



AGENDA REPORT

To: Planning Commission
From: Ben Song, Community Development Director
Agenda: January 4, 2022, Planning Commission Meeting
Item: Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Integrate the Adopted Town Center Vision and Plan

Item Summary

Staff recommends an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan by fully integrating the adopted Town Center Vision and Plan as a supplemental document to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The amended Comprehensive Plan will be transmitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission for formal recognition.

Background

On October 8, 2018, the City of Johns Creek adopted the Comprehensive Plan, which serves as a policy document and guide for the future development of the City. A cornerstone of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan is to create a vibrant Town Center with quality housing options, dining, retail, offices and public spaces.

In June 2020, Council reviewed and approved the revised Town Center Plan study boundary and affirmed that the goal of the Town Center Plan is to establish appropriate land use, linear park design, street and multi-modal networks, and streetscape standards to create a sense of place commensurate with the scale and quality of the City. In the fall of 2020, Council awarded the Town Center Plan contract to Pond & Company, and appointed 35 residents and three Council liaisons to the Town Center Advisory Committee (TAC) to assist with the preparation and development of the plan.

After almost a year of intensive community engagement, the Town Center Vision and Plan was adopted unanimously by the Mayor and Council on October 25, 2021. The adopted Town Center Vision and Plan identified amending the Comprehensive Plan as a prioritized action item to formally integrate the plan as the vision document to allow for future development to consider the appropriate context and future land use for the area and provide guidance to Council on future zoning decisions for properties within the Town Center.

Update

Staff reviewed the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and made the following changes to integrate the adopted Town Center Vision and Plan:

- Updated the boundary and total acreage of the Town Center (Pages ii and 155)
- Updated Future Land Use Maps for the City and for the Tech Park Community Area (Pages 49 and 151)

- Updated the Land Use Change Map and data for the City and Tech Park Community Area (Pages i, 51, 151 and 243)
- Removed the allowable maximum density of 16 units/acre within the Town Center, and instead refer to the Town Center Vision and Plan (Pages 50, 152, 154, 256)
- Added the Town Center Vision and Plan as a supplemental document to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment as provided.

Attachment

- (1) Draft Amendment to Comprehensive Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Johns Creek Comprehensive Plan 2018 (the Plan) is a policy document for the City's growth. The Plan includes both citywide information (Chapters 1 and 2) as well as a chapter for each of the eight Community Areas so that residents, visitors, businesses, and developers can better understand each area's vision. The Community Area chapters are: 3-Autrey Mill, 4-Johns Creek North, 5-Medlock, 6-Newtown, 7-Ocee, 8-River Estates, 9-Shakerag, and 10-Tech Park. Chapter 11 provides a list of projects to undertake in order to implement the Plan.

Vision and Goals

The Plan begins by setting an overall vision to guide the City:

"Johns Creek is an exceptional city that seeks to enhance its residential quality of life by supporting its diversity, arts, businesses and schools."

To implement the vision, eight goals are established:

1. Protect and preserve the City's premier residential communities and enhance our overall quality of life;
2. Provide superior recreational and cultural activities throughout the City;
3. Expand the City's economic base;
4. Create an identity for the City;
5. Protect the City's natural environment and historic resources;
6. Create a citywide multi-modal transportation network;
7. Ensure the City has the appropriate tools to implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan; and
8. Improve intergovernmental relations.

Together, the Plan's vision and goals will help guide the policies and decisions of the Mayor and Council over the next ten years.

Land Use

The Plan creates a parcel-specific Future Land Use Map that specifies the City's vision for each property over the next ten years. While each property retains its underlying zoning, the Future Land Use Map forms the basis for the City's position related to any future rezoning or development requests. Besides residential density reduction, 91.9% of the City's land uses are anticipated to remain the same over the next ten years.

Housing

Compared to the current Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2008, the recommended densities for new residential development are reduced significantly. New density limitations have been added for small undeveloped lots and infill parcels specifying that new development must match the surrounding neighborhood density and is limited to single-family, detached homes. Additionally, the following reductions in residential density are established for three Community Areas within the Plan:

- **Johns Creek North:** three units/acre (reduced from four units/acre);
- **Medlock:** two units/acre (reduced from three units/acre); and
- **Shakerag:** one unit/acre (reduced from three units/acre).

Existing residential density limits in other Community Areas remain intact in the Plan:

- **Autrey Mill:** one unit/acre;
- **Newtown:** three units/acre;
- **Ocee:** three units/acre; and
- **River Estates:** one unit/acre.

Commercial Development

To further change the City's commercial growth patterns and encourage the creation of community villages and a Town Center through private investment, the Plan recommends limiting development to specific existing commercial locations. Key locations that are targeted for redevelopment include:

- **Johns Creek North:** shopping centers along Jones Bridge Road at the intersections of Sargent and Douglas Roads;
- **Medlock:** shopping centers at the intersection of State Bridge and Medlock Bridge Roads;
- **Newtown:** shopping centers at the intersection of Old Alabama and Haynes Bridge Roads;
- **Newtown:** shopping centers at the intersection of Old Alabama and Jones Bridge Roads;
- **Newtown:** shopping center at the intersection of Holcomb Bridge and Barnwell Roads;
- **Ocee:** shopping center at the intersection of State Bridge and Jones Bridge Roads;
- **Ocee:** shopping center at the intersection of State Bridge and Kimball Bridge Roads; and
- **Tech Park:** office area east of Medlock Bridge Road and west of Johns Creek Parkway.

Implementation Projects

To guide and direct the City's capital investments over the next ten years, proposed projects for road improvements, trails, and parks are prioritized. Examples of prioritized projects include building out the new park lands (purchased in 2016 and 2017) with Park Bond funds, providing improvements to existing parks, developing sidewalks and trails in each Community Area to connect residents to schools and shopping centers, and improving the capacity of certain roadways and studying the feasibilities of roundabouts and left-turn lanes to improve traffic flow and increase safety entering and exiting neighborhoods.

In addition to the proposed capital projects, the Plan prioritizes the creation of tools for implementation, such as a historic preservation ordinance and a Unified Development Code, which will combine the City's zoning, tree, and sign ordinances with the City's stormwater management and land development regulations. The Plan also prioritizes areas for further study, and recommends the creation of five local master plans/area plans to add architectural standards and greater specificity to the Plan's established allowable heights, densities, uses, and visual examples of desired development. Areas prioritized for further study include:

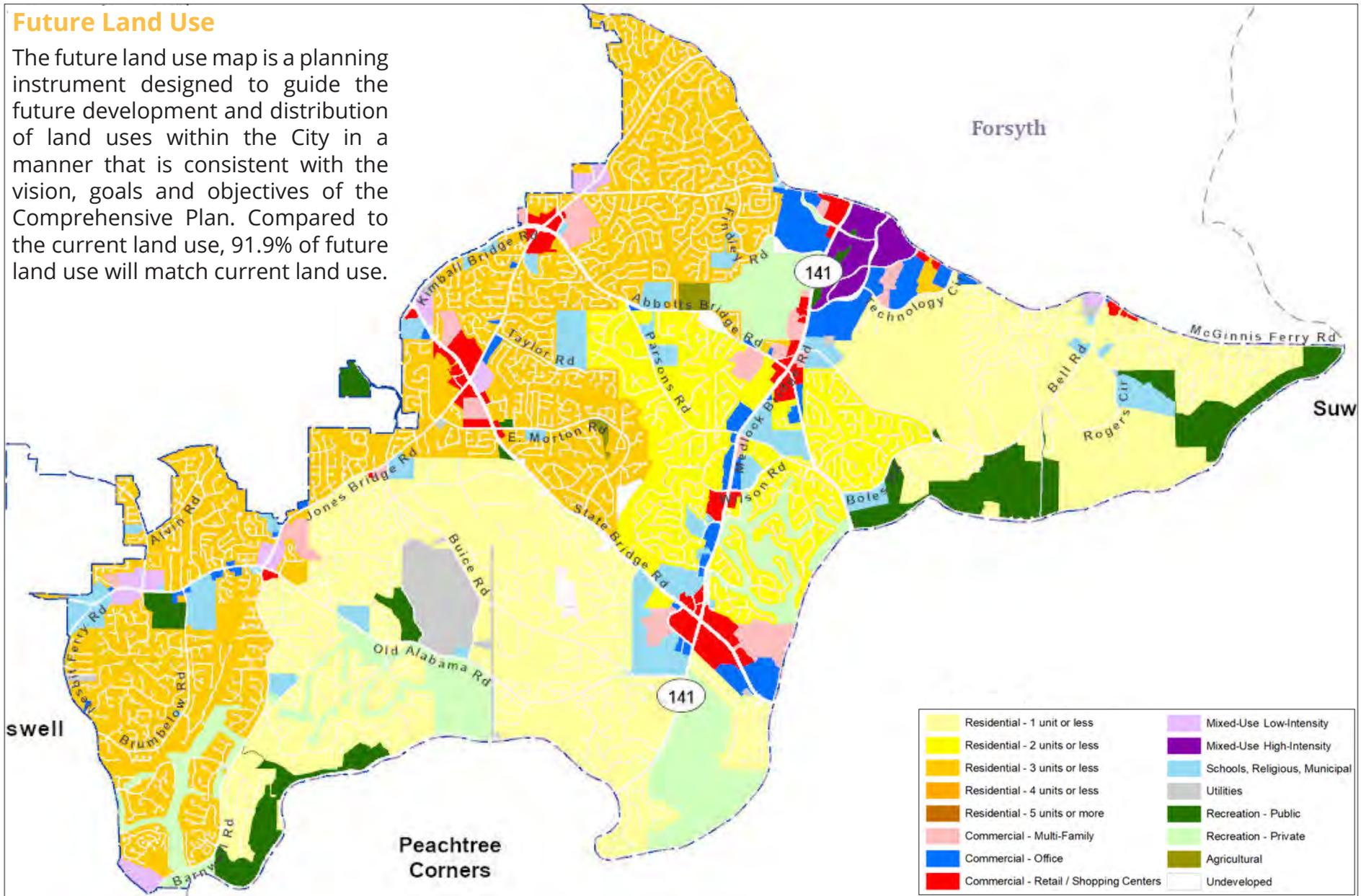
- **Johns Creek North:** Jones Bridge Road at Sargent and Douglas Roads, to create a community village;
- **Medlock:** State Bridge Road at Medlock Bridge Road, to create a retail-only community village;
- **Newtown:** Old Alabama Road at Haynes Bridge Road, to create a community village.
- **Ocee:** State Bridge Road at Kimball Bridge Road and at Jones Bridge Road, to create community villages; and
- **Tech Park:** approximately 192 acres in Tech Park, to create a Town Center. The Town Center Vision and Plan was adopted on October 25, 2021, and has been added to the Comprehensive Plan as a supplemental document.

Overall

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan's focus is to preserve and protect Johns Creek's residential neighborhoods and quality of life by managing development. The reductions in residential density and the targeting of specific locations for commercial redevelopment and the Town Center will change the City's growth patterns, and the implementation of proposed capital projects will enhance the City's livability in the future.

Future Land Use

The future land use map is a planning instrument designed to guide the future development and distribution of land uses within the City in a manner that is consistent with the vision, goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Compared to the current land use, 91.9% of future land use will match current land use.



Map 20: Future Land Use

CITYWIDE LAND USE

Land Use Categories

Land use categories provide general guidance on the intensity, character, and location of land uses. To ensure land use categories are applied consistently across the City, this Comprehensive Plan establishes 16 land use categories listed in the table below.

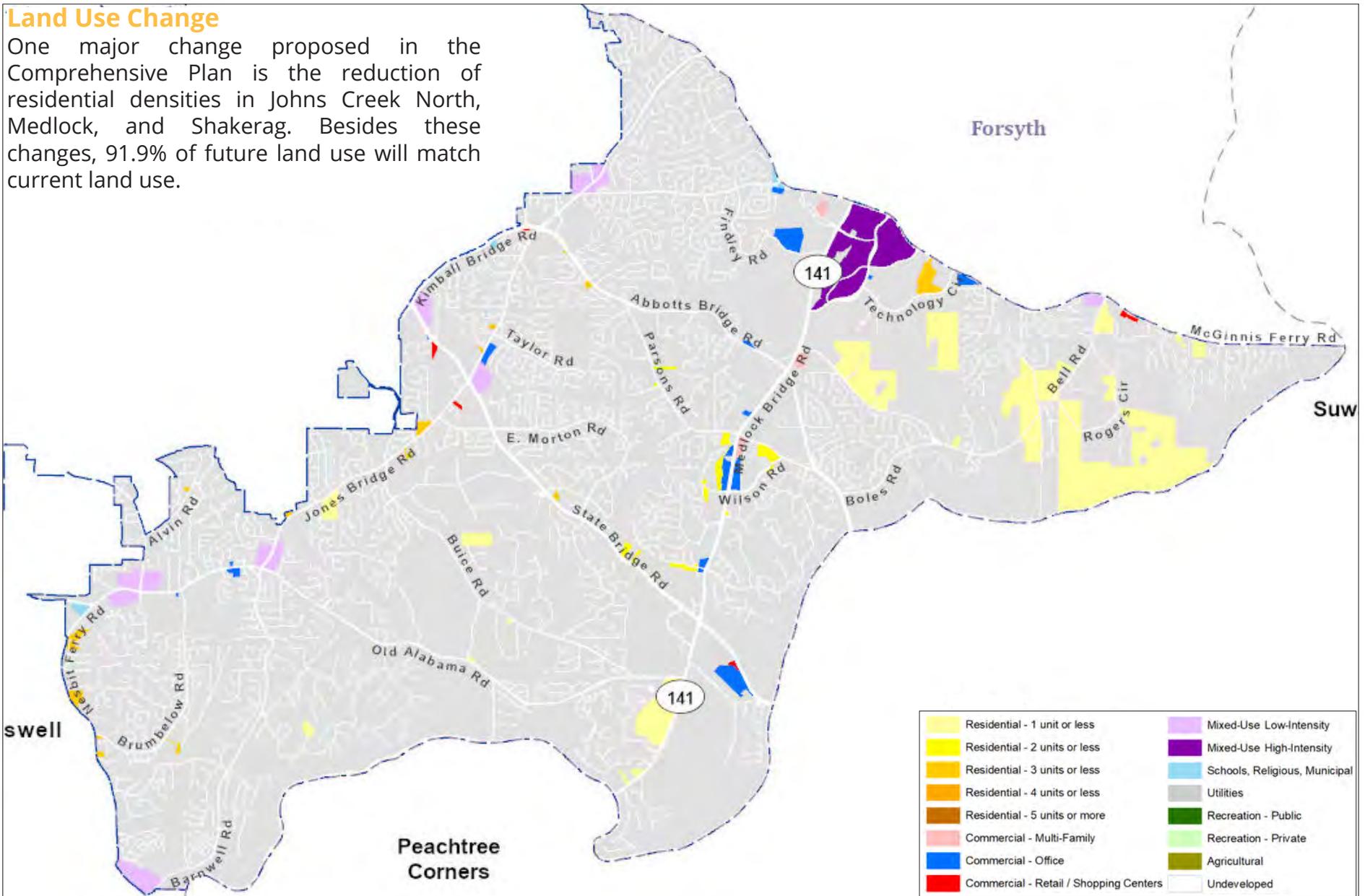
Table 3: Land Use Categories

Color	Land Use	Residential Density per Acre	Maximum Height	Types of Uses Permitted
	Residential - 1 unit or less	1	3 stories/40 feet	Single-Family Dwelling Unit: Detached
	Residential - 2 units or less	2	3 stories/40 feet	Single-Family Dwelling Unit: Detached
	Residential - 3 units or less	3	3 stories/40 feet	Single-Family Dwelling Unit: Detached
	Residential - 4 units or less	4	3 stories/40 feet	Single-Family Dwelling Unit: Detached
	Residential - 5 units or more	>5	5 stories/60 feet	Single-Family Dwelling Unit: Detached
	Commercial - Multi-Family	12	4 stories/60 feet	Property containing housing units with more than 4 dwelling units/building (i.e. townhomes, apartments, condos, 4-plexes, live-work lofts, etc.)
	Commercial - Office	N/A	4 stories/60 feet	Privately-owned property used primarily for office, health care, hotels, light assembly, with supporting uses
	Commercial - Retail / Shopping Centers	N/A	3 stories/40 feet	Neighborhood and community-oriented retail and service activities including local business offices, grocery stores, restaurants
	Mixed-Use Low-Intensity	8	3 stories/40 feet	A planned development with a mix of residential, commercial retail and office uses that includes public park space. Residential uses include single family detached, duplex, triplex, townhouses, condos, stacked flats and live-work units. Garden style apartments are not permitted.
	Mixed-Use High-Intensity	N/A*	5 stories/75 feet	A planned development with a mix of residential, commercial retail and office uses that includes public park/open space and entertainment uses. Refer to the adopted Town Center Vision and Plan for residential typologies. Garden style apartments are not permitted.
	Schools, Religious, Municipal	N/A	4 stories/60 feet	Publicly- or privately-owned lands used for schools, libraries, places of worship, city hall, municipal court, fire stations, etc.
	Utilities	N/A	N/A	Publicly- or privately-owned lands used for utility purposes such as water treatment, reservoirs, radio towers
	Recreational - Public	N/A	3 stories/40 feet	Publicly-owned neighborhood and community parks, community centers and open space
	Recreational - Private	N/A	3 stories/40 feet	Privately-owned golf, tennis, swim and country club facilities
	Agricultural	1	3 stories/40 feet	Agricultural
	Undeveloped	N/A	N/A	Undeveloped land

*Refer to the Adopted Town Center Vision and Plan

Land Use Change

One major change proposed in the Comprehensive Plan is the reduction of residential densities in Johns Creek North, Medlock, and Shakerag. Besides these changes, 91.9% of future land use will match current land use.



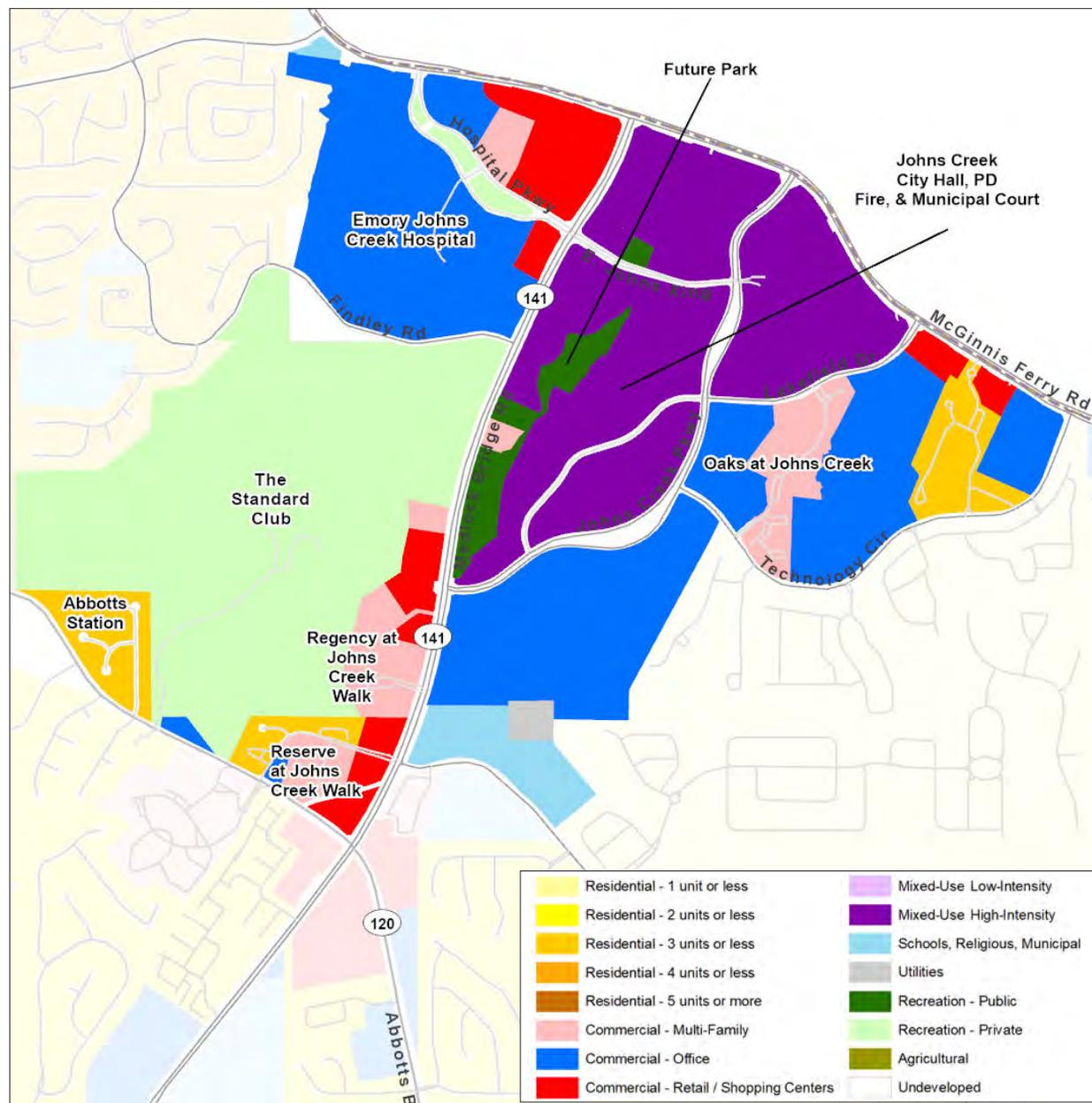
Map 21: Land Use Change

Future Land Use

Apart from residential density reduction, 73.7% of future land use in Tech Park will match current land use. A detailed build-out analysis is available on Pages 154-155.

Table 18: Land Use Change in Tech Park (Acres)

Land Use Type	Current	Future	Change
Residential - 3 units or less	0	49.1	49.1
Residential - 4 units or less	19.2	0	-19.2
Residential - 5 units or more	8.6	0	-8.6
Commercial - Multi-Family	54.2	60.3	6.2
Commercial - Office	403.3	266.9	-136.4
Commercial - Retail/Shopping Centers	67	53	-14
Mixed-Use High-Intensity	0	195.8	195.8
Schools, Religious, Municipal	22.6	24.1	1.5
Utilities	4.1	4.1	0
Recreation - Public	20.4	20.4	0
Recreation - Private	280.7	280.7	0
Undeveloped	80.7	6.3	-74.4



Map 68: Future Land Use in Tech Park

VISION

The vision for Technology Park is to redevelop this suburban office park into a live-work-play destination for business owners who want to live in a premier residential community, have a short commute to their offices, and have an amenity-rich park at their business' front door.

The core area of Technology Park has been identified as the location of the City's new "Town Center." The area has been chosen not only because it could host both the new City Hall and a new city park, but also because it is surrounded by office buildings and surface parking lots that will support a lively town center. Importantly, it will be able to accommodate restaurants, entertainment venues, events, and festivals without negatively impacting any residential subdivisions. It is envisioned that by creating a master plan for the Town Center, and rezoning the area to high-intensity mixed-use, the City will enhance its opportunities to attract new corporate businesses - expanding the City's health, wellness, educational and technology sectors - and create vibrancy and a sense of place for Johns Creek. The Town Center Vision and Plan as well as the Town Center Zoning District would guide the private sector in the amenities desired by the community, as well as the City's design standards.

Within the high-intensity mixed-use area, no more than five stories in height are allowed, with an exception to allow ten percent (10%) of the buildings to be built to a height of eight stories if they 1) build an iconic structure; 2) bring economic benefit to the City (i.e. create high-paying jobs); 3) reduce the impervious surface and 4) preserve at least 30% or more green space. There is a preference for housing geared towards Millennials and active adults (age 55+).

Outside of the high-intensity mixed-use area, new infill housing developments will be limited to single-family detached units up to three units/acre and three stories in height.

The City has plans to expand street networks that promotes effective circulation, economic development and environmental sustainability. Sidewalks and trails will also link the park and City Hall to a potential privately-funded arts, cultural, and civic events complex, where the City's symphony orchestra and chorale could perform, where community, cultural and commercial events could be held, and where theater and arts organizations could reside.



BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS

Residential Build-out Analysis

The residential build-out analysis provides a projection of maximum allowable future development within the Community Area, based on the Future Land Use Map and market analysis. It can also explore the impact of development on tax base, traffic, school enrollment, natural and historic resources, and quality of life.

The projected number of housing units was calculated by multiplying the acres of land by the allowable number of residential units as described in the Community Area vision. Population increase was calculated by multiplying the number of additional housing units by the average number of people per household (3.07).

The build-out analysis shows that the Tech Park Community Area (outside the Town Center) has the capacity for 955 additional residential units, although full build-out is unlikely to occur in the next 10 years, if ever.

The build-out analysis within the Town Center can be found in the adopted Town Center Vision and Plan.

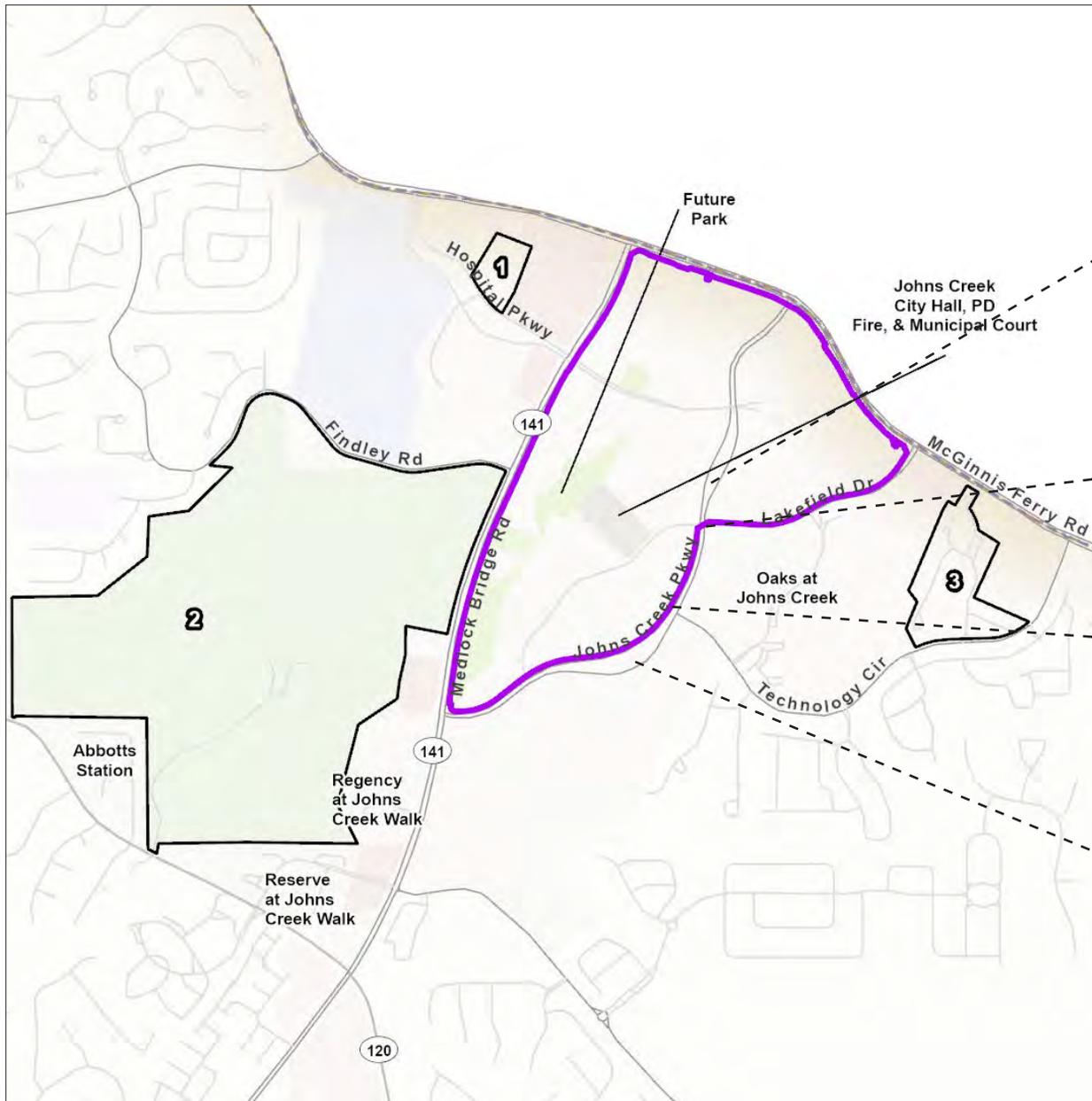
Commercial Build-out Analysis

The Tech Park office complex, while popular in the 1980s and 1990s, has lost favor with younger employees and corporations that currently seek walkable environments located adjacent to highways, public transportation, or both. The office buildings are aging and no longer provide Class A space. In addition, because the complex is so large and spread out, most employees still drive to eat lunch or run errands.

It is envisioned that the core area (outlined in purple) within Tech Park will transform from a 1980s office complex into a 21st-century “Town Center.” There would also be a walkable “Main Street” that is lined with restaurants, entertainment venues, and new infill office buildings with residential units above, or located on land currently used as parking.

Table 19: Residential Build-out Analysis in Tech Park (outside the Town Center)

No.	Acreage	Allowed Residential Units/Acre	Allowed Residential Units	Existing Residential Unit(s)	Potential Residential Units Increase	Potential Population Increase
1	6.16	N/A	75	0	75	231
2	278.41	3	835	0	835	2,564
3	21.21	N/A	45	0	45	139
Total	305.78				955	2,934



Map 69: Potential Residential Build-out in Tech Park

Land Use Changes in Johns Creek

Land Use Type	Current Land Use	Future Land Use	Land Use Change
Residential - 1 unit or less	3,265.0	5,772.4	2,507.4
Residential - 2 units or less	724.8	1,760.7	1,035.9
Residential - 3 units or less	5,184.0	4,789.4	-394.6
Residential - 4 units or less	2,054.3	0	-2,054.3
Residential - 5 units or more	196.8	0	-196.8
Commercial - Multi-Family	346.8	365.6	18.8
Commercial - Office	537.5	470.5	-67
Commercial - Retail / Shopping Centers	579.5	384.5	-195
Mixed-Use Low-Intensity	0	177.8	177.8
Mixed-Use High-Intensity	0	195.8	195.8
Schools, Religious, Municipal	914.2	885.5	-28.7
Utilities	333.7	333.7	0
Recreational - Public	916.9	916.9	0
Recreational - Private	1,512.1	1,512.1	0
Agricultural	264.9	51.0	-213.9
Undeveloped	885.4	100.2	-785.2

Residential Build-out by Community Area

Land Use Type	Potential Residential Units Increase
Autrey Mill	36
Johns Creek North	155
Medlock	481
Newtown	616
Ocee	382
River Estates	97
Shakerag	1,204
Tech Park	N/A*

*Refer to the Adopted Town Center Vision and Plan

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

units. Garden style apartments are not permitted. The maximum height is 5 stories/75 feet.

Mobility: The degree to which someone can travel. Refers to the amount of costs that are associated with moving from one point to another.

Multifamily Housing: Housing structures that support more than one household within one dwelling unit.

Multi-modal: The many different types of transportation that are used by residents and business to move people and commerce. Modes of transportation include car, bus, PTV, walking, bicycling, light rail, heavy rail, truck, and equestrian trails.

Open Space: The portions of a property or land areas not occupied by buildings, parking, drive aisles, or other similar elements. The term may also refer to non-vegetated urban open spaces, such as plazas and parks.

Park: Publicly owned outdoor land set aside for the use of the public for recreation. A park must be of size or complexity to be used or visited. Simple landscaping, or a single piece of sculpture would not be considered a park without being part of a larger coordinated landscape area, or series of sculpture. The park is the backbone of any recreation and park system.

Personal Transportation Vehicle (PTV): Under Georgia law, a PTV is any motor vehicle having no fewer than three wheels, an unladen weight of 1,300 pounds or less, and which cannot operate at more than 20 miles per hour. Golf carts are considered as PTVs, but low-speed vehicles (LSV), neighborhood electric vehicles (NEV), power wheelchairs, scooters or any all-terrain vehicles are not.

Placemaking: A process by which people shape the public realm in a human scaled, pedestrian-oriented fashion that makes the place distinctive and memorable, more attractive to, and compatible with, the people who use it.

Recreational Trail: A pathway for use by pedestrians and where designated horseback riding, it may vary in width and may be constructed of hard or soft surface materials depending on location. A recreational trail is usually located outside of a roadway right of way in a naturalized setting.

Redevelop: To demolish existing buildings or to increase the overall floor area existing on a property, or both, irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.

Rezoning: The adjustment of the regulations that define how land, buildings, and structures within a specific geographic area can be used.

Right-of-way: A portion of the public space that is generally used for transportation. Public streets, highways, and strips of property owned by the public for providing utilities are all considered the right-of-way. There are policies related to the use of rights-of-way, as opposed to policies related to the use of private property. Right-of-way policies are intended to allow individuals to utilize public spaces while preserving the public interest. Right-of-way policies may regulate signage; traffic of pedestrians, bicycles, or automobiles; materials used in construction; street furniture; and public art.

Sidewalk: A pedestrian only pathway with a minimum width of 5 feet constructed primarily of concrete and with a minimum separation of 5 feet from back of the roadway curb by a landscaped strip. The minimum landscaped separation between a sidewalk