public policies related to growth and development, yet it also offers few solutions. For example, it is noted throughout the plan that there is a lack of housing options for those 65 years old and older, as well as a general lack of affordable housing. However, the plan does nothing to recommend alternative housing types. As the proposed development plan at right illustrates, there are two residential areas, none of which would allow alternatives to detached single-family houses. Similarly, the town center designation does not include housing as a suggested use. Another issue is that some information is inaccurate. The Analysis of Areas Requiring Special Attention states that the city "has only minor areas where slopes are steep, on the very edges of the city." In reality, roughly 20 percent of the city's undeveloped land features slopes of 20 percent or greater.

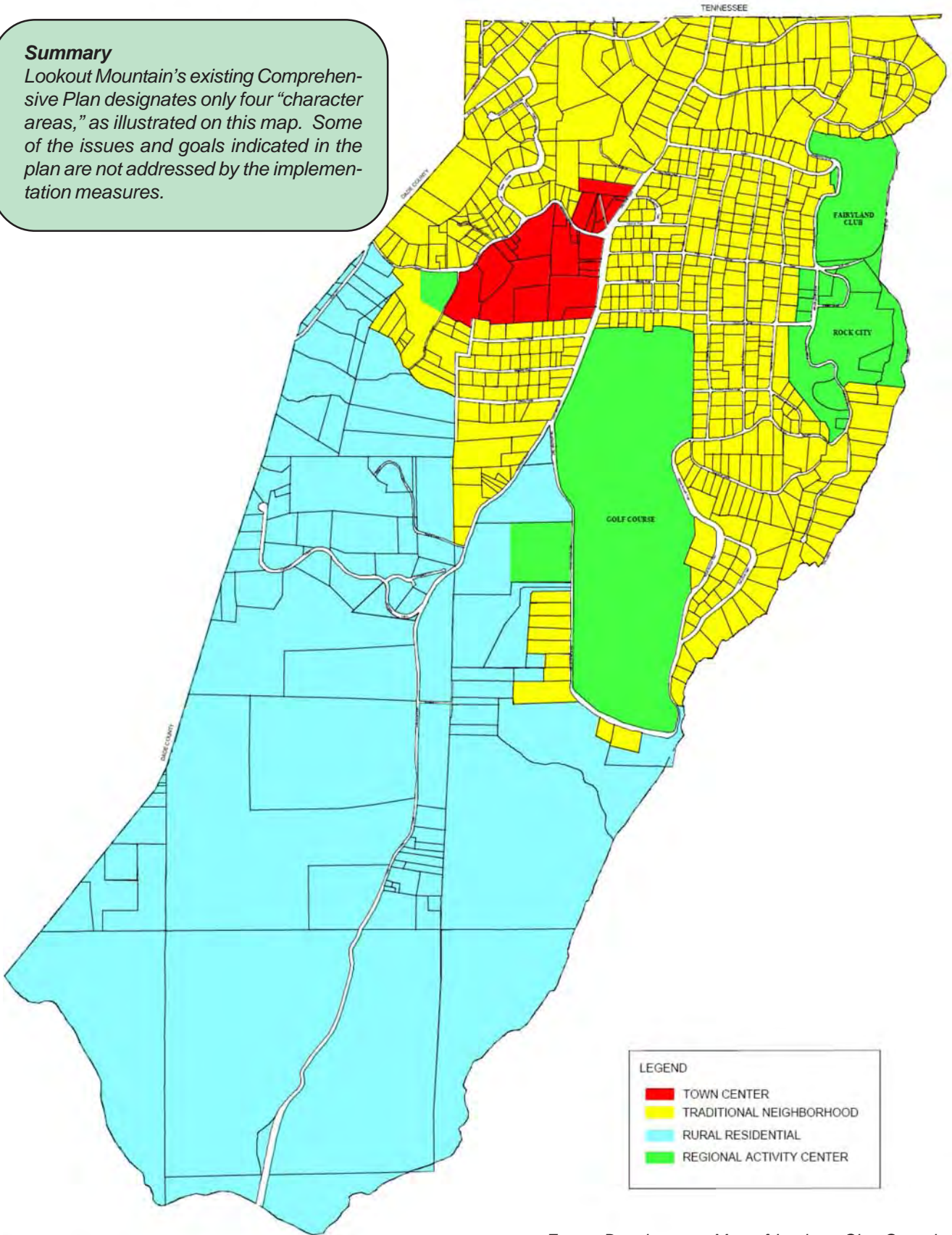
As illustrated on the map at right, the "Future Development Narrative" designates four distinct "character areas" - Traditional Neighborhood, Regional Activity Center/Recreation, Rural Residential, and Town Center. The section on the Rural Residential area suggests a density of one unit per two acres (87,120 square feet), yet the existing zoning for residential areas allows a minimum lot size of 35,000 square feet. That density level is nearly triple of what the plan suggests for Rural Residential areas.

Finally, some of the recommended implementation measures are questionable. For example, there is the suggested "incentive" to allow "design variances for conservation subdivisions and individual homes." While policies to allow conservation subdivisions in which housing is clustered to preserve open space is certainly a good idea, achieving it through the issuance of variances may not be. A more effective approach would be to create an Open Space Development (OSD) ordinance to either be mandated in certain areas or provided as an optional zoning (perhaps even with incentives built in).



Summary

Lookout Mountain's existing Comprehensive Plan designates only four "character areas," as illustrated on this map. Some of the issues and goals indicated in the plan are not addressed by the implementation measures.



LEGEND	
■	TOWN CENTER
■	TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
■	RURAL RESIDENTIAL
■	REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

PREPARED BY THE COOSA VALLEY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
THIS MAP IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. ADDITIONAL RESEARCH
MAY BE NECESSARY FOR SITE SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS.

Future Development Map of Lookout City, Georgia
Source: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Town Center Plan

On August 17, 2007, the grocery store anchoring Lookout Mountain’s small commercial center burned down. This unfortunate event prompted citizens to step back and take a broader view of the entire area and its future. Choosing to turn a negative into a positive, the community decided it wanted to transform the faceless commercial center dominated by a “strip commercial” character into a distinctive and walkable Town Center. Consequently, the City commissioned the creation of a Town Center Plan. The primary study area included 16.5 acres. The boundaries are irregular in shape, as they follow property lines. It includes the existing mixed use area, and it is anchored by the intersection of Lula Lake Road and McFarland Road. The area includes a diverse mix of uses, including institutional, retail, services, housing and lodging.

A strong community input process was utilized to create the plan, which included a project kick-off meeting, a series of stakeholder meetings, a charrette workshop, and a concept plan presentation designed to encourage an open discussion with citizens. The resulting Town Center plan is illustrated at right.

Key Features of the Plan

The plan advocates a mixed use environment that is urban in form and pedestrian friendly. The following is a summary of some of the key components recommended by the plan:

Town Green

This small ceremonial park is the focal point for the area. It fronts onto Lula Lake and is surrounded by a street with

angled on-street parking.

Municipal Buildings

The plan provides for much-needed additional space for City Hall, the police department and fire department. While public works might still have office space here, the main operations would relocate given the space needs of vehicles and equipment.

Mixed Use Buildings

Depicted in orange on the plan map at right, these buildings would feature groundfloor commercial uses with upper floor housing and/or offices.

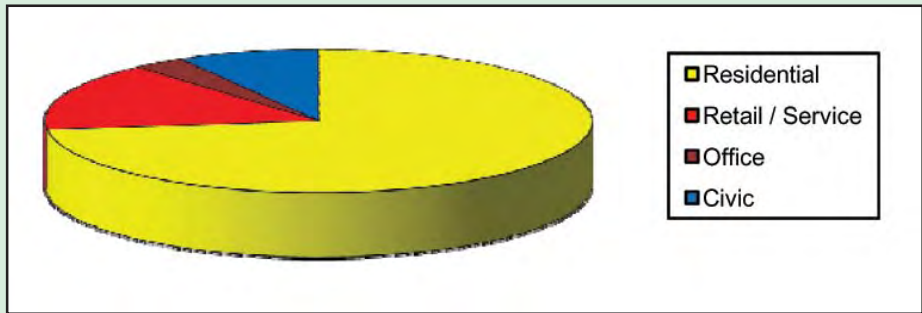
Housing

Housing would be in the form of peripheral multi-family buildings and townhouses, as well as some upper floor units above commercial uses within mixed use buildings.

Plan Implementation

One drawback of this plan is that it was not within the master planning project’s scope and budget to include a market and feasibility analysis to determine financial viability. Furthermore, the current economic downturn will likely stall the plan’s implementation for the near future. Finally, new zoning and design standards tailored specifically to the plan are still needed to avoid the possibility of a suburban style “strip center” from happening.

Summary
Although the financial feasibility and timing of this project are still unknowns, the plan’s broad community support and relatively recent occurrence cause it to still be a relevant plan.



As this pie chart illustrates, the majority of proposed building area within the Town Center would consist of residential uses. Housing would be in the form of peripheral multi-family buildings and townhouses, as well as a few upper floor units above commercial uses.



SUMMARY

Group A
 A-1: 2 level Fire Station: 4,500 sf
 A-2: 1 level Police Station: 2,250 sf
 A-3: 1 level City Hall: 4,200 sf
 1 level Office: 4,200 sf
 A-4: 1 level Civic: 450 sf
 A-5: 1 level Retail: 4,275 sf
 1 level Condo/Apt: 4,275 sf, 4 units
 A-6: 1 level Grocery Store: 5,000 sf
 A-7: 1 level Retail: 3,750 sf
 A-8: 1 level Retail: 700 sf

Group B
 B-1: 3 level Condo/Apt: 30,600 sf, 25 units
 B-2: 1 level Retail: 5,000 sf
 2 level Condo/Apt: 10,000 sf, 8 units

Group C
 C-1: 3 level Condo/Apt: 21,600 sf, 18 units
 C-2: 3 level Condo/Apt: 25,200 sf, 21 units

Group D
 D-1: 1 level Retail: 7,200 sf
 1 level Condo/Apt: 7,200 sf, 6 units

Group E
 E-1: 3 units
 E-2: 3 units
 E-3: 4 units
 E-4: 7 units

TOTAL:
 Condo/Apt: 99 units
 Retail: 20,925 sf
 Civic: 11,400 sf
 Office: 4,200 sf

PARKING SUMMARY

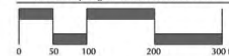
Group A: 104 spaces @ 3.5/1,000 sf
 Residential: 6 spaces @ 1.5/unit
 Group B: 18 spaces @ 3.5/1,000 sf
 Residential: 50 spaces @ 1.5/unit
 Group C: self parked @ 1.5/unit
 Group D: 25 spaces @ 3.5/1,000 sf
 Residential: 9 spaces @ 1.5/unit
 Group E: self parked @ 2/unit
 Existing Church: 24 spaces

Concept Plan for:

Lookout Mountain

for: City of Lookout Mountain, Georgia
 by: The Walker Collaborative with
 Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Associates

05.20.2008



Existing Zoning & Development Regulations

The City's zoning and subdivision regulations have evolved over time and have a piecemeal quality to them lacking a clear structure and cohesiveness. Below is a summary.

Zoning

As the zoning map at right illustrates, there are a total of seven zoning districts in Lookout Mountain, as follows:

Community Convenience Commercial District

This designation has been applied to one specific area in the city. That area is the same that has been designated as the Town Center, including the adjacent B&B property to the immediate north of the small commercial area, as well as the bank property on the south side of McFarland. This district allows a broad range of commercial uses, such as stores, restaurants, services and motels. Development requirements include a maximum building height of 2 stories or 35 feet, and one off-street parking space for every 200 square feet of building area.

Multiple Family Dwelling District

This designation has been applied to three areas. Two properties are those that presently have the city's only two multi-family developments, while the third one is applied to an undeveloped area that straddles the western terminus of Durand Drive. Permitted uses are limited to multiple family dwellings. Development requirements include a minimum front setback of 30 feet, a maximum building height of 2 stories or 35 feet, 1.5 off-street parking spaces for each unit, a minimum lot size of 4,000 square feet for each unit, a minimum lot width of 190 feet, a minimum front yard of 30 feet, a side yard of 30 feet, and a rear yard of 25 feet (side and rear yards are increased by 10 feet when adjoining a different zone). There are also minimum separation requirements between buildings, and a minimum of 50 percent of the site must be left natural or landscaped.

Single Family District

Over 90 percent of the community is zoned the Single Family District. In addition to permitting single family houses, it also allows a variety of public uses, such as schools and libraries. Development requirements include a maximum building height of 2.5 stories or 35 feet, a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet, and a minimum

lot width of 75 feet. The minimum front yard setback is 40 feet, the rear yard must be at least 25 feet, and sideyards must be at least 15 feet. It is noteworthy that, although the minimum permitted lot size for this zone is 15,000 square feet, the subdivision regulations require all new lots to be at least 35,000 square feet in area.

Single Family / Business Conference District

This zoning permits all uses allowed in the Single Family District, as well as business and educational meetings and social gatherings. Likewise, height and area requirements are the same as those in the Single Family District. This district is not visible on the draft zoning map at right.

Single Family / Neighborhood Commercial District

The only property with this designation is on the south side of McFarland Road west of Whitt Road and east of Scenic Highway. This zoning permits all uses allowed in the Single Family District, as well as offices and a few specific repair-related businesses. The height and area regulations of the Single Family District shall apply.

Tourist Oriented Commercial District

This designation has been applied only to Rock City and the small commercial development across the street from it (west side of Mockingbird Lane). Permitted uses are limited to tourist attractions and supportive retail and service uses, as well as offices and warehouses. Development requirements include a maximum building height of 2.5 stories or 35 feet, and one off-street parking space for every 200 square feet of building area.

Municipal District

This zoning permits all uses allowed in the Single Family District, as well as municipal buildings and facilities. Height and area requirements are the same as those in the Single Family District. This district is not visible on the draft zoning map at right.

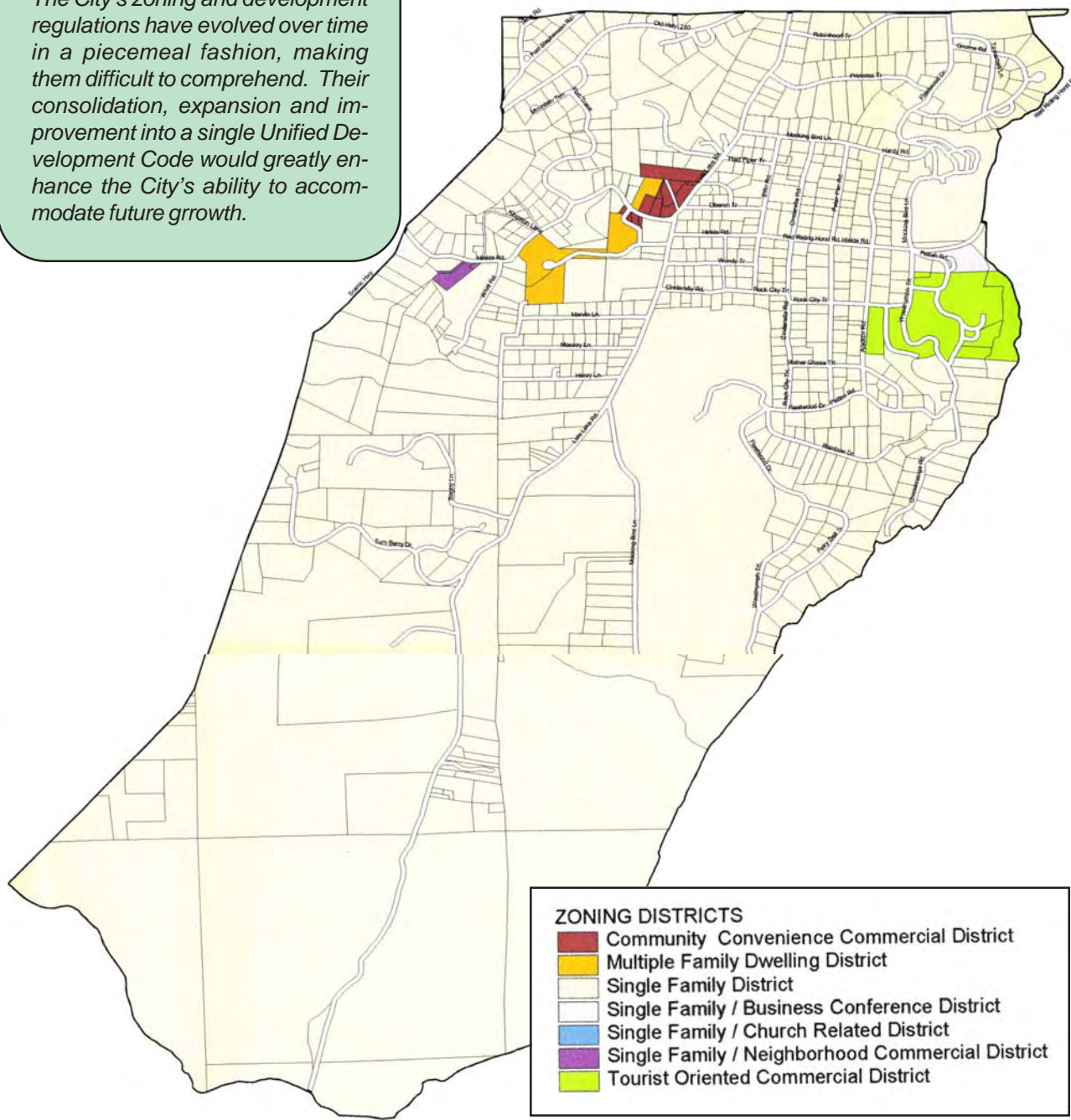
Development Regulations

The City's subdivision regulations for new lots limit minimum lot sizes to 35,000 square feet, street frontages must be at least 175 feet, lot depths must be at least 200 feet, and public sewer is required for all new development within proximity to city sewer lines. The City also has regulations related to grading, erosion control

This draft zoning map will be replaced once the City updates it.

Summary

The City's zoning and development regulations have evolved over time in a piecemeal fashion, making them difficult to comprehend. Their consolidation, expansion and improvement into a single Unified Development Code would greatly enhance the City's ability to accommodate future growth.



and stormwater management. However, compared to the development regulations of many communities, regulations are needed that are more protective of the natural environment. The existing regulations are stand-alone and not integrated into a clear, comprehensive development plan review and approval process. For example, there are no provisions for submittal and approval

of construction plans prior to construction, and there is no differentiation in requirements for residential verses commercial development activities. In addition, there are no current regulations with respect to development on steep slopes or stream buffer protection greater than the state minimum of 25 feet.

EXISTING POLICY BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to establish a point of reference illustrating where the community stands at present. Although the average citizen may look around and see more green space than development, that is not what they will have in the future. It must be assumed that, over time, growth will continue and the community's current policies - zoning and development regulations - will eventually be fully realized. Once this existing point of reference is understood, alternative growth scenarios can be objectively considered.

Methodology

The map at right illustrates the steps that were taken to arrive at this scenario. Those steps are described below:

Elimination of Lands Not Used in Calculations

Lands already developed, those with significant environmental constraints, parks, and similar lands were first identified as follows:

- 1) Lands with *consolidated drains/streams and topography in excess of 20% slope* were first removed from calculations (green on map). See pages 5-19 of the Background Study for more detailed information on existing environmental constraints.
- 2) Existing *subdivided property* that will likely not be re-developed in the near future were then removed from calculations (cross-hatched dark beige on map).
- 3) Properties reserved for *public/private parks* and recreation were removed from calculations (olive green on map). It is noteworthy, however, that if the golf course and driving range were to develop under their current zoning, they would yield approximately 132 single-family lots.
- 4) Properties not located within the Town Center that are currently utilized for *public/institutional uses* were also removed from calculations (blue on map).

Calculations for Developable Land

Following the process of elimination just described, lands that can/might be developed were calculated based upon their current zoning, as follows:

Single-Family Areas

First, calculations were made for areas zoned for single-family residential development that are not necessarily environmentally-constrained or already subdivided into small single-family lots and could potentially be developed in the near future (light beige on map). These areas contain approximately 400 acres of developable land. Fifteen percent of this acreage should be removed prior to determining density in order to account for public rights-of-way for new roads and infrastructure. This leaves 340 acres that could be developed for single-family lots. The potential density for this acreage was estimated by applying the following calculation:

$$340 \text{ (total acres)} \times 43,560 \text{ (number of square feet in an acre)} / 35,000 \text{ (minimum number of square feet required for a single-family lot)}$$

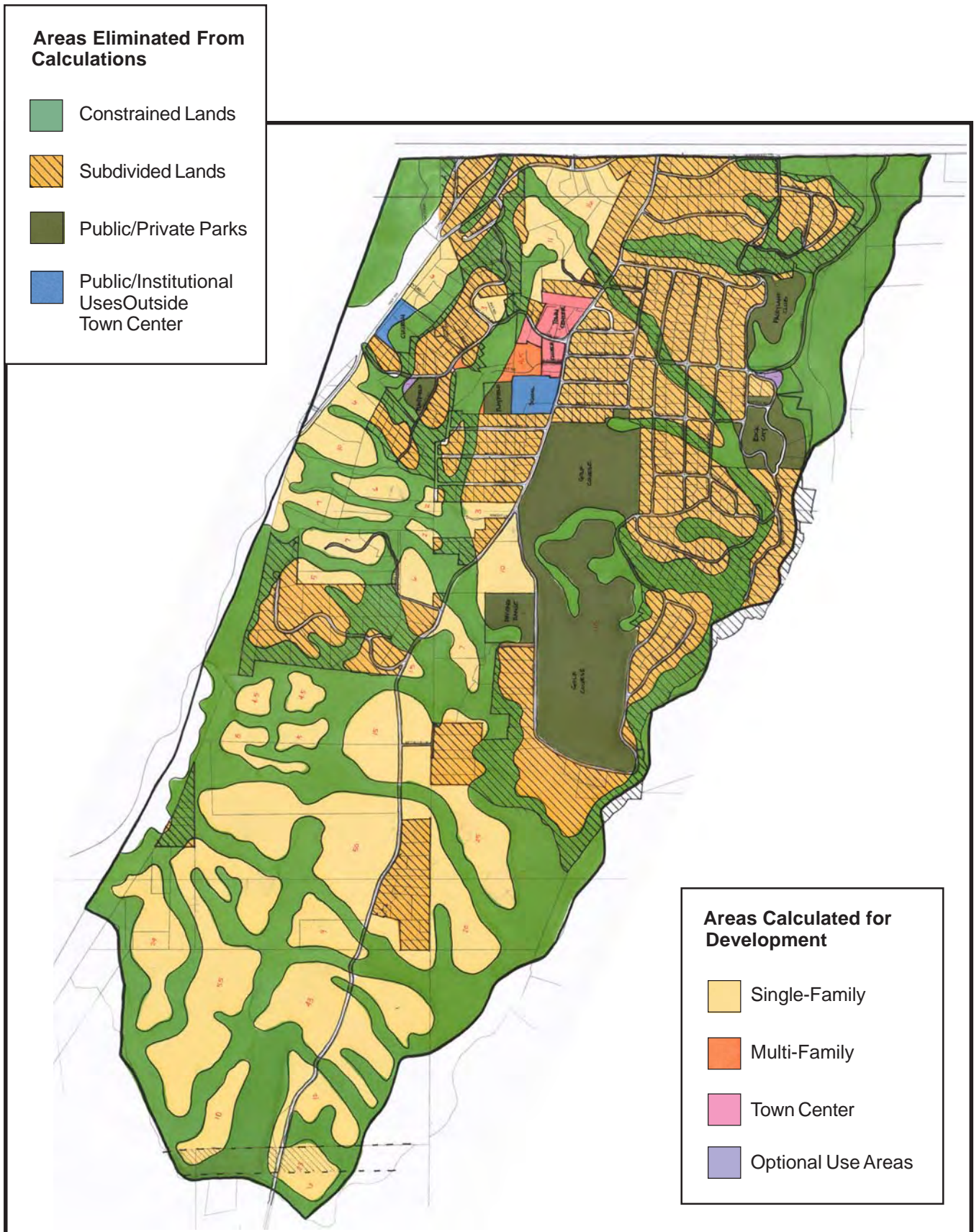
The areas represented on the map in light yellow would yield approximately *423 lots*. Existing single-family houses within the light yellow areas should also be considered in determining resulting development yields. There are approximately 19 existing single-family houses within these areas.

Multi-Family Areas

Properties zoned for multi-family development comprise approximately 4.5 acres of land that is suitable for multi-family development (orange on map). The potential development yield for this acreage is estimated by applying the following calculation:

$$4.5 \text{ (total acres)} \times 43,560 \text{ (number of square feet in an acre)} / 4,000 \text{ (minimum number of square feet per multi-family dwelling per zoning)}$$

These areas would yield approximately *49 multi-family units*. Existing multi-family dwellings within this area should be considered in determining total multi-family units in Lookout Mountain.



Town Center

Property within Lookout Mountain’s designated Town Center have been identified (pink on map). Based upon the recently-completed Town Center Plan, redevelopment of this area would yield the following in addition to the existing adjacent bed and breakfast, apartments, gas station, bank, and church:

- Multi-family: 99 units
- Retail: 20,925 square feet
- Civic: 11,400 square feet
- Office: 4,200 square feet

Optional Use Areas

In accordance with the City’s existing zoning, some properties are permitted to have single-family uses, as well as commercial/business-related uses (purple on map). The property between Fairyland Club and Rock City would yield a small meeting place/conference hall or a single-family residence. The property on the south side of McFarland Road, adjacent to the soccer field, is currently occupied by a small supply/distribution facility. These areas will be considered based upon their existing uses.

Calculated Development Yields

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Future</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Population</i>
Single-Family Units	565 ⁽¹⁾	423 ⁽²⁾	988	2,568 ⁽³⁾
Multi-Family Units	42 ⁽⁴⁾	148 ⁽⁵⁾	190	380 ⁽⁶⁾
Retail (sq. ft.)	NA ⁽⁷⁾	20,925	20,925	NA
Offices (sq. ft.)	NA ⁽⁷⁾	4,200	4,200	NA
Civic (sq. ft.)	NA ⁽⁷⁾	11,400	11,400	NA

- (1) Number of non-rental units per 2000 US Census (does not account for existing rental single-family units - # unavailable)
- (2) Number of potential new single-family houses per build-out calculations
- (3) Based on existing average of 2.6 people per household in Lookout Mountain per 2000 US Census
- (4) Statistic provided by the City
- (5) Potential build-out for multi-family areas and Town Center combined
- (6) Based on average number of household members in apartments (2) per U.S. Census Bureau’s 2007 American Housing Survey
- (7) Existing square footage will be replaced with that created by the redeveloped Town Center

Results & Planning Implications

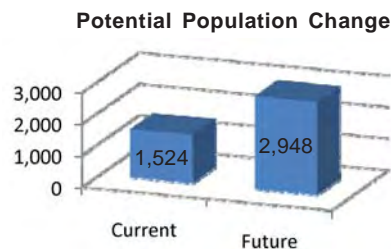
Results: Future Build-Out Based on Current Policies

The calculations documented on the previous pages yield the following future build-out scenario based upon the City’s current zoning and plans (existing and future development combined):

- Single-Family: 988 units
- Multi-Family: 190 units
- Retail: 20,925 square feet
- Office: 4,200 square feet
- Civic: 11,400 square feet

Planning Implications

The resulting population of a full build-out scenario based upon current City policies would be roughly 2,948 people. This compares to the current population 1,524 people. Thus, the residential population would increase by 1,424 people - nearly double from its current level.



Transportation Impacts

Based on the future build-out scenario with the City's current zoning and plans, approximately 8,892 new trips per day will be added to the City's streets. Of these new trips, the majority will go to and from the south and west of the Town Center, about 3,219 will go to and from the south, and 2,598 will go to and from the west. Approximately 2,093 trips will come to and from the east and 982 will go to and from the north of the Town Center. These projections are based on the existing distribution of traffic in the city, as well as the proposed new locations of the future single and multi-family residential units.

The current number of average daily trips on Lula Lake Road just north of the intersection with McFarland Road is 2,480. Therefore, with an additional 982 daily trips added, there will be a nearly 40% increase in traffic for this portion of roadway. Other city roads will encounter a similar magnitude of increased traffic. Based on this increase in traffic volume, there will be fewer gaps in traffic to allow side street traffic at unsignalized intersections to enter the major roadways. There will also be less of an opportunity for pedestrians to cross roadways safely. Also, roadway improvements near the Town Center on roads such as, Lula Lake Road, McFarland Road, and Red Riding Hood Trail will need to be completed to be able to handle the new capacity of trips generated with the future development. Based on the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority's Generalized Annual Average Daily Volumes table for a two-way arterial, unsignalized, with two lanes, undivided, without left turn bays, the "level of service" (LOS) for Lula Lake Road, Red Riding Hood Trail, and McFarland Road is "A." Even in a full build-out scenario, that LOS of A would remain.

Infrastructure Impacts

Based upon the sewer study conducted in 2007, and assuming that remedial improvements can be made to the system, approximately 200 additional new housing units can be accommodated. The study implies that beyond that number, it is questionable how many more can be accommodated. Based upon the projected future build-out potential of 571 new housing units, 371 new units (65% of the total potential new units) might not be accommodated by the existing sewer system - even if

the current system is improved to fix existing problems.

School Impacts

The Fairyland School currently has an enrollment of approximately 300 students. Based upon discussions with school representatives, the school is not yet at capacity and could accommodate roughly 100 to 120 more students, although they emphasized that those numbers require much more study. When the current 607 households are considered in light of current enrollment, an average of .49 students are generated per household. Thus, the potential new 571 households would generate approximately 280 children, which would far exceed current capacity at Fairyland School. *Using the figures available, the addition of 225 new housing units would generate 110 new students, which is in the middle of the approximate "breaking point" for the school's current capacity.* One way to lessen this impact would be for fewer conventional single-family houses to be constructed and, instead, more diverse housing types that generate less children.

Environmental Impacts

The vast majority of land to be developed in the future will be in the form of single-family residential development. Based upon the build-out scenario calculation, roughly 400 acres of land would be developed. Only 4.5 acres of land would be developed for multi-family development. Thus, a total of roughly 405 acres of land would be transformed from its current natural condition to developed land. That compares with a total land area of approximately 1,728 acres in the city. Thus, 23% of the city's land would be developed, in addition to areas already developed. It must also be considered that *much of the environmentally constrained lands remaining undeveloped would now be fragmented and disconnected from other such areas by development, tremendously reducing its environmental value - including its ability to support a diverse range of plant and animal species.*

Community Character Impacts

While these impacts cannot be quantified, the potential new volume of development would clearly alter the current character of the community. However, strong development standards such as those related to tree preservation and replacement could mitigate impacts.

PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

Purpose & Approach

As already summarized on pages 4 and 5 of this plan, a variety of approaches were used to solicit public input for this comprehensive plan. One approach was the administration of a simple questionnaire to better understand the perspectives, opinions and values of Lookout Mountain’s citizens. The questionnaire featured four specific questions, as follow:

- 1) What do you love about Lookout Mountain that we need to keep?
- 2) What would you like to change?
- 3) What would you like to see in 20 years?
- 4) What aspects of other communities, if any, should we consider emulating/borrowing?

The survey was administered in three manners. It was first handed out at the July 14, 2009, public kick-off meeting for the project, which was held at the Fairyland Club. The meeting attendees completed the survey and handed them in when the meeting ended. Other citizens picked up copies of the survey at City Hall and then completed them and returned them. Others downloaded the survey off of the City’s website to complete and submit the survey.

Survey Results

A total of XXX surveys were completed and submitted. The results are provided at right and summarized here.

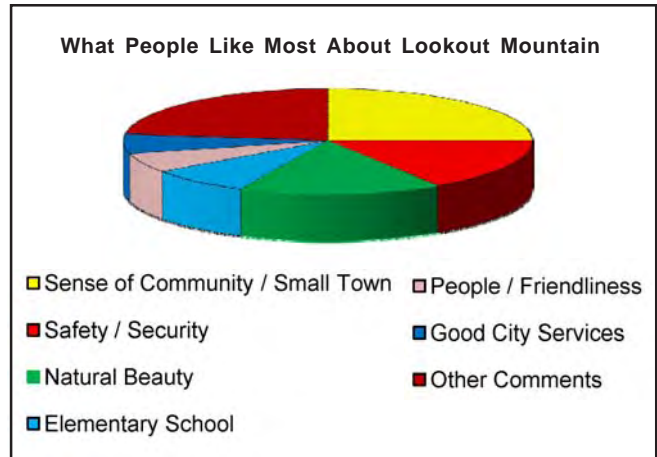


The public input survey was first distributed to the public on July 14, 2009 during the public kick-off meeting held at the Fairyland Club.

What People Like Most About Lookout Mountain

Of the 721 individual comments on this subject, the most common responses were as follows:

- Sense of Community / Small Town - 180 (25%)
- Safety / Security (including for children) - 118 (16%)
- Natural Beauty - 114 (16%)
- Elementary School - 60 (8%)
- People / Friendliness - 41 (6%)
- Good City Services - 40 (6%)
- Other Comments - 168 (23%)



Senior Housing

A total of 97 comments were made in support of senior housing, including “assisted living,” “a retirement community,” and “Chapelbrow.”

Comments Supporting Restricted Growth

Of the 349 individual comments on this subject, the most common responses were as follows:

- Planned, careful, restricted growth - 103 (30%)
- No more traffic / low traffic levels - 90 (26%)
- No growth / little change - 89 (26%)
- No large development - 34 (10%)
- Low density development - 33 (9%)

Other Key Issues

Among the other findings of the survey, there was strong community support for the following:

- More pathways / sidewalks
- Town Center (shopping, dining, City Hall, etc.)
- Underground utilities
- Improved sewer system
- More green space

Things to Keep / Things People Like

Planned, careful, restricted growth to compliment / protect integrity of community.....	103
No more traffic / Low traffic	90
No growth / Stay the same / Little change.....	89
No large development.....	34
Low density.....	33
No Chapelbrow.....	12
Restricted Growth Comments	349

Sense of community / small town.....	180
Safety / Security including for children.....	118
Natural beauty.....	114
Elementary school.....	60
People / Friendliness.....	41
Good city services - police, fire, public works.....	40
Quiet / Peaceful.....	23
Privacy.....	14
Variety of homes.....	13
Hiking trails.....	11
Local businesses / No chain stores / No fast food.....	11
Maintained yards.....	11
Minimum commercial growth.....	11
No Covenant College growth.....	11
Single family homes.....	11
Speed enforcement.....	10
Trees / tree canopy.....	9
Good churches.....	6
Keep Scenic Hwy. from moving.....	6
Historic character.....	4
Parks.....	4
Clubs.....	3
Longevity of residence / Live here long.....	2
Quality of life.....	2
Recreation leagues.....	2
Tourist community.....	2
Town Common.....	2

Things to Change / Things People Want

More pathways / sidewalks / trails / bike paths.....	173
Town Center.....	97
Restaurant / public dining.....	26
Grocery.....	16
Beauty shop.....	13
New city hall.....	6
Town Center Comments	158

Assisted living.....	28
Retirement community.....	26
Senior citizen housing / care options.....	18
Condos for seniors.....	11
Chapelbrow.....	8
Assisted living focused on Lkt Mtn residence (small)....	4
Nursing home.....	2

Senior Housing Comments	97
Underground utilities.....	54
Better sewer system.....	29
More green space.....	23
No / less rental property.....	19
High School / Middle School Options.....	18
Enforcement of lawn and house upkeep.....	17
Recycling.....	17
Community Pool.....	13
Less tourism.....	13
More street lamps.....	13
Public library.....	12
Too small / need growth.....	11
More recreation facilities.....	10
Annexation of Dade County area.....	7
More police presence.....	7
More Fairyland School support.....	6
Golf carts.....	5
Leash law.....	4
More community events.....	4
Community Garden.....	3
Lower taxes.....	3
City government more involved with Fairyland School.....	2
Fix storm water problems.....	2
Medical facility.....	2
Public Transit.....	2
Street signs - better / more legible.....	2

Footnotes:

- A) The four questions presented to the citizens of Lookout Mountain were:
 1. What do you love about Lookout Mountain that we need to keep?
 2. What would you like to change?
 3. What would you like to see in 20 years?
 4. What aspects of other communities, if any, should we consider emulating?
- B) The responses to the four questions were consolidated under the two headings above. Similar responses to different questions were consolidated. For example, some comments for more Pathways / Sidewalks were made in response to questions 2, 3 and 4.
- C) Comments required at least two responses to be registered.
- D) Because of the open ended nature of the questions and the variety of answers, the tallying and consolidation of the comments incorporated as much art as science.
- E) Where it seemed appropriate, comments with a common theme (Restricted Growth, Town Center, Senior Housing) have been presented together and totaled.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Once a community's existing conditions are understood, as well as the community preferences and values, a set of goals and objectives are critical to provide direction to the comprehensive planning process. All of the goals listed below have been adapted directly from the "State-wide Planning Goals" found in the Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1 Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning "Local Planning Requirements." Many of the objectives (all but two), including all that are relevant to Lookout Mountain and that clearly fit within a particular goal, have been adapted from the "Quality Community Objectives" section of the same chapter. Such objectives have been asterisked (*).

A. Economic Development Goal

Achieve a growing and balanced economy consistent with prudent management of Lookout Mountain's resources that equitably benefits all segments of the population.

A-1. Appropriate Businesses Objective*

The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in Lookout Mountain should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

A-2. Employment Options Objective*

A range of job types should be provided in Lookout Mountain to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

A-3. Limited Commercial Uses Objective

Commercial uses in Lookout Mountain should be intended primarily for the benefit of the community's residents. Businesses should not be developed or expanded to the extent that there is an overwhelming increase in the number of non-residents regularly visiting the community.

A-4. Local Support of Businesses Objective

To the extent that businesses do exist in Lookout Mountain and new ones will be established in the future, it is important that local residents support them so they can prosper and continue to serve the community.

B. Natural and Cultural Resources Goal

Conserve and protect the environmental, natural and cultural resources of Lookout Mountain.

B-1. Heritage Preservation Objective*

The traditional character of Lookout Mountain should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

B-2. Open Space Preservation Objective*

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

B-3. Environmental Protection Objective*

Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

B-4. Tree Canopy & Indigenous Vegetation Objective

Lookout Mountain's deciduous tree canopy should be protected to preserve the habitat of many important animal species. Similarly, natural areas should be protected from invasive plant species. Preserved areas should be physically contiguous to maintain a cohesive ecosystem.

C. Community Services and Facilities Goal

Ensure the provision of community facilities and services to support efficient growth and development patterns that will protect and enhance the quality of life of Lookout Mountain's residents.

C-1. Public Sewer & Water Objective

All new development should be serviced by public sewer and water systems. Such systems should also not exceed their capacity to function in an effective and efficient manner, and they should avoid negative impacts on the quality of life for residents.

C-2. Education Objective

Maintain a high quality of education for Lookout Mountain's young people, including well-qualified teachers and good physical facilities. The Fairyland School's capacity to accommodate students should not be overburdened, and the school should have convenient and safe accessibility to a large percentage of students who might choose to walk or bicycle to school.

C-3. Recreation Objective

A broad range of recreational opportunities should exist for all Lookout Mountain citizens, both publicly and private operated. The City should play a leadership role in providing passive recreational opportunities through facilities such as greenways, parks and open space.

D. Housing Goal

Ensure that all residents of Lookout Mountain have access to adequate and affordable housing.

D-1. Housing Opportunities Objective*

Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in Lookout Mountain to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

D-2. Multi-Family Housing Design & Location Objective

All multi-family housing should have a high quality of design to protect the community's aesthetics, character and property values. To achieve a variety of planning objectives, most multi-family housing should be located in or near the Town Center.

D-3. Residential Maintenance & Appearance Objective

All housing should be maintained at a level that ensures that buildings remain structurally sound and safe, and that properties are attractive and contribute positively to the character of their surroundings. Vehicles and similar items should not be stored in front yards.

E. Land Use and Transportation Goal

Ensure the coordination of land use planning and transportation planning to support efficient growth and development patterns that will promote sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources, and provision of adequate and affordable housing.

E-1. Traditional Neighborhood Objective*

Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

E-2. Infill Development Objective*

Lookout Mountain should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional urban core of the community.

E-3. Sense of Place Objective*

The development of an activity center that serves as a community focal point should be encouraged. This community focal point should be an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly place where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

E-4. Town Center Objective

The City's proposed redevelopment of the existing Town Center should be achieved. Most future civic, commercial, multi-family and mixed-use development in Lookout Mountain should occur within or adjacent to the Town Center.

E-5. Transportation Objective

Development levels should not exceed the capacity of roads to handle traffic without undue safety and congestion problems. Safe and convenient transportation options beyond motorized vehicles should exist throughout the community, including walking, jogging and cycling.

F. Intergovernmental Coordination Goal

Ensure the coordination of local planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, with neighboring communities, and with state and regional plans and programs.

F-1. Regional Cooperation Objective*

Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.

PUBLIC CHARRETTE WORKSHOP

Although the overall project methodology was designed to encourage strong public input throughout the life of this project, the public charrette workshop offered the single greatest opportunity for meaningful “hands-on” involvement of key stakeholders. A “charrette” is an intensive brain-storming process used by planners and designers to create planning concepts within a limited amount of time. The purpose of the charrette process is to provide a forum for key stakeholders to achieve a consensus on the future of the study area. The most tangible outcome of the charrette is the creation of Alternative Growth Scenarios for consideration as the basis for the ultimate plan. The three (3) day charrette (August 25-27, 2009) included the following steps:

Follow-Up Field Work

This task gave the consultants another opportunity prior to the evening Planning Workshop to build on previous impressions of the study area. In particular, examples of land use and development features in the City that “work” and “don’t work” were identified. Also, any field information not previously obtained, but later recognized as necessary, was gathered as part of this task.

Planning Workshop

Prior to the charrette, the City recruited approximately 60 participants to be involved in the Planning Workshop. Participants were stakeholders representing a broad spectrum of community interests. The consultants, City officials, and Planning Workshop participants gathered at the Our Lady of the Mount Catholic Church and achieved the following steps over a roughly two-hour period:

Workshop Orientation

The consultants presented the following items:

- Workshop Purpose & Overview
- Background Research Findings
- Results of the Public Input to Date / Goals & Objectives
- Workshop “Ground Rules”

Planning Session

The Planning Session consisted of splitting participants into teams of roughly ten (10) members each, and each team created its own concept plan by applying colored markers to base maps. Notes explaining non-graphic issues were also encouraged. A variety of planning topics were addressed, and each was graphically represented on the plans by a specific color. For example, environmental conservation was represented by the color green, commercial uses were represented by red, housing was represented by yellow, and so forth. Although a limited amount of time was allocated for each issue, substantial time was reserved at the end for teams to go back and revisit any issues necessary.

Workshop Team Presentations & Wrap-Up

Following the completion of the Planning Session, the Workshop Teams reassembled into a single group and one or more members of each team briefly presented their plans. After each presentation, there was plenty of time for questions and comments. Following the Workshop Team presentations, the consultants concluded the evening by identifying common elements between the various ideas, and suggested how those ideas might be combined to form the basis for the Alternative Growth Scenarios as a prelude to the ultimate Comprehensive Plan.

Alternative Growth Scenarios Preparation

Based upon this project’s background analysis and visioning, the established goals and objectives, and the results of the charrette Planning Workshop, the consultants developed the Alternative Growth Scenarios. Three scenarios were developed, one being the “build-out scenario” based upon existing zoning that was created previously. Each scenario addressed key considerations for the study area, such as:

- Land uses
- Development densities and character
- Transportation
- Community facilities

During this step, the consultants met with key City representatives to receive feedback on the work accomplished up to this point.

Alternative Growth Scenarios Presentation

Similar to the public “kick-off” meeting conducted at the beginning of the project, this meeting was widely-publicized to encourage a strong turn-out. This meeting, held on the evening of August 27, 2009 at the Fairyland Club, included the following key components:

- Opening Comments & Project Approach

- Overview of Existing Conditions
- Summary of Public Input Results
- Review of Goals & Objectives
- Presentation of the Alternative Growth Scenarios
- Discussion with the Public

The majority of meeting time was dedicated to the Alternative Growth Scenarios, as opposed to the background information. Because of the importance of public interaction, a generous amount of time was provided for an open discussion.



Key Ideas Generated by the Workshop

- Develop the Town Center
- Protect natural areas, especially those with environmental constraints
- Preserve historic features of the community (Fairyland Club, golf course, etc.)
- Provide sidewalks on key roads, as well as trails through natural areas
- Avoid too much growth that might detract from the character of the community and quality of life

ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIOS

Purpose & Approach

From the beginning of this comprehensive planning process, it has been anticipated that up to three alternative growth scenarios would be explored so that citizens could compare different options for future growth. It was recognized that one of the three scenarios would be the “build-out scenario” based upon existing zoning. An evaluation of that scenario was conducted prior to the planning charrette (see pages 42-45). Rather than producing two separate scenario maps whereby many features would be repeated, a single map was produced (see at right), and differences between the two scenarios have been conveyed graphically and through supportive text. To best articulate the distinctions between the two alternative growth scenarios, a summary of the key concepts proposed in any scenario is provided below.

Key Concepts: Any Scenario

The following key concepts are described in more detail in the “plan” portion of this comprehensive plan document, but below is a summary:

Town Center

The 2008 Town Center Plan proposes a mixture of governmental, commercial and residential uses developed in a pedestrian-friendly form and anchored by a small town green. The Town Center Plan, which has enjoyed strong community support, is reaffirmed by this comprehensive plan.

Low-Impact Business

This designation applies to a single parcel on McFarland Road that is currently used for a business and zoned as Single Family / Neighborhood Commercial District. It is the intent of this plan to allow the existing use to continue, but any other non-residential uses on the land should be of a low-impact nature with respect to traffic, noise, etc.

High-Density Residential

These areas are intended to accommodate a broad range

of residential uses that are higher in density relative to other areas of the city. Such uses include single-family detached houses on small lots (including “patio homes”), attached houses (duplexes, triplexes, quads, etc.), townhouses, condominium/apartment buildings, and various forms of senior housing (assisted living, etc.). It is important that higher-density housing be located within or near the Town Center. As indicated on the map at right, the cross-hatching on the most northern portion of this designation represents the option of either High-Density Residential or Medium-Density Residential.

Medium-Density Residential

This designation is limited to the northern half of the city where most of the existing housing already exists. This designation supports the existing density and character of single-family detached houses, which features average lot sizes of approximately 15,000 square feet (.34 acres).

Low-Density Residential

This designation dominates the undeveloped southern half of the city, which has many environmentally sensitive features, as documented in this plan document’s background study of existing conditions. The current minimum lot size per zoning is 35,000 square feet, while the two alternatives tested out were densities featuring minimum average lot sizes of 60,000 square feet and 3 acres, respectively. See page 56 for more on these alternative scenarios.

Open Space, Recreation & Attractions

This designation is applied primarily to properties already in use as open space, recreation, or attractions. These properties include the golf course, Fairyland Club, Rock City, the soccer field, and recreational facilities associated with the Fairyland School. The only new such area is the park proposed on the southeast edge of the city that would offer spectacular views of the valley below.

Institutional

The Institutional designation recognizes existing institutions, such as the Catholic church and the elementary school, but not those that are part of the Town Center, which has its own designation.

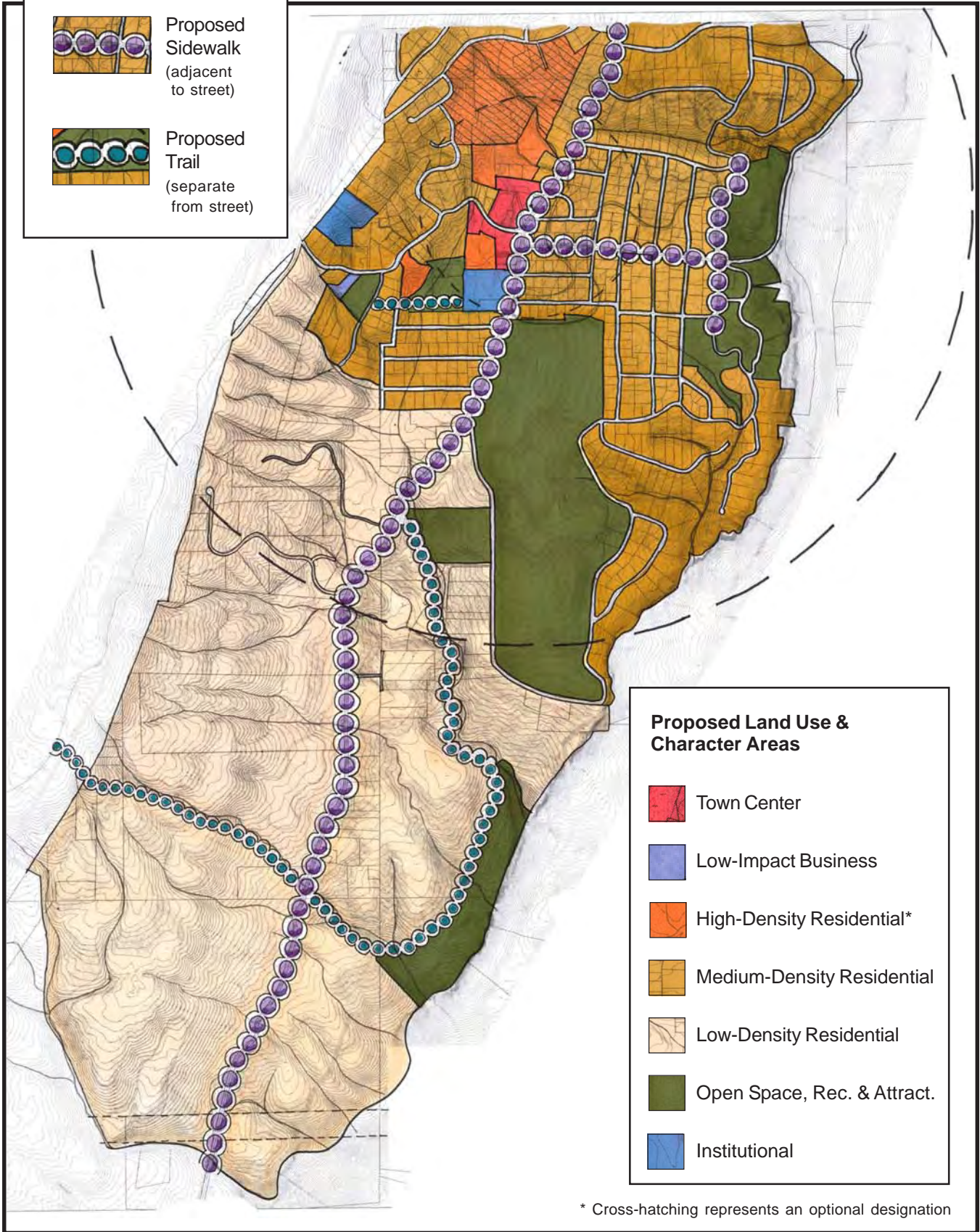
Sidewalks / Trails Plan









Proposed Sidewalk
(adjacent to street)



Proposed Trail
(separate from street)



Proposed Land Use & Character Areas

-  Town Center
-  Low-Impact Business
-  High-Density Residential*
-  Medium-Density Residential
-  Low-Density Residential
-  Open Space, Rec. & Attract.
-  Institutional

* Cross-hatching represents an optional designation

Roads & Transportation

Even with future increased growth, it appears that additional driving lanes can be avoided, yet increased traffic levels will remain relatively minimal. Key roads will continue to have a level of service (LOS) of “A.” However, improvements will be needed relative to specific intersections, sight distances and safety considerations.

Sidewalks / Trails

As the concept plan map indicates on the previous page, sidewalks are proposed for key segments of Lula Lake Road, Red Riding Hood Trail, and Mockingbird Lane / Fleetwood Drive. Trails that are separated from roads are proposed for: 1) a relatively short east-west segment to connect the Fairyland School recreation facilities with the soccer field to the west, and 2) a much longer looping segment in the southern half of the city that will traverse Lula Lake Road and access the proposed new park.

Utilities & Infrastructure

Recommendations for this subject include: 1) improving the sewage treatment system to further combat odor issues and to increase capacity for additional growth; and 2) to require that new development place utilities underground.

Natural Environment & Community Character

Key recommendations include: 1) the adoption of environmentally-friendly development standards to protect slopes, streams/natural drainage, forested areas, and other natural features; 2) consider a tree preservation corridor overlay zoning; and 3) consider neighborhood conservation zoning for areas in the north half of the city.

Alternative Scenarios

With an understanding of the main concepts that are proposed under any scenario, the alternatives can be more easily comprehended. The two key variables in considering alternative growth scenarios for Lookout Mountain relate to the proposed high-density residential areas in the north half of the city and the low-density residential areas in the south half of the city. These two geographic areas / issues are independent of each other

in that the high-density residential alternatives in the north do not hinge upon the low-density alternatives in the south part of the city.

High-Density Residential Near the Town Center

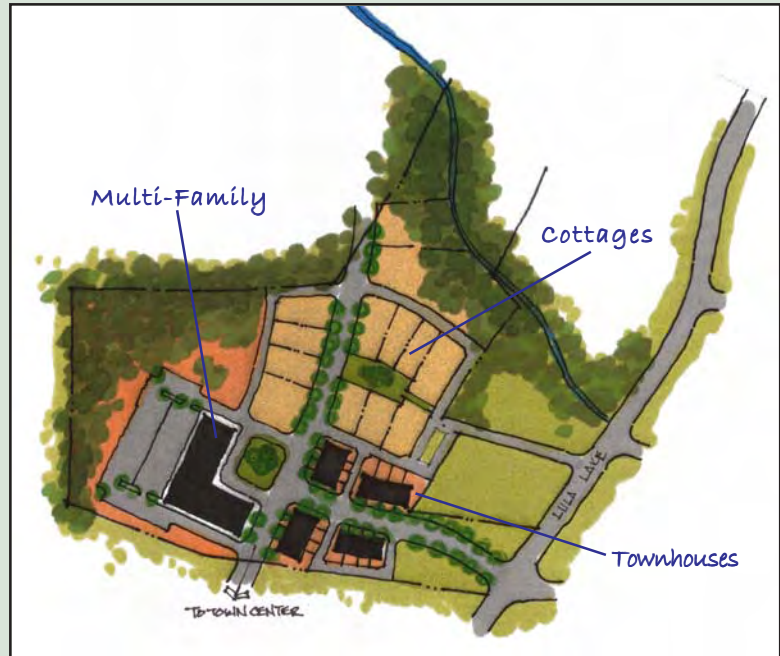
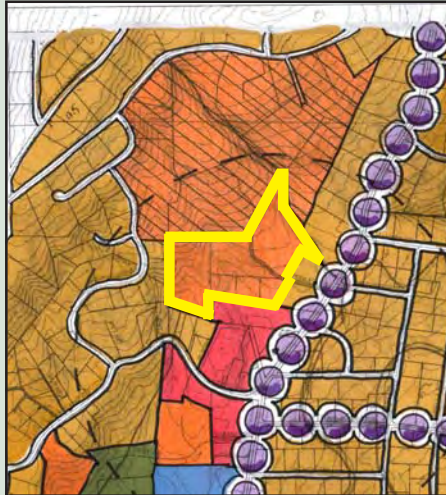
Because of the current lack of choices for housing types, there is strong consensus that a greater variety of housing types is needed in Lookout Mountain. In particular, housing for seniors is needed, ranging from “down-sizing” patio homes to assisted living. An important principle of the Concept Plan is that higher density housing should be located in and near the Town Center. The following criteria were used in identifying specific properties targeted for such development:

- Lands with no (or minimal) existing development
- Larger parcels that will accommodate land assemblage relative to numerous smaller parcels
- Lands best accessed (directly or indirectly) by Lula Lake rather than McFarland

Two alternatives have been suggested for high-density housing near the Town Center, and both are illustrated and summarized at right. Alternative “A” features a smaller area directly adjacent to the north side of the Town Center, and Alternative “B” features this same area, as well as a larger contiguous area to the immediate north of Alternative “A.” Alternative “A” includes a 5+ acre component of multi-family housing, which could include assisted living (approximately 40± beds). *It is critical to emphasize that the two conceptual site plans at right are purely conceptual and simply one of numerous ways that these sites might be developed with the high-density residential designation.* The question that the City must answer is “Which specific properties should be included within the proposed high-density residential designation?” Because there are pros and cons with either scenario that are relatively evenly weighted, the decision on these alternatives will rest primarily with the preferences of the City. The City’s decision will be clarified within “the plan” section of this plan document.

Alternative A: High-Density Residential Near the Town Center

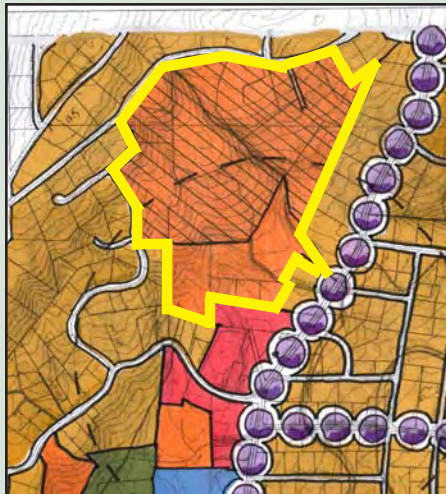
- 11 cottages
- 16 townhouses
- 5+ acres of multi-family housing



Alternative B: High-Density Residential Near the Town Center

Same program as Alternative A, plus:

- 34 single-family houses
- 36 cottages (smaller single-family houses)
- 16 townhouses



Low-Density Residential in the South

In addition to the issue of where to locate high-density housing in the north half of the community, the other key alternative is the density of future residential growth in the south half of the city. The relatively undeveloped southern half of the city has many environmentally sensitive features, as documented in this plan document’s background study of existing conditions. The current minimum lot size per zoning is 35,000 square feet (.8 acres), while the two alternatives tested out were densities featuring minimum average lot sizes of 60,000 square feet (1.5 acres) and 3 acres, respectively. Regardless of the density decided upon by the City, it has been proposed that a clustering option be allowed that would permit smaller lot sizes in return for protected common open space so long as the overall site density is not exceeded. This option will be illustrated and described in greater detail in “the plan” portion of this document.

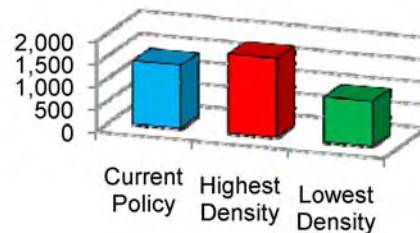
“highest density scenario” includes the more expansive high-density residential area near the Town Center (Alternative B illustrated on page 55), combined with the 60,000 square foot lot density in the south. The “lowest density scenario” includes the less expansive high-density residential area near the Town Center (Alternative A illustrated on page 55), combined with the 3-acre lot density in the south. It must be emphasized that other potential scenarios include combining the higher density scenario in the north near the Town Center with the lower density scenario in the south, and vice-versa.

The results of the comparison are that the highest density scenario would yield an additional population of 1,748 people, while the current zoning would yield 1,396 additional people. On the other hand, the lowest density scenario would yield an additional population of only 990 people. Thus, the current zoning’s results fall roughly in the middle of the two scenarios tested here.

Comparison of the Alternative Scenarios

The chart below compares the number of housing units and resulting population based upon: current conditions, a full build-out scenario with the existing zoning, a full build-out scenario with a higher density approach, and a full build-out scenario with a lower density approach. The

Additional Population Comparisons



Comparison of Alternative Growth Scenarios

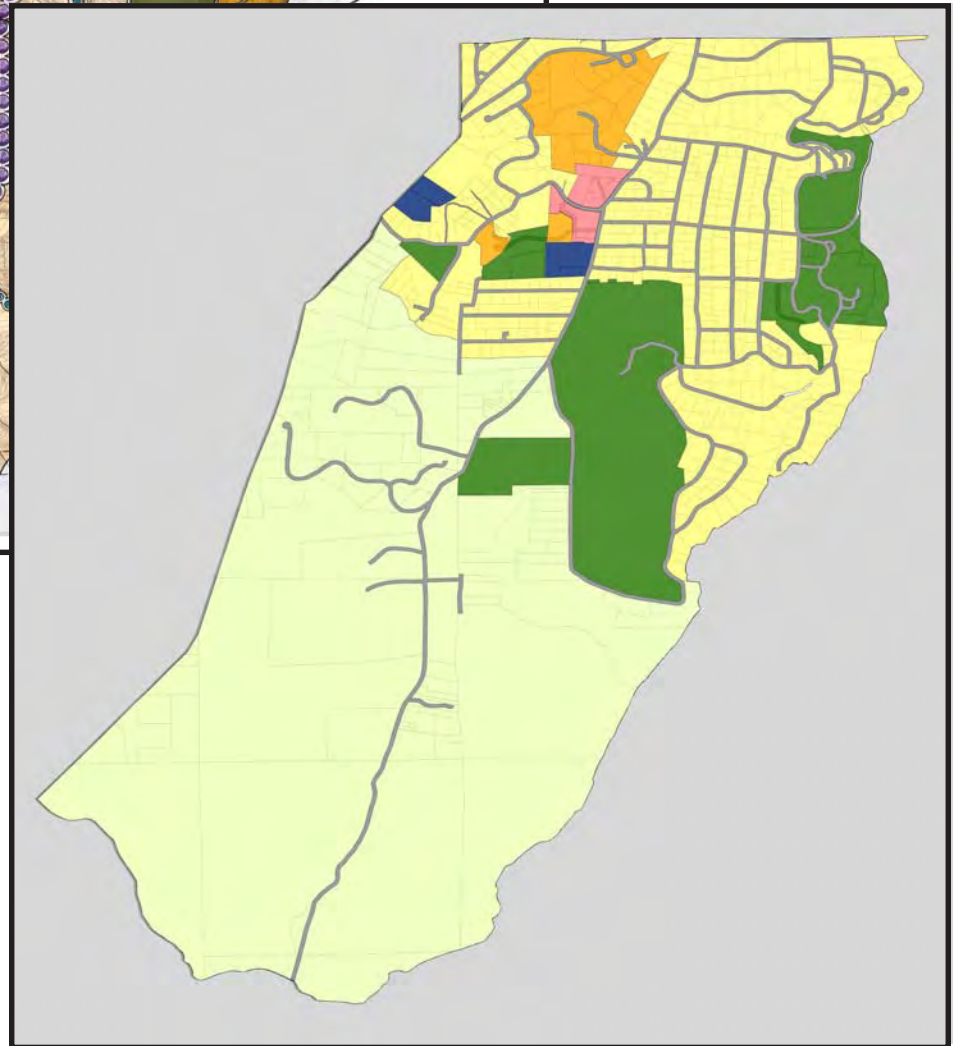
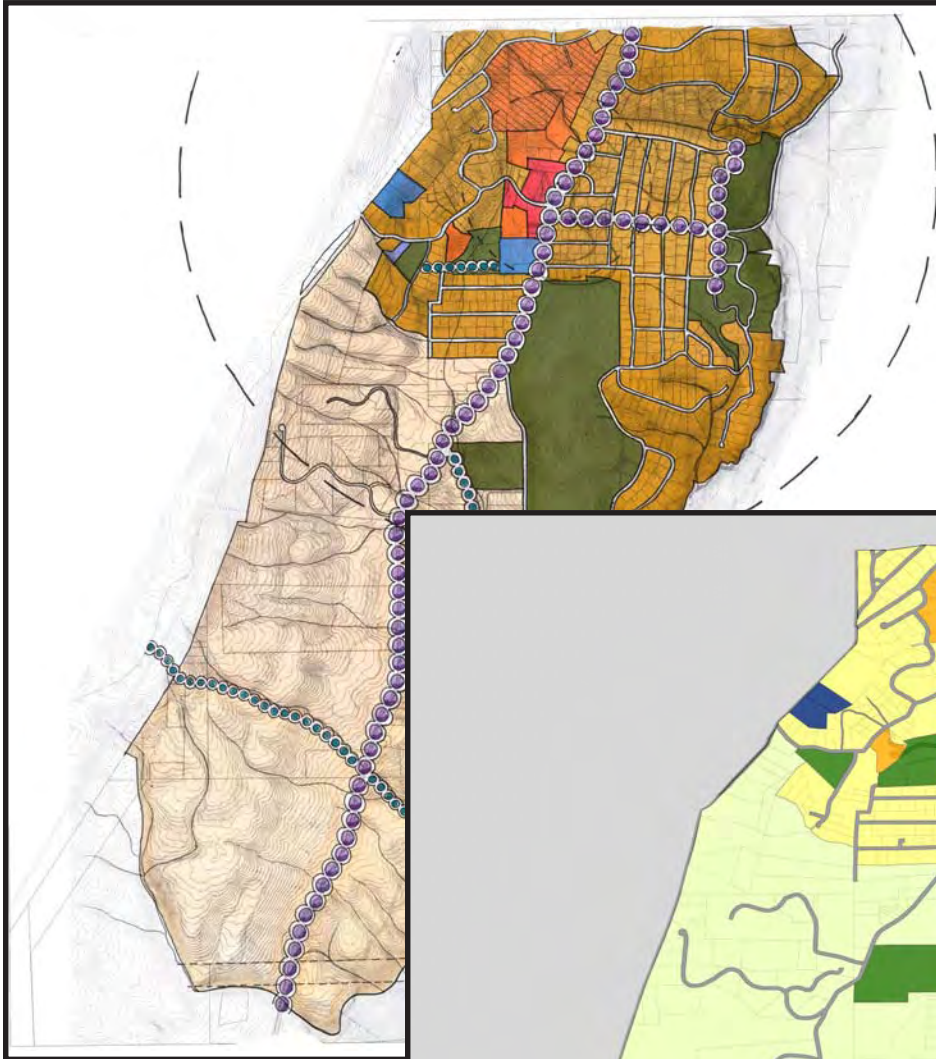
<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Existing Conditions (Units / Population)</i>	<i>Current Policy (Units / Population)</i>	<i>Highest Density* (Units / Population)</i>	<i>Lowest Density** (Units / Population)</i>
Single-Family	565 / 1,440	423 / 1,100	503 / 1,308	224 / 582
Multi-Family	42 / 84	148 / 296	220 / 440	204 / 408
Total	607 / 1,524	571 / 1,396	723 / 1,748	428 / 990

* 60,000 sq. ft. lot density in south / most expansive high-density north of Town Center

** 3-acre lot density in south / least expansive high-density north of Town Center

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THE PLAN



LAND USE & CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

Overview

This plan element addresses land use and character areas. Until recent years, such plan elements were typically referred to simply as “land use” elements. However, because it is now widely recognized that the physical form, density, and character of a particular area is as important as the land use, the concept and the term have been expanded. Thus, the description below of each “land use and character area” classification will address the permitted land uses, densities (for residential classifications), and general physical form. This plan element shall serve as the basis for future zoning. As with this plan, the subsequent zoning should also address not only land uses, but densities, form and character.

Land Use & Character Areas

The following land use and character areas are illustrated on the map on the following page and described in detail on the following pages, but below is a summary of each:

Town Center (16 acres)

The Town Center shall consist of a mixture of governmental, commercial and residential uses developed in a pedestrian-friendly form and anchored by a small town green. It is located in the northern half of the city where a more suburban form of a town center has existed for years, near the intersection of Lula Lake Road and McFarland Road.

High-Density Residential (48 acres)

These areas are intended to accommodate a broad range of residential uses that are higher in density relative to other areas of the city. Appropriate uses include single-family detached houses on small lots, attached houses, townhouses, condominium/apartment buildings, and various forms of senior housing. All higher-density housing should be located within or near the Town Center.

Medium-Density Residential (404 acres)

This land use and character area designation is limited

to the northern half of the city where most of the existing housing already exists. It supports and reinforces the established density and character of existing neighborhoods and their single-family detached houses, which feature average lots sizes of approximately 15,000 square feet (.34 acres).

Low-Density Residential (948 acres)

The Low-Density Residential classification dominates the undeveloped southern half of the city, which has many environmentally sensitive features. The appropriate maximum density of this area should equate to an average lot size of 60,000 square feet (1.4 acres). However, clustering should be an alternative in which smaller lots are created in a concentrated arrangement, but compensating preserved open space shall insure that the overall permitted density is not exceeded.

Open Space, Recreation & Attractions (211 acres)

This designation is applied primarily to properties already in use as open space, recreation, or attractions, such as the golf course, Fairyland Club, Rock City, the soccer field, and the Fairyland School’s recreational facilities. While other portions of this plan propose a new public park on the southeast edge of the city, it is not included in this land use and character area plan element because it is not recommended that the area be zoned similarly. The implementation of this idea should occur through land acquisition by the City rather than through zoning.

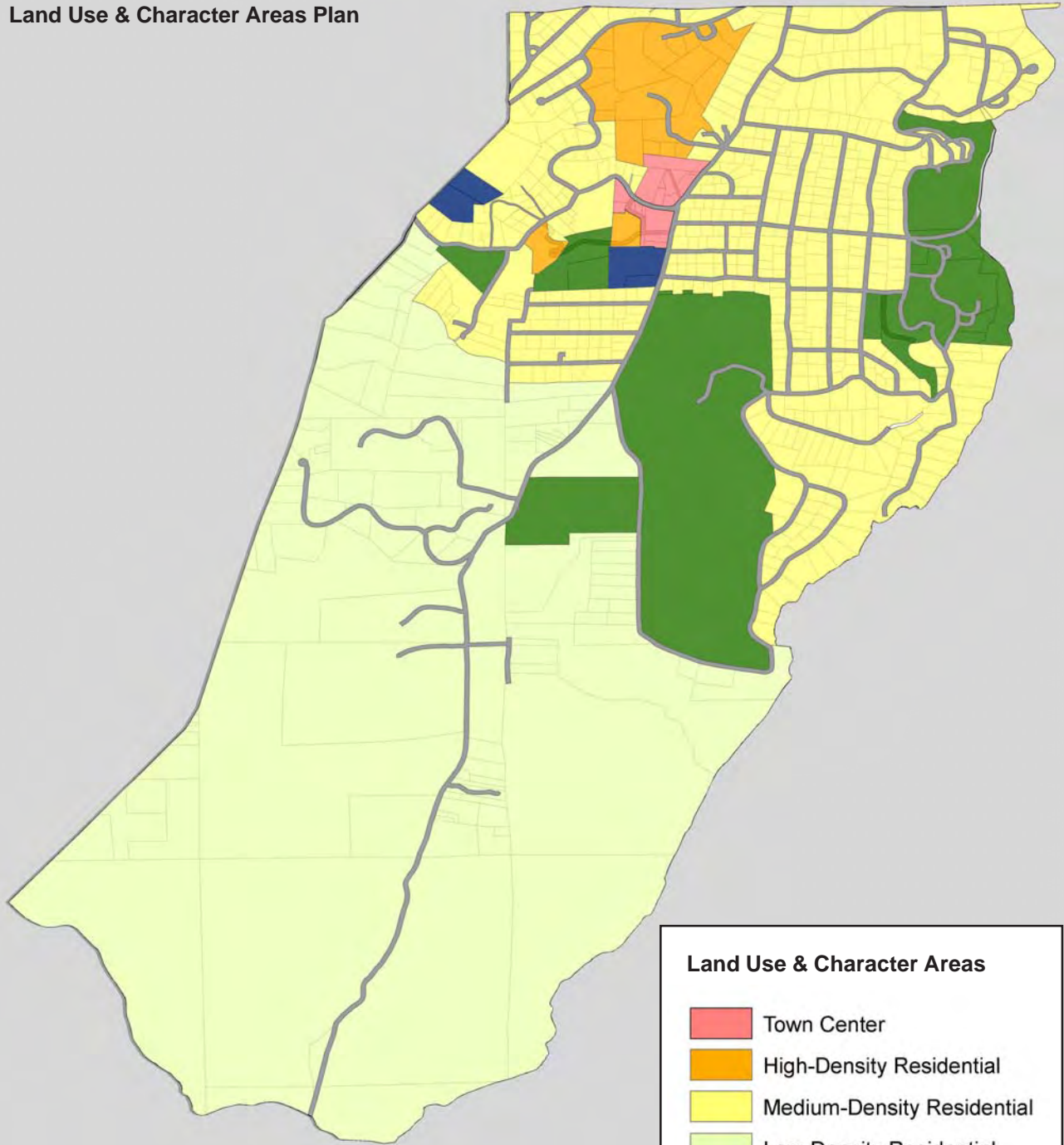
Institutional (12 acres)

The Institutional designation recognizes existing institutions, such as the Catholic church and the elementary school, but not those that are part of the Town Center, which has its own designation.

Existing Uses Not Reflected in the Plan

The property on McFarland Road immediately west of the soccer field is currently used for a business and zoned as Single Family / Neighborhood Commercial District. Because a commercial use in this location is inconsistent with the principles of this plan, it is not designated for the existing use. However, even if the zoning were changed to residential for compatibility purposes, the use would be “grandfathered in” to continue.

Land Use & Character Areas Plan



Land Use & Character Areas

- Town Center
- High-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Open Space, Rec, Attract
- Institutional

Town Center (2008)

In 2007, the grocery store anchoring Lookout Mountain’s small commercial center burned down. This unfortunate event prompted citizens to step back and take a broader view of the area and its future. Choosing to turn a negative into a positive, the community decided it wanted to transform the generic commercial center dominated by a “strip commercial” character into a distinctive and walkable Town Center. Consequently, the City commissioned the creation of a Town Center Plan. The study area included 16.5 acres anchored by the intersection of Lula Lake Road and McFarland Road. A strong community input process was utilized to create the plan, including a project kick-off meeting, a series of stakeholder meetings, a charrette workshop, and a concept plan presentation encouraging an open discussion with citizens. The plan is illustrated on the following page.

Key Features of the Town Center Plan

The plan advocates a mixed use environment that is urban in form and pedestrian friendly. The following is a summary of some of the key components of the plan:

Town Green

This small ceremonial park is the focal point for the area. It fronts onto Lula Lake and is surrounded by a street with angled on-street parking.

Municipal Buildings

The plan provides for much-needed additional space for City Hall, the police department and fire department. While public works might have office space here, the main operations would relocate elsewhere given their space needs.

Mixed Use Buildings

Depicted in orange on the plan map at right, these buildings would feature groundfloor commercial uses with upper floor housing and/or offices.

Housing

Housing would be in the form of peripheral multi-family buildings and townhouses, as well as some upper floor units above commercial uses within mixed use buildings.

It is important to understand that the site plan at right is merely one scenario of how the Town Center might

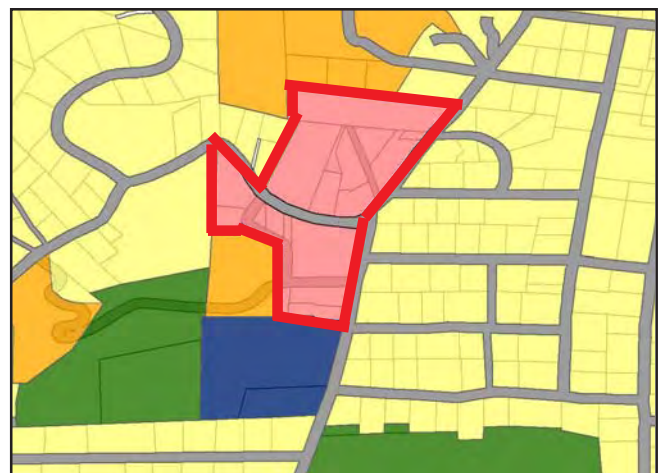
develop, but it is critical that the plan’s urban design principles be followed. Also, specific uses/tenants will be determined by market conditions.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The 2008 Town Center Plan is validated and reaffirmed by this Comprehensive Plan for three reasons:

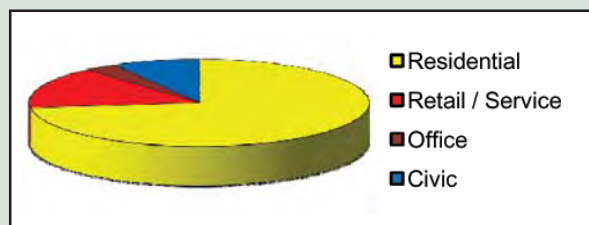
- 1) The Town Center Plan was created relatively recently
- 2) The Town Center Plan still has broad community support
- 3) The substance of the Town Center Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan

Thus, the Town Center Plan can be treated as a supplement of this Comprehensive Plan.



Scenario A: Building Area Breakdown

Land Use Type	Sq. Ft.	Percent
Residential	99,000	73
Retail / Service	20,925	15
Office	4,200	3
Civic	11,400	8
TOTAL	135,525	99



Key Plan Graphics: 2008 Town Center



Existing Bank



Proposed Facade Changes to Existing Bank



High-Density Residential

Existing Conditions

The following criteria were used in identifying specific properties targeted for the High-Density Residential designation based upon their existing conditions:

- Lands adjacent to and/or near the Town Center
- Lands with no (or minimal) existing development to make development economically viable
- Larger parcels that will accommodate land assemblage for development relative to the difficulty of acquiring numerous smaller parcels
- Lands best accessed (directly or indirectly) by Lula Lake rather than McFarland, which has constraints for vehicular and pedestrian safety caused by narrow widths and tight curves
- Lands with existing high-density residential development and/or zoning unless already part of the designated Town Center.

As the maps on the following page indicate, designated lands are located directly north of the Town Center, as well as to the south and west where existing similar development and/or zoning already exist. It totals 48 acres.

Land Uses

This designation will accommodate a broad range of residential uses higher in density relative to other areas of the city, including: single-family detached houses on small lots (including “patio homes”), attached houses (duplexes, triplexes, quads, etc.), townhouses, condominium/apartment buildings, and various forms of senior housing (assisted living, etc.).

Density

The maximum density for this area should be eight (8) units per acre. Minimum lot sizes for single-family detached houses should be 5,500 square feet and minimum lots sizes for attached single-family lots (townhouses) should be 1,500 square feet. A minimum lot size for multi-family buildings is not necessary. No buildings should exceed three (3) stories in height.

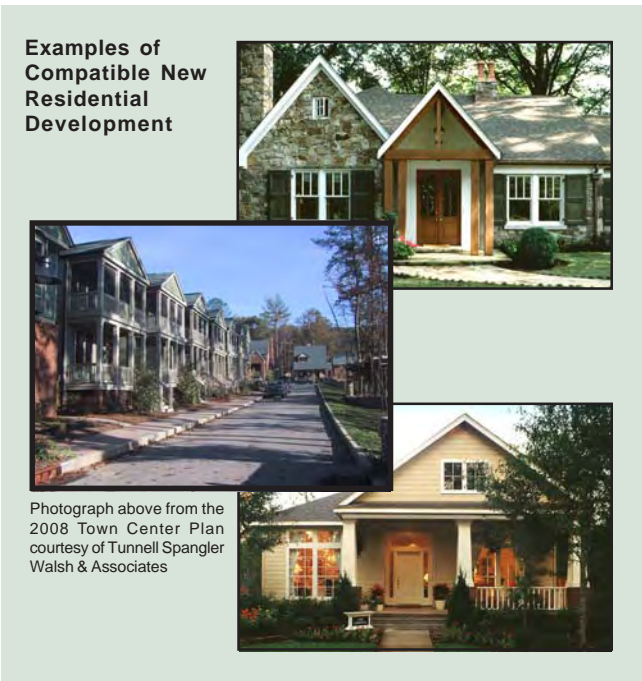
Intent
Because of the current lack of choices for housing, a greater variety of housing types is needed. In particular, housing for seniors is needed, ranging from “down-sizing” patio homes to assisted living. Higher density housing should be located in and near the Town Center to decrease traffic, increase opportunities for walking, benefit the residents, and economically support the Town Center.

Proposed Character

Despite accommodating a variety of housing types, they can all be visually compatible through strong urban design standards. Characteristics should include shallow front setbacks, front porches, and the avoidance of “garagescape” through on-street parking and rear alleys.

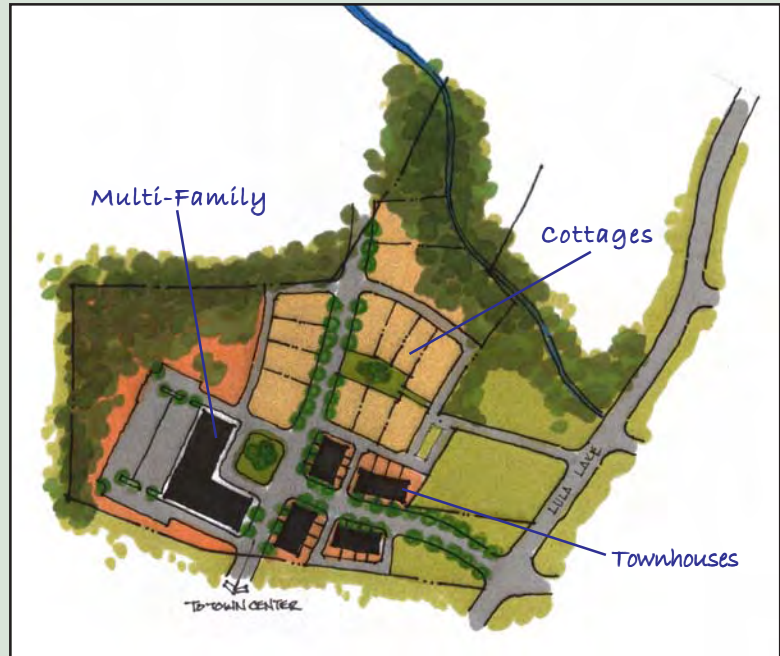
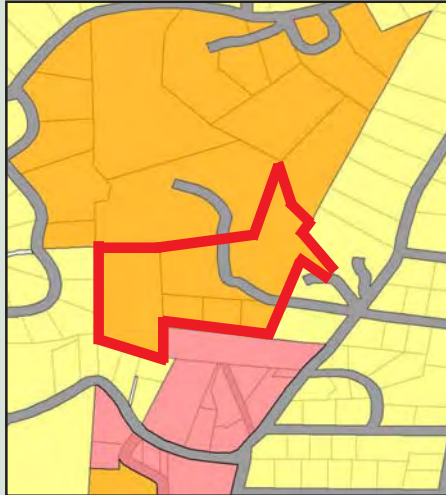
Other Considerations

Two alternative designs are provided on the following page. Alternative “A” features a smaller area directly north of the Town Center, and Alternative “B” includes this same area, as well as a larger contiguous area to the immediate north. Alternative “A” includes a 5+ acre component of multi-family housing, which could include assisted living (approximately 40± beds). *These two site plans are purely conceptual and simply one of numerous ways these sites might be developed with this designation.*



Concept A: High-Density Residential Near the Town Center

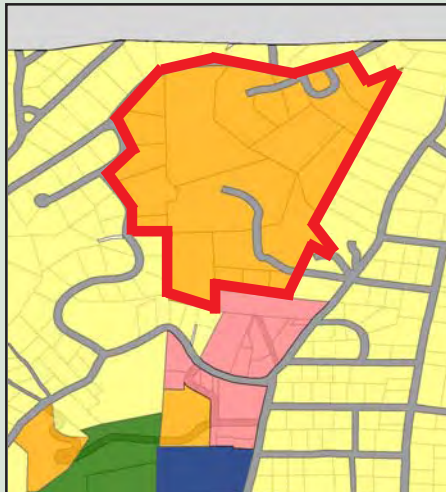
- 11 cottages
- 16 townhouses
- 5+ acres of multi-family housing



Concept B: High-Density Residential Near the Town Center

Same program as Alternative A, plus:

- 34 single-family houses
- 36 cottages (smaller single-family houses)
- 16 townhouses



Medium-Density Residential

This designation is limited to the northern half of the city where most of the housing already exists. It contains 404 acres (see the map on the following page).

Existing Conditions

This area consists of residential neighborhoods with single-family houses that were developed primarily between the 1930s and 1960s. The median age of Lookout Mountain’s houses is fifty (50) years.* Over seventy-five (75) percent of the community’s housing was developed prior to 1969*, and virtually all of it exists within the designated Medium-Density Residential area.

*Source: Sperling’s Best Places

Land Uses

The only primary permitted use for this designation should be single-family detached houses, while certain institutional uses that do not negatively impact nearby residents should be a special exception use.

Density / Lot Sizes

Minimum permitted lots sizes shall be 14,520 square feet (.33 acres), which equals a maximum gross density of three (3) units per acre (43,560 square feet).

Character

The character sought for this designation is consistent with the area’s existing character: narrow streets, gener-

Intent
It is the intent of the Medium-Density Residential designation to protect and reinforce the many positive qualities of the existing neighborhoods located in the northern half of Lookout Mountain.

ous front and side setbacks, extensive mature vegetation, and architecture compatible with existing forms.

Other Considerations

Key considerations for the future of this area include the following:

Streets

Streets should remain their current relatively narrow width, and opportunities for traffic calming should be sought where needed. Sidewalks should be added to segments of Red Riding Hood Trail, Lula Lake, and Mockingbird Lane (see the section on “Transportation and Infrastructure” for more on this issue).

Front Yards

Front yards should exist as primarily green lawns. With the exception of standard driveways (one vehicle width), vehicles, boats and similar objects should not be stored in front yards - even with surface paving.



Lookout Mountain’s earliest 20th-century housing was developed as part of the Fairyland subdivision. Its original physical characteristics should serve as the basis for future zoning regulations for the Medium-Density Residential designation.

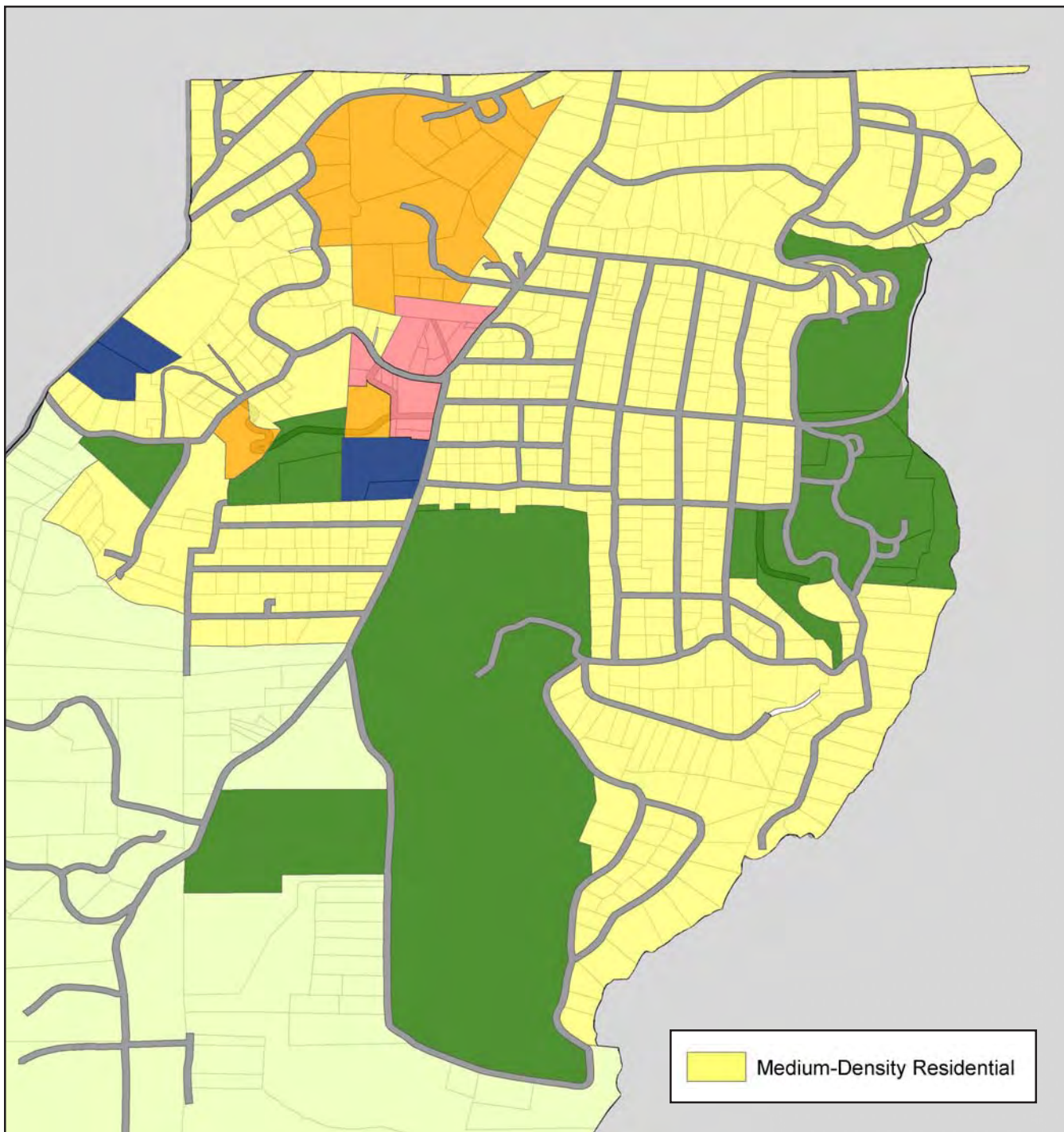
Property Maintenance

A minimum maintenance ordinance should be considered to insure that all properties are adequately maintained. This idea is particularly relevant to rental property in Lookout Mountain.

area. They might either be incorporated into the base zoning or applied as part of a design overlay district (see the section on “Natural Environment and Community Character” for more on this issue).

Design Standards

Special design standards should be considered for this



Low-Density Residential

This designation dominates the relatively undeveloped southern half of the city, consisting of 948 acres.

Existing Conditions

This area has many environmentally sensitive features, as documented in this plan document's background study of existing conditions. Among those features are steep slopes, soils with severe limitations for development, limestone geology with caverns, dense vegetation, and endangered plant and animal species.

Land Uses

The only primary permitted use for this designation should be single-family detached houses, while certain institutional uses that do not negatively impact nearby residents should be a special exception use.

Density / Lot Sizes

Minimum permitted lots sizes shall be 60,000 square feet (1.4 acres). However, a clustering option should be allowed in which lots can be as small as 14,520 square feet (.33 acres), but the balance of the site must be preserved in perpetuity through a conservation easement.

Character

The character intended for this designation is a rural and natural looking landscape. Development should have a limited visual impact, and the most environmentally significant lands, such as steep slopes (25 percent or more) and natural drainage ways / streams, should be protected from development.

Other Considerations

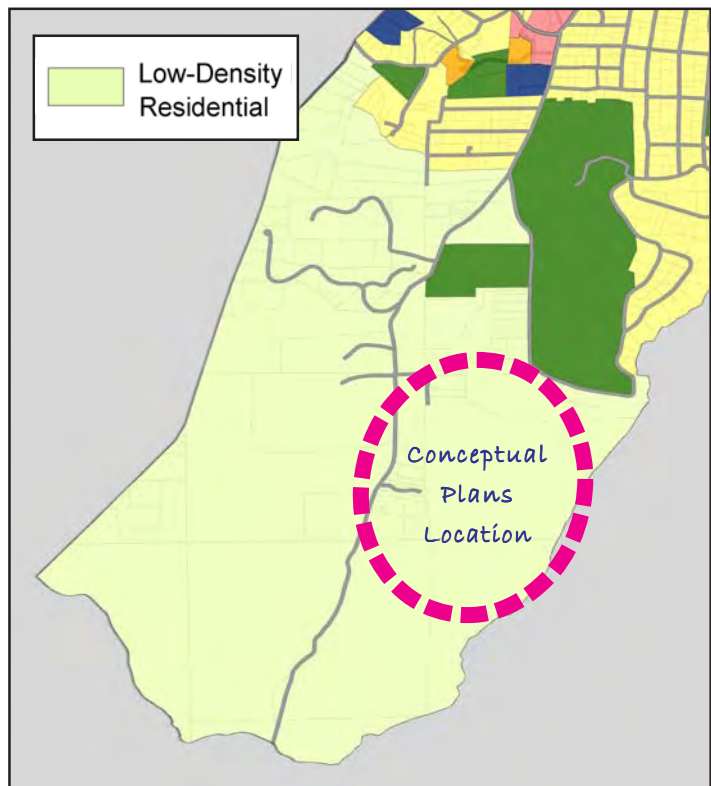
As the concept plans at right illustrate, there are two options suggested for this classification.

The conventional large lot approach (Concept A) would feature minimum 60,000 square foot lots. The clustering option (Concept B) would allow lots as small as 14,520 square feet, but the total number of lotws would not to exceed the 60,000 square foot lot overall gross density. Rather than mandating either particular approach, it is recommended that future zoning allow either option.

An existing model in Lookout Mountain for the conventional large lot option is the Turn Berry Drive development off of Lula Lake Road. While there are no existing models in Lookout Mountain for the clustering option, the proposed minimum 14,520 square foot lots are comparable in size to those found in the north side of the city (minus the preserved common open space).

With respect to the two concepts on the following page, it is acknowledged that this particular site has substantial constraints because of rock outcroppings, so the feasibility cannot be confirmed. Also, *these specific designs are conceptual and will not dictate requirements for future development on this particular site.*

Intent
It is the intent of the Low-Density Residential designation to provide housing in a form and character that is in harmony with the environmentally rich fabric of the southern half of Lookout Mountain.



Concept A: Conventional Large Lot Option

- 39 lots
- Minimum lot size: 60,000 square feet
- No preserved common open space



Concept B: Clustering Option

- 39 lots
- Minimum lot size: 15,000 square feet
- Preserved common open space and trails



Open Space, Recreation & Attractions

This designation is applied primarily to properties already in use as open space, recreation, or attractions. It totals 211 acres of land area (see the map below for locations).

Existing Conditions

These properties include the golf course, Fairyland Club, Rock City, the soccer field, and recreational facilities associated with the Fairyland School.

Land Uses

Permitted land uses should include open space, recreational facilities, and tourist attractions.

Density / Lot Sizes

Not applicable

Intent

It is the intent of the Open Space, Recreation & Attractions designation to accommodate the city's existing such properties.

Character

Because each property for which this designation has been applied is so different, there is no single character that is being sought. However, in general, the character should be compatible with the community's strong identity with the natural environment.

Other Considerations

While other portions of this plan propose a new public park on the southeast edge of the city (see page 79), it is not included in this land use and character area plan element because it is not recommended that the area be zoned as a park. The implementation of this idea should occur through land acquisition by the City rather than through zoning.

Institutional

The Institutional designation recognizes two existing institutions located outside of the Town Center, which has its own land use and character designation. Combined, the properties comprise 12 acres.

Existing Conditions

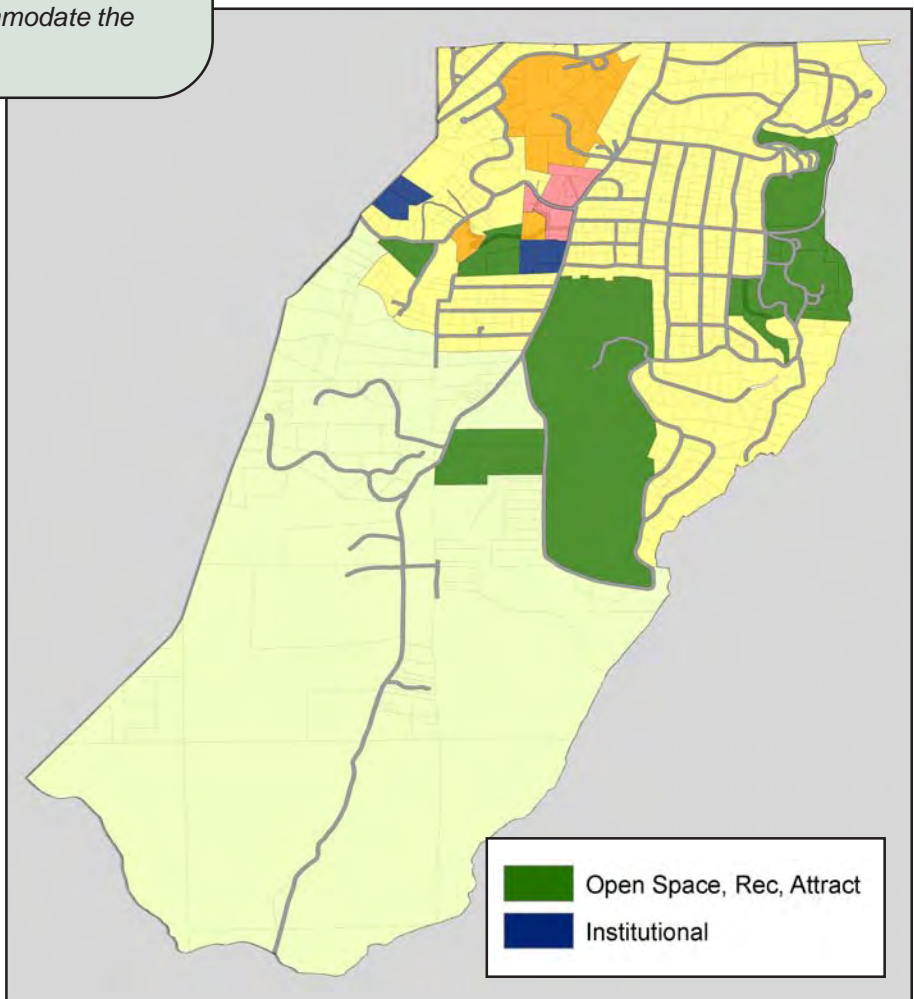
The two existing institution beyond the Town Center are the Catholic church on Scenic Highway and the elementary school on Lula Lake Road.

Land Uses

Permitted land uses should include governmental, religious, educational, and similar institutional uses.

Density / Lot Sizes

Not applicable



Intent

It is the intent of the Institutional designation to accommodate existing religious, governmental and similar uses located outside of the designated Town Center.

Character

As with the Open Space, Recreation and Attractions designation, the properties included within the Institutional designation are diverse in their character and settings. Thus, it is not reasonable to attempt to apply a single character for all such properties. In fact, to help underscore the unique and significant role that institutions play within the community, and to help maintain important visual landmarks that help geographically orient people, it is desirable that individual institutions each have an individual character.

Other Considerations

Although Covenant College is an important institution for Lookout Mountain, and the college owns some property within the city's boundaries, the actual institutional land use does not occur within the city. As the aerial photograph map on page 5 of this plan reveals, there are no college-related physical improvements within the city. Therefore, the college is not among the institutional uses delineated in this plan.

Future Build-Out Under the Plan

The earlier section of this plan entitled "Existing Policy

Build-Out Scenario" (pages 42-45) documented existing development with respect to the amounts of various land uses, projected a full build-out scenario based upon existing policies (zoning and plans), and then calculated the totals for the future. Because nearly all of the community's existing commercial and institutional uses are located within the Town Center area, and because the 2008 Town Center Plan projects a future build-out scenario, those numbers are still considered relevant. In summary, they are as follow:

Town Center Non-Residential Build-Out Projections

Retail:	20,925 square feet
Offices:	4,200 square feet
Civic:	11,400 square feet

With respect to residential development, below is a chart summarizing existing development, a build-out scenario based upon the City's current policies, and a build-out scenario based upon this plan. Even though the minimum permitted lot size in the southern half of the city is proposed to be nearly double of the existing permitted size, sample site plans reveal that steep slopes prevent the current permitted density (minimum 35,000 sq. ft. lots) from actually being achieved, and the proposed density is more realistic. On the other hand, the hypothetical build-out of the area proposed for High-Density Residential would yield 81 single-family houses and 72 attached and multi-family units.

Residential Growth Comparisons: Existing, Current Policy & Proposed

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Existing Conditions (Units / Population)</i>	<i>Current Policy (Units / Population)</i>	<i>Proposed Plan (Units / Population)</i>
Single-Family	565 / 1,440	423 / 1,100	503 / 1,308
Multi-Family	42 / 84	148 / 296	220 / 440
Total	607 / 1,524	571 / 1,396	723 / 1,748

TRANSPORTATION

This plan section will not only address transportation issues for motorized vehicles, but for other modes of transportation as well, including walking and cycling.

Roads

Key Roads Overview

The City is and will continue to be, with this plan, accessible by vehicular travel mainly along rural two-lane undivided roadways. On the west side of the City, Scenic Highway (SR 189), designated as a major arterial, provides connections to the northeast via Cummings Highway and Broad Street to downtown Chattanooga and Interstate Highways 75 and 24. Scenic Highway also provides access to the southwest. McFarland Road and Red Riding Hood Trail (SR 157), both major arterials, provide the east-west route through the City from Scenic Highway in the west to continue as Ochs Highway into Chattanooga. Lula Lake Road, designated as a collector, provides a north-south route through the center of the City from Scenic Highway to the north in Tennessee and to the south to end at SR 157. See page 25 of this plan's Background Study for a map highlighting these arterials and collectors.

Current Travel Volumes

Lula Lake Road to the north of Red Riding Hood Trail is the most heavily traveled road with approximately 8,800 vehicles per day (GDOT 2008 AADT). Scenic Highway to the north of the City carried less than 1,000 vehicles per day. The next highest traffic volumes were reported on McFarland Road between Lula Lake Road and Scenic Highway at 6,870 vehicles per day. Scenic Highway to the south of McFarland Road carried 3,360 vehicles per day and Red Riding Hood Trail to the east of the Town Center area carried less than 2,500 vehicles per day.

Town Center

The existing Town Center area roadway network forms a grid of residential streets connecting to these thoroughfares, with the addition of Woodnymph Trail bordering the golf course. The proposed Town Center will continue the grid of streets and parking by running parallel to either Lula Lake Road or McFarland Road.

Plan's Impact on Traffic

Based on this plan, approximately 880 new trips during the peak hours will be added to the city's streets. This represents 10% of the total daily trips and is the typical percentage experienced in the peaks. Of these new trips, the majority will go to and from the south and west of the Town Center; about 175 to and from the south and 535 to and from the west during peak hours. Approximately 85 will come to and from the east and 87 to and from the north of the Town Center during peak hours. This is based on the existing distribution of traffic in the city, as well as the proposed new locations of the future single and multi-family residential units. The current number of average daily trips on Lula Lake Road just north of the intersection with McFarland Road is 2,500, and this plan will generate approximately an additional 870 daily trips.

In comparison, the plan proposed in this document will add more traffic to the city's roads than the future build-out scenario with the city's current policy. However, the existing roadways will continue to operate at acceptable Levels of Service (LOS). The Level of Service measure is similar to a report card with A being the best and F being unacceptable. In most communities, the goal is to have the roads operate at LOS D or better. Currently, Lula Lake Road north of the Town Center is operating at LOS B, and south of the Town Center at LOS A. With this plan, the Levels of Service are expected to become LOS C to the north and LOS B to the south. Red Riding Hood Trail at Rock City is currently operating at LOS D based on capacity. With the proposed plan, it is expected to continue to operate at the same LOS. The segment of this road between Rock City and Lula Lake is currently operating at a LOS of C and will continue to with this plan. McFarland currently operates at LOS C. With the proposed plan, it is expected to operate at a slightly lower LOS. Overall, the generated traffic from the proposed plan will not have a significant impact on the roadway Levels of Service. It is noteworthy that this plan's implementation would not require any traffic improvements to increase capacity.

Recommended Improvements

Some improvements are suggested for the safety of the residents and visitors to the community. Improvements on Lula Lake Road, McFarland Road, Red Riding Hood

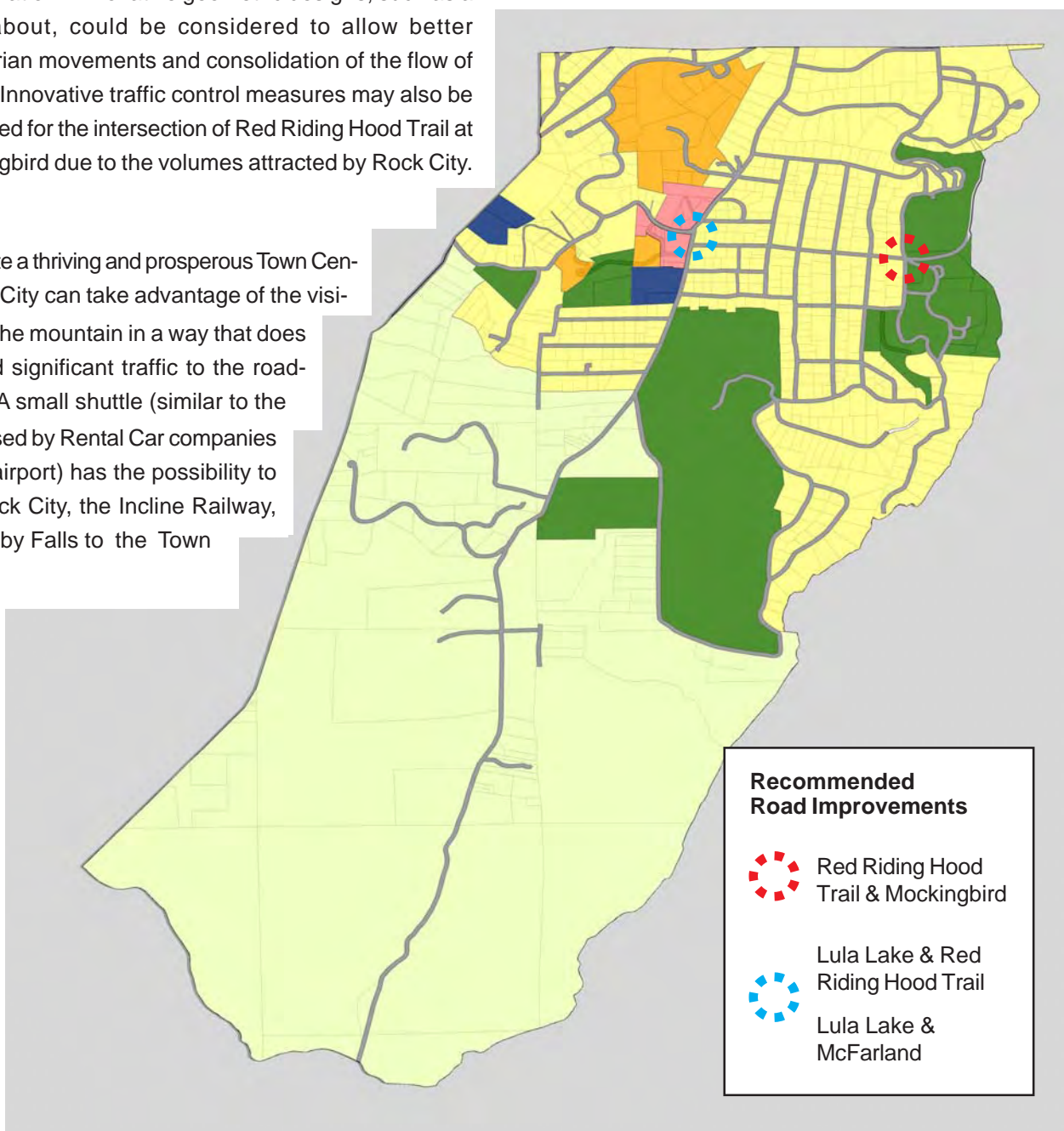
Trail, and other select roadways near the Town Center should be made to encourage safe walking and bicycling. In addition, crosswalks are recommended, especially around the Town Center, for safer pedestrian crossing locations anywhere a sidewalk meets a roadway. The crosswalk and sidewalk design features must meet the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The intersection of Red Riding Hood Trail at Lula Lake Road and McFarland Road could be improved to provide a safer alternative to the existing intersection configuration. Innovative geometric designs, such as a roundabout, could be considered to allow better pedestrian movements and consolidation of the flow of traffic. Innovative traffic control measures may also be examined for the intersection of Red Riding Hood Trail at Mockingbird due to the volumes attracted by Rock City.

Transit

To create a thriving and prosperous Town Center, the City can take advantage of the visitors to the mountain in a way that does not add significant traffic to the roadways. A small shuttle (similar to the vans used by Rental Car companies at the airport) has the possibility to link Rock City, the Incline Railway, and Ruby Falls to the Town Center.

Visitors would be encouraged to park in areas already designated for parking at the Incline Railway and Rock City. They can then take the shuttle to and from the Town Center to enjoy all that Lookout Mountain’s shops and restaurants have to offer without having to drive their personal cars through the city. This approach would help provide a sufficient usage to maintain the businesses and services that residents want to have available in the Town Center.



Sidewalks / Trails

As has been noted throughout this planning process, a significant drawback to Lookout Mountain at present is its lack of sidewalks and formal trails. This is an issue that has been particularly important to citizens providing input into this plan. In 2003, a “Pedestrian Pathway” master planning report was prepared. It included a plan for a pedestrian path extending from the state line at the north to the Lula Lake - Wood Nymph split at the south. A relatively short segment connecting Fairyland School with the park across from the Town Center has been developed, but the balance will require additional funding.

Sidewalks

For the purposes of this plan, sidewalks are defined as paved trails that are located adjacent to roads. As the map on the following page indicates, sidewalks are proposed for key segments of Lula Lake Road, McFarland Road, Red Riding Hood Trail, and Mockingbird Lane / Fleetwood Drive. The recently completed section connecting the school with the city park should serve as the design model. Below are some general principles to follow in the development of a sidewalk system for Lookout Mountain:

- Connect key activity nodes, such as the Town Center, Fairyland School, soccer field, golf course, Fairyland Club, and Rock City. The map of proposed sidewalks follows this principle.
- While sidewalks within the Town Center should be wide and provided on both sides of the street, it is acceptable for roads elsewhere to have a sidewalk on only one side of the road because of space and funding constraints.
- Sidewalks should be at least four (4) feet in width and built of a durable surface, such as concrete, asphalt, brick, or similar paving materials. The grade, width, surface and other design features must meet the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Where space and funding are available, a planting strip and street trees should be provided between the street/curb edge and sidewalk, and human-scaled lighting should be provided in the highest traffic areas.



The recently completed pedestrian trail along Lula Lake Road features a concrete surface, landscaping, human-scaled lighting, and benches.

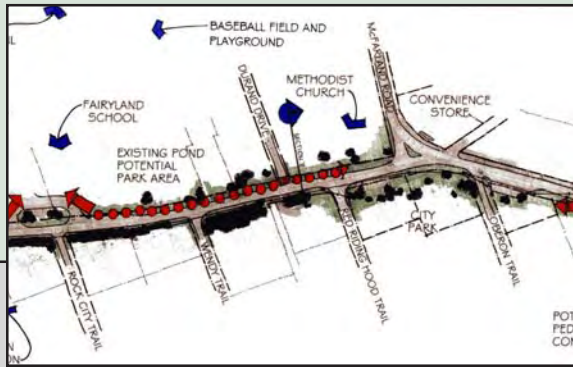
Trails

For the purposes of this plan, trails are defined as pedestrian routes that are located separately from roads. While they can be paved with a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt, they can also feature less durable materials such as wood chips, gravel or even grass/dirt. As illustrated on the map on the following page, trails are proposed for: 1) a relatively short east-west segment to connect the Fairyland School recreation facilities with the soccer field to the west; and 2) a much longer looping segment in the southern half of the city that will traverse Lula Lake Road and access the proposed new park. Below are some general principles to follow for trails:

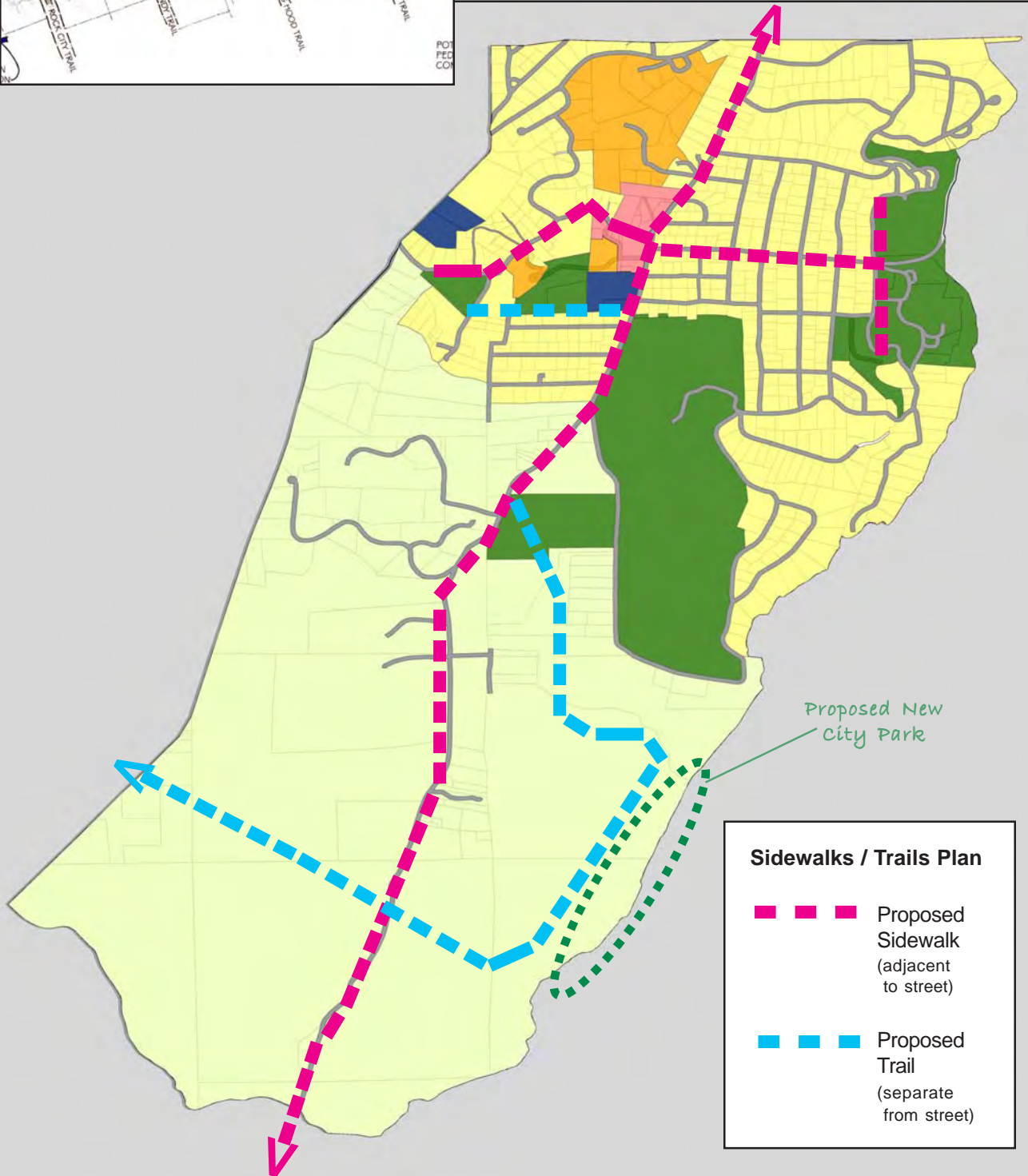
- As with sidewalks, connect key activity nodes, particularly those not already connected with sidewalks. Also, connect nodes with the sidewalk system, as is proposed with the proposed new park and the proposed sidewalk on Lula Lake Road.
- Trails should avoid existing development where possible, and follow rear lot lines, utility easements, and streams/floodplains (less costly to acquire).



This trail through a wooded area consists of a gravel surface. Relative to concrete or asphalt, it is less expensive to develop and it is permeable for stormwater absorption. However, it also requires more maintenance.



The plan map at left is from the pedestrian pathway report commissioned by the City in 2003. While the plan addresses a proposed segment extending from the city boundary at the north to the golf course at the south, the section illustrated at left is the portion completed so far. Federal transportation enhancement funding helped pay for most of the project.



INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

The Background Study portion of this plan addresses existing conditions for Lookout Mountain's infrastructure and utilities (see "Existing Built Conditions"). As that section reveals, there are no significant limitations or issues with respect to public water, electricity, gas, telecommunications, and similar utilities. However, a few other utility issues were identified through the public visioning process for this plan. Those issues relate to deficiencies with the existing sewage treatment system and the visual impact of utility poles and overhead wires. Both subjects are addressed here.

Sewage Treatment System

A "Feasibility Study Sewer Service Extension" was prepared by Consolidated Technologies, Inc. in June 2007. The intent was to determine whether five potential new developments totaling 204 residential units can be supported by the current system. That report is the primary source of information for this plan.

Lookout Mountain owns and operates a low pressure grinder pump (LPGP) collection system. According to the report, wastewater is collected by individual grinder pump units and conveyed to a centralized pump station on Chickamauga Trail. From there it is conveyed to Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, and ultimate treatment and disposal occurs at the Moccasin Bend regional wastewater treatment plant. Roughly 570 individual grinder pump units are connected to the city's system, and there are three larger commercial pump units: Covenant College, Rock City and the Flintstone Subdivision. Covenant College, the "single largest customer," abandoned its own wastewater treatment plant and connected to the city's system. That old system is considered to be obsolete, and it does not appear to be feasible to redevelop it into a functioning system.

The study concluded that the best route for serving the proposed 150 units associated with a new retirement village would be to connect at Lula Lake Road to the east. A new fallout line would eventually be needed,

although the first phase of development might utilize an existing system along Lula Lake Road to the north to the McCallie Lane area. Potential funding sources for an expanded system might include the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA).

Flintstone Subdivision System

This residential subdivision is located south of Covenant College and immediately west of the city's limits. The system experiences inflow/infiltration problems during wet weather, which cause the pumps to operate almost continuously. According to the report, "The Chickamauga Trail pumps cannot keep up with the combined pumping rate from Flintstone Subdivision and Covenant College plus the routine domestic flow in the system." *Repairing this system should be a high priority for improving the overall sewage treatment system.*

Chickamauga Trail Pump Station

This facility is located in a residential neighborhood just south of Rock City. It has experienced overflows during extremely wet weather. There have also been odor problems during dry weather and when Covenant College is not in session (flows are lower, which decreases the amount of chemical odor treatment added to the college's pump station). The City has made considerable efforts to correct the odor problem to the extent that it can with odor controlling chemicals. The study determined that, for a variety of reasons, this facility cannot be expanded to accommodate significantly greater volumes of wastewater. *Continuing efforts to combat the odors associated with this pump station should be a high priority for improving the overall sewage treatment system.*

Summary

The top two priorities for the current sewage treatment system should be to repair the inflow/infiltration problems in the Flintstone Subdivision and to continue addressing odor problems with the Chickamauga Trail pump station. It is also recommended that the work performed on the 2007 study of the system be expanded to provide more definitive answers regarding the amount of development that an improved system can handle and the best options for expanding the system if needed.

Underground Utilities

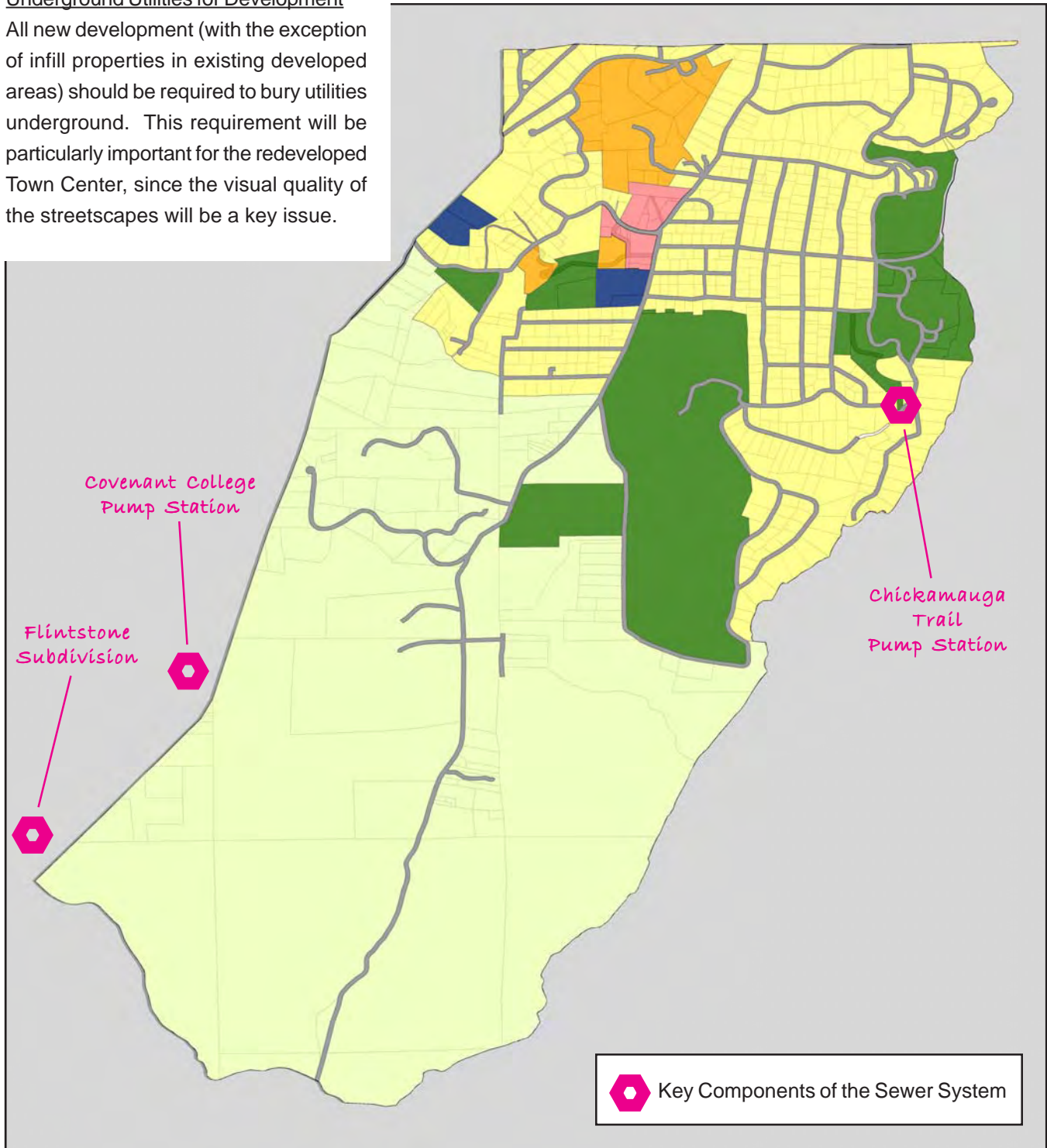
The public input process for creating this plan revealed a strong desire by many residents to eliminate utility poles and above-ground electrical lines because of their negative visual impacts. Consequently, two recommendations are provided:

Consider Burying Existing Overhead Lines

Because of the cost associated with this idea, it should not be considered a high priority. However, when this plan's ideas for expanding the city's sidewalk system are implemented, that might be an excellent opportunity to bury lines as part of the construction project.

Underground Utilities for Development

All new development (with the exception of infill properties in existing developed areas) should be required to bury utilities underground. This requirement will be particularly important for the redeveloped Town Center, since the visual quality of the streetscapes will be a key issue.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

This topic turned out to be an important one for many of the city's residents. Background information on Lookout Mountain's natural environment is contained in this plan's section entitled "Natural Resources" (pages 5-19), while historic resources that also contribute towards community character are addressed in the section entitled "Historic Resources" (pages 20-21). Below are recommendations related to this subject, as follows:

Regulatory Approaches

This plan's land use and character area plan already takes steps to better protect Lookout Mountain's natural environment by suggesting a decreased residential density within the southern half of the city - from minimum lot sizes of 35,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet, and by suggesting a clustering option to preserve common open space (see pages 66-67). However, further measures are recommended, as follows:

Improve Standards for New Development

As noted in the plan section entitled "Existing Public Policies" (pages 40-41), the City currently lacks effective regulations to protect environmental resources, particularly when compared to many communities in the region, state and country. Thus, the following issues should be addressed through development standards:

Steep Slopes

Development on steep slopes causes environmental problems such as erosion and sedimentation, especially given the acute soil limitations of the mountain, as documented on pages 10 and 11 of this plan. It is recommended that development be prohibited on lands exceeding a particular threshold of slope (such as 25 percent), and special mitigating precautions and/or lower densities of development should be considered for a slightly lesser range of slopes (such as 15 to 25 percent).

Streams / Natural Drainage

Pages 14 and 15 of this plan document Lookout Moun-

tain's system of natural streams and drainage ways and discuss their importance. While the State requires a minimum stream buffer of only 25 feet (measured from the bank edge), many communities in the region require wider buffers. Fulton County, for example, requires 50 foot and 75 foot buffer (depending upon what part of the County) in which no disturbance may occur, and an additional 25 foot setback beyond that buffer prohibits impervious surfaces to be developed. This ordinance is considered to be a good model for the region and should be considered by Lookout Mountain.

Mature Vegetation

Lookout Mountain is essentially a community within a forest. Pages 16 and 17 of this plan address forested areas and highlight their importance for both environmental and community character reasons. There are a variety of regulatory measures practiced by many other communities that should be considered for Lookout Mountain, as follows:

- Prohibit "clear cutting" of a site in which all or most of the vegetation is removed prior to site development
- Requiring a pre-construction survey of trees on a site to insure no net loss (replacement of lost trees)
- Requiring a particular density of trees within a specific depth (50 feet, for example) of road frontage to maintain a "green corridor."

All vegetation standards must consider the species and size of vegetation so that mature hardwoods, for example, are not replaced by small and/or non-native species.

Other Environmental Issues

There are other standards that might be considered related to geology, groundwater and similar environmental issues. Construction methods should also be regulated, such as providing silt fencing around the perimeter of a construction site, and fencing off the perimeter of trees to be saved (around the drip line) to avoid heavy equipment from compacting the dirt around their root systems and causing trees to eventually die.

Improve Standards for Neighborhoods

In addition to the natural environment, much of Lookout Mountain's unique community character is derived from its existing older neighborhoods. Some of these issues were noted previously on pages 64 and 65, but the following standards should be considered:

Front Yards

Front yards should exist as primarily green lawns. With the exception of standard driveways (one vehicle width), vehicles, boats and similar objects should not be stored in front yards - even with surface paving.

Property Maintenance

A minimum maintenance standards should be considered to insure that all properties are adequately maintained. This idea is particularly relevant to rental property in Lookout Mountain.

Scale & Form of Infill Houses

While the "tear down" phenomenon is not overly pronounced yet in Lookout Mountain, based upon the experience of similarly desirable communities, it may not be far away. It is important that new houses avoid looking like they were "shoehorned" onto their lot, so building width-to-lot width ratios should be considered so that new houses fit comfortably onto their lots.

Architectural Character

One option to insure that the character and design quality of the existing older neighborhoods is protected is to adopt either local historic district designation or conservation district designation. The two are similar in that they both apply a set of detailed standards to architectural and site design, and the demolition of significant or "contributing" buildings is discouraged or even prohibited. However, conservation districts tend to be less stringent than historic districts, making them a more popular alternative for many neighborhoods. Regardless of which option might be considered, it is recommended that this type of special overlay zoning not be applied unless a considerable majority of residents are in support of it.



Lookout Mountain's older neighborhoods are in need of protections to preserve their architectural integrity and overall cohesive character.

Non-Regulatory Initiatives

Create a New City Park

While the creation of a new city park would provide substantial environmental benefits, this idea is even more relevant to the following plan section on "Parks and Recreation." Details are explained on the following page.

Encourage Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are a private sector legal tool for protecting land. A landowner and a qualified entity enter a legal agreement whereby the owner agrees not to develop their land. The specific provisions are up to the two parties, but there are federal tax benefits available for the perpetual preservation of the land. The most obvious entity to hold easements for Lookout Mountain is the Lookout Mountain Conservancy, although the Land Trust for Tennessee is a state-wide alternative.

PARKS & RECREATION

Existing Facilities

As previously summarized in the “Existing Built Conditions” section of this plan, the following parks and recreation facilities presently exist in Lookout Mountain:

Parks & Greenways

- A small *City Park* was created in 1991 on the other side of Lula Lake Road from City Hall
- A short segment of *greenway* exists between the city park and the Fairyland School

Recreation Facilities

- Lookout Mountain *Golf Course*: private 18-hole course
- Fairyland Club: private club featuring a *swimming pool* and six (6) *tennis courts*
- Carter Field *soccer field*
- Fairyland School recreation facilities: *baseball field*, *multi-purpose field*, and a *paved trail*

Covenant College, which makes its recreational facilities available to the community, has the following facilities:

Barnes Gym - basketball and volleyball courts, multiple workout rooms, climbing wall, aerobics room and weight room)

Ashe Activity Center - cardio-fitness room, three (3) basketball courts, and an indoor track

Scotland Yard soccer field - for playing games

Shadowlands soccer field and an adjacent smaller field (both for training)

Other facilities include a running trail system, a newly-constructed baseball field and softball field, an intramural playing field, and three (3) tennis courts.

In addition to all of these various recreation facilities, it must be kept in mind that neighboring Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, which has a larger population, also has many recreational facilities that are available to residents of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee.

National Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) produces a set of standards for the provision of public parks based upon the population being served. While these are only very general guidelines and every community is different, they provide broad direction relative to the types of parks that might be appropriate for Lookout Mountain. Given that these standards are based upon the populations served, it is noteworthy that Lookout Mountain’s current population is approximately 1,500 residents, its potential added population with a full build-out of this plan would be another 1,750 people, resulting in a potential future population of roughly 3,250. With those numbers in mind, below are the NRPA standards for parks:

Mini-Parks

Approximately one-acre in size, they are intended for children’s playgrounds and passive areas for others. They serve a population of 500 to 1,000 people. While neither currently or plans to include children’s play equipment, the existing City Park and the planned small “town green” that will anchor the Town Center would fit into this category.

Neighborhood Parks

Intended to serve neighborhoods and often associated with schools, these parks include recreational facilities and should include at least 2.5 acres per 1,000 people served. They usually range between 5 and 10 acres in size, and serve 1,000 to 2,500 people. While both are smaller in size, the Fairyland School facilities and Carter Field (soccer) might fall under this category of parks.

Community Parks

Community parks are intended to provide recreational facilities for all age groups and multiple neighborhoods, and they are most commonly accessed by automobiles, bicycles and similar means. They call for approximately 5 acres per 1,000 people, and they typically range in size from 40 to 100 acres. That size range translates to serving 8,000 to 20,000 people. There is currently no such park in Lookout Mountain.

Regional Parks

Because this park type is typically 100 acres or more in size and serves a population of 5,000 to 7,500 people, it is irrelevant to Lookout Mountain.

Recommendations

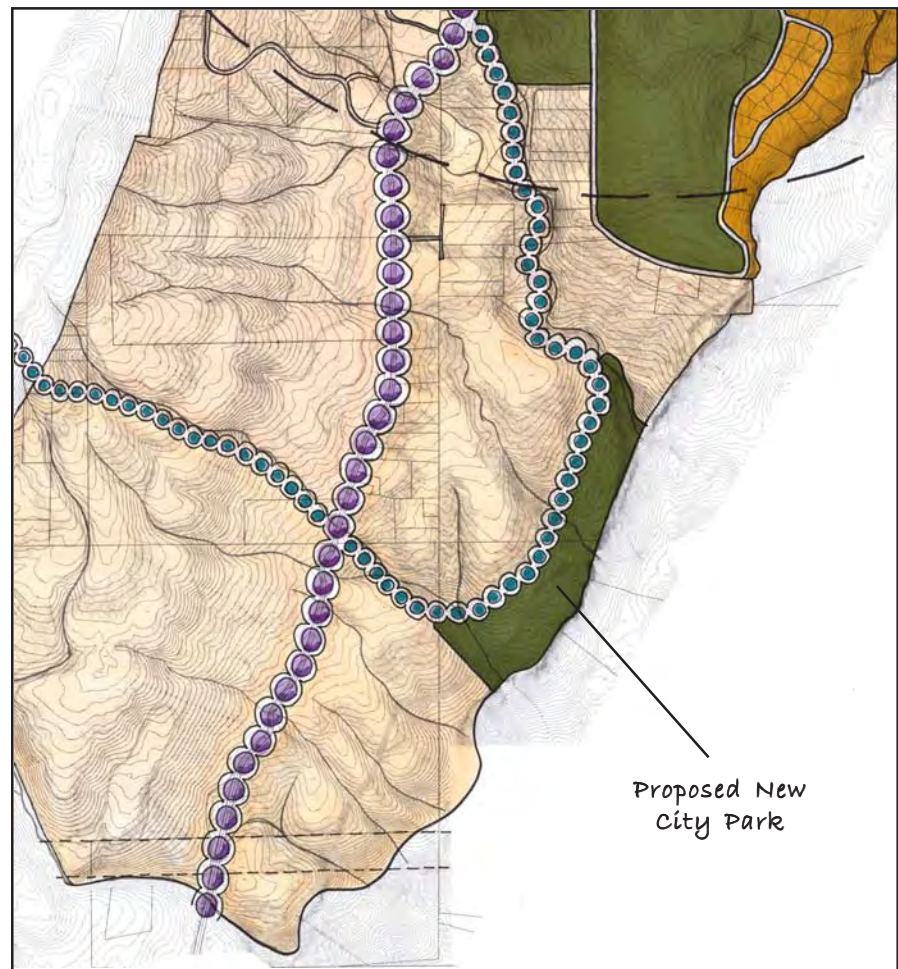
In light of Lookout Mountain’s current and future population, there is a wealth of recreational opportunities. While it is acknowledged that many of these facilities require a membership to private clubs, there are others that are available to all citizens, including some of those of nearby Covenant Collge and Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. Despite the community’s relative abundance of parks and recreational facilities, it is recommended that an expanded greenway system and a new city park be developed. Greenways - or “trails” - were addressed previously (see pages 72-73), but the concept behind a new park is provided below.



The proposed new park could include playground facilities for young children.

Create a New City Park

While Lookout Mountain benefits from a nearby national park and a very small city park across from the Town Center, there is no large park within the community. Consequently, it is proposed that a new park be created in the southeast edge of the city (see map at right). This park would be primarily for passive recreational purposes (picnicking, hiking, etc.), but might also have playgrounds for children. It would provide spectacular views to the valley below. Because this land is privately owned, the City would need to purchase it, so the timing would be dependent upon available funding and negotiations with the current owner.



HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Housing

Of Lookout Mountain’s 607 existing residential units, only 42 are multifamily units (apartments/condominiums). This represents only 7 percent of the community’s total housing stock. Because every community is demographically different, there are no absolute standards for the optimal mix of housing types. However, relative to most other communities, this figure is very low. As a general rule of thumb, single-family detached housing comprises 65-70 percent of housing in many communities, with the balance of it being attached and multifamily housing. According to the US Census Bureau’s March 2000 Population survey, 33 percent of the nation’s housing stock is rental housing, of which 11 percent is single-family detached rental housing.



Lookout Mountain’s limited amount of existing multifamily housing is located near the Town Center.

In the various public input sessions conducted as part of this plan, two key housing concerns have surfaced. First, people are concerned about the growing number of single-family houses that are being rented, particularly with respect to property maintenance. Solutions to this issue, in the form of minimum maintenance standards, were previously addressed on page 77. The other issue is the lack of housing options in Lookout Mountain. In particular, senior housing is needed, including assisted living.

“Eighty-six percent of older Americans surveyed prefer to remain in the familiar neighborhoods where they have been living and age in place (65 percent of them have lived in the same community for more than 20 years). Many find, however, that they no longer need or can maintain the family home. Multifamily housing allows seniors to remain in their neighborhoods through the different stages of their lives without the hassle of maintaining single-family housing.”

The Case for Multifamily Housing
Urban Land Institute
2003

Recommendations

In addition to the adoption of minimum maintenance standards to address the issue of existing rental housing, it is recommended that the amount of land zoned for multifamily and attached housing be expanded. This idea has already been addressed in detail on pages 62-63 in the section entitled “High-Density Residential.” It proposes that several properties immediately north of the Town Center, as well as a few located south and west of it, be designated as high-density residential. This classification would allow for a wide range of housing types, including small lot single-family houses, townhouses, apartments/condominiums, and assisted living. Also, the Town Center area would accommodate attached housing, including mixed use buildings with upper floor housing units.

For any type of attached or multifamily housing, it will be critical that design standards be adopted by the City to insure a high level of design and construction quality. Doing so will protect property values and help to lessen any potential public opposition to higher-density housing in Lookout Mountain.

Economic Development

As this plan's section on "Socio-Economic" reflect, Lookout Mountain has a relatively affluent population. For example, the community's 2007 median household income was \$71,252, compared with a state average of \$49,136. Similarly, the most common professional occupations of residents include management, business, finance, sales and related occupation ("white collar" jobs).

For a variety of reasons, including the desire to protect the scenic beauty of Lookout Mountain and its convenient proximity to a major employment center - Chattanooga, the community has little interest in aggressive business growth and job creation beyond that necessary to provide convenient goods and services needed by residents. Consequently, economic development is not a particularly high priority issue relative to other considerations, although its tax revenue potential for the municipal government is clearly understood and appreciated. With that overview, the following two types of businesses are most relevant to Lookout Mountain: community serving businesses and tourist related businesses.

Community Serving Businesses

With the exception of businesses such as the golf club and the Fairyland Club, it is recommended that all community serving businesses be located in the Town Center. As explained on pages 60-61, examples of such



Because of its location, this coffee house is one of Lookout Mountain's few businesses that targets both local residents and tourists visiting Rock City.

uses include groceries, specialty retail, dining, personal and professional services, and offices. Given the availability of such uses in nearby Chattanooga, they would need to be attractive enough to local consumers to draw them as an option to leaving the mountain. Because of the importance of the Town Center for the future of the community, the City's support of these community serving businesses should be an extremely high priority.

Tourist Related Businesses

The single major tourist destination in Lookout Mountain is undoubtedly Rock City, which attracts nearly a half million visitors annually. Because it is located on the edge of the community and accessed directly by one of the major roads leading to the community, the potential negative traffic impacts to the broader community are minimal because of this traffic "siphoning" phenomenon. Conversely, the tax revenue benefits are a substantial benefit to the City. Rock City is also considered to be a "good corporate citizen." For all of these reasons, it is important that the City work to maintain an environment that allows this business to prosper. At the same time, however, Rock City should be geographically contained in a manner that avoids its future encroachment into nearby residential areas.

While a coffee house and gift shop exist across the street from Rock City and clearly benefit from its proximity, it is recommended that other area properties not be altered from residential to commercial zoning and/or uses. Lodging is another existing use that benefits from tourism, and there are presently two bed and breakfast (B&B) businesses in Lookout Mountain. Because B&Bs are relatively low-impact uses having a somewhat residential character, especially when compared with conventional hotels, it may be acceptable for additional B&Bs to occur if strictly regulated through a B&B ordinance. Such an ordinance would need to control issues such as their location, size (number of rooms), parking location and design, and similar concerns. The only location in the community that might be appropriate for a small inn or "boutique" style hotel would be the Town Center.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

There are two primary means for implementing a community-wide comprehensive plan: regulations and municipal initiatives. Each is discussed below.

Implementing Regulations

City regulations will be the primary implementation tool for this comprehensive plan. As noted previously in this plan’s section on “Existing Zoning & Development Regulations” (see page 40), the City’s current regulations have evolved over time in a very piecemeal fashion, resulting in a general lack of clear structure and cohesiveness. Even without this comprehensive plan prompting it, a new set of zoning and development regulations would be needed.

Zoning

This comprehensive plan features six different land use classifications, as summarized and illustrated on pages 58-59, and described in detail on the subsequent pages. It is the intent of this plan that the existing seven zoning classifications be replaced by the six proposed classifications. Below is a list, for comparative purposes, of the existing and proposed zoning classifications.

Existing Zoning Districts	Proposed Zoning Districts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Convenience Commercial District Multiple Family Dwelling District Single Family District Single Family / Business Conference District Single Family / Neighborhood Commercial District Tourist Oriented Commercial District Municipal District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Center District High Density Residential District Medium Density Residential District Low Density Residential District Open Space, Recreation & Attractions District Institutional District

One reason there are slightly fewer proposed districts than existing districts is that the Town Center District allows for a variety of uses. There is a possibility that the Open Space, Recreation and Attractions District might need to be split into two separate classifications, as the standards for an attraction (primarily, Rock City) will be

different from those of open space and recreational uses. However, this classification could also be kept as a single one and simply distinguish between these uses as sub-classifications.

Transitioning from Current to Proposed Zoning

The first step needed for the City to adopt the proposed new zoning is to draft a new zoning ordinance and zoning map. This comprehensive plan provides clear direction for such zoning, but a great deal of detail must be added. Zoning should address not only the permitted land uses and densities, but physical form and character as well. There are multiple options for how the City might adopt the proposed new zoning districts and map:

- A single “blanket” rezoning in which all zoning in the City would convert to the new zoning on a particular date. While some property owners may have concerns with the unknowns of this approach, it must be emphasized that all properties would be “grandfathered in” in that the current uses and physical development could legally continue as is. The new zoning standards would not become relevant until a new use or development were proposed for a property.
- An incremental rezoning in which the new zoning would apply only when property owners applied for the new zoning and/or sought a new use and/or development. Although this approach may seem less threatening to property owners, there are potential drawbacks, such as the City having to maintain two sets of zoning regulations.
- A hybrid approach to rezoning in which certain key locations might be automatically rezoned on a particular date, while others would occur on an incremental basis. In this scenario, a likely area for the automatic rezoning would be the Town Center, while likely areas for the incremental approach would be the medium and low density residential areas.

The Town Center

Regardless of what approach is taken city-wide for instituting the new zoning, the Town Center should be a top priority. While a detailed plan for this area was

completed a few years ago, the zoning and design standards needed to implement it have yet to be drafted. To insure that the Town Center is a true urban Town Center - as depicted in the plan and supported by the community - and not a suburban “strip center,” very prescriptive zoning and design standards will be needed. It must be emphasized that Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning, which has been discussed by the City in the past, is an inappropriate tool for the Town Center because it is too flexible to yield such a specific outcome.

There is one alternative approach to expediting the Town Center’s development if the City does not want to spend the time and money needed to create the zoning and design standards. It could utilize a qualified urban designer to serve on behalf of the City to review all plans and work with designers and developers to insure that the intent, design principles and spirit of the plan are realized. However, even in this scenario, zoning and design standards would need to be eventually adopted for the Town Center (most likely as part of the overall new zoning), as regulations would be needed for any future expansions or redevelopment within the Town Center.

Development Standards

In addition to new zoning, new development standards are needed. The existing standards are insufficient because there are many important development issues that are presently not addressed, and many that are addressed are not done so adequately. In particular, standards will need to address steep slopes, stormwater management, protection of natural drainage areas, removal of vegetation and grading, and similar environmental issues. Standards need to be much more aggressive in providing protections to one of the community’s most treasured and important resources - the natural environment. These issues are addressed in detail in the background study portion of this plan.

Other Regulations

Examples of other regulations that might be needed include neighborhood conservation zoning, minimum property maintenance standards, and bed-and-breakfast regulations. Each issue was addressed earlier in detail.

City Initiatives

This category of plan implementation tools includes physical improvements that would be initiated and funded by the City, as opposed to merely adopting regulations to shape the form of private sector initiatives. Below are some of the key City initiatives associated with this plan:

Town Center Development

Key components of this development will include a new City Hall, fire house, police station, and town green. Although the Town Center Plan was designed to respect the property boundaries between the City private owners, it will still require a partnership between all parties. The City will need to control the design of new buildings and infrastructure, as well as pay for them.

Street Improvements

A variety of street improvements will be necessary to accommodate substantially more growth, as described in the plan section entitled “Transportation” (pages 70-71). Many of those improvements will be at the Town Center, where much of the future growth could occur.

Sidewalks & Trails

These recommended improvements are addressed on pages 72-73. As with the City’s recently installed trail, there is a strong chance that future expansions of the sidewalk and trail system might be financed by federal transportation enhancement funds.

Sewage Treatment System Improvements

The top priorities for the current system are repairing inflow/infiltration problems in the Flintstone Subdivision and continuing to addressing odor problems with the Chickamauga Trail pump station. Funding sources for an expanded system might include the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA).

New City Park

Relative to the Town Center’s development and the provision of sidewalks to some key stretches of road, a new park should be a lower priority goal. At approximately 45 acres in size, acquisition costs will be substantial.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Responsible Parties & Priorities

Although some types of community plans involve multiple parties that are responsible for plan implementation, that is not the case for most city-wide comprehensive plans. Accordingly, all actions summarized below will be the responsibility of the City of Lookout Mountain.

In light of the City’s limited financial resources, proposed actions need to be prioritized. In the case of this plan,

the three priority levels also correspond with time sequencing. Thus, “High” priority actions should occur within the near future, while moderate and low priority actions are less pressing.

While this comprehensive plan features numerous ideas and recommendations, the key actions are summarized below.

Implementation Matrix		
	Pages Addressed	Priority Level
Regulations		
New Zoning Ordinance & Map - to implement new classifications, including the Town Center	58-69, 82-83	High
New Development Standards - focusing particularly on environmental conservation	76-77, 83	High
Other Regulations - minimum maintenance standards, neighborhood conservation zoning, etc.	77, 83	Moderate
City Initiatives		
Town Center Development - new municipal buildings, town green, infrastructure	60-61, 83	High
Street Improvements - particularly near the Town Center and on Red Riding Hood	70-71, 83	Moderate
Sidewalks & Trails - sidewalks along existing key streets are the highest priority	72-73, 83	High
Sewage Treatment System Improvement - remedial work on the existing system is the priority	74-75, 83	High
New City Park - a large passive park on the eastern edge of the city to provide views to the valley	78-79, 83	Low