2.0 VISION

"JOHNS CREEK IS AN EXCEPTIONAL CITY THAT SEEKS TO ENHANCE ITS RESIDENTIAL QUALITY OF LIFE BY SUPPORTING ITS DIVERSITY, ARTS, BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS."

The City profile in Chapter 1 demonstrates that Johns Creek's development prior to incorporation was not always focused or guided. While we cannot undo past decisions, we can change the trajectory of future growth and development through long-term collaboration, commitment, and bold action.

Creating a new vision for the City through the Comprehensive Plan is the first step in this process. The second and most important step involves establishing goals and priorities. The final step requires the City to commit to a clear course of action.

The vision was created using the combined results of technical analyses and input gathered from public engagement. The goals, objectives and strategies are divided into eight themes: housing, parks and recreation, natural and historic preservation, economic development, city identity, transportation, land use and intergovernmental relations. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in this Vision Chapter will require the majority of Council to support and move forward functionally and financially.

GOAL 1: PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE CITY'S PREMIER RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES AND ENHANCE OUR OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE.

Objective 1. Ensure the integrity of existing single-family residential neighborhoods from overdevelopment of adjacent undeveloped/underdeveloped parcels.

> **Strategy:** It is expected that undeveloped/underdeveloped parcels will be developed with a similar density or use as the surrounding neighborhood(s) or development(s). Remaining mindful of the diverse property uses surrounding these parcels, undeveloped/underdeveloped properties should be considered for rezoning.

Objective 2. Protect and preserve residential subdivision entrances and landscape strips/tree buffers along collector and arterial roadways.

Objective 3. Expect all new residential subdivisions to foster a sense of community by including usable common space.

Objective 4. Promote housing options within the City to attract and retain all age groups.

> **Strategy:** Expand senior housing options to promote opportunities for "aging in place" and encourage active-adult and age-restricted housing developments near shopping and health-related services, especially in village designated areas and the Town Center.

> **Strategy:** Expand home-owner housing options for Millennials, especially in village designated areas and the Town Center.

> **Strategy:** Expand housing options for employees working in Technology Park, especially those in critical positions such as hospital workers.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUPERIOR RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

Objective 1. Implement the strategies and projects identified in the Johns Creek Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan, adopted by the City in 2016.

> **Strategy:** Complete the design and build-out of the five new parks: Cauley Creek Park, State Bridge Road Park, Morton Road Park, Boles-Bell Park and the Linear Park in Tech Park.

> **Strategy:** Complete the improvements to Newtown Park, Ocee Park, Autrey Mill Preserve and Shakerag Park.

Objective 2. Ensure each Community Area has easy access to a park.

> **Strategy:** Create a series of new and enhanced public spaces – including parks, plazas, and green spaces – throughout the city to serve as locations for residents to gather and interact.

> **Strategy:** Encourage the City, if financially feasible, to acquire new parkland for community areas which are underserved by parks.

Objective 3. Ensure each Community Area has easy access to a recreational trail system.

> **Strategy:** Create recreational trails separated from roadways by landscaping to encourage walking, biking and the use of Personal Transportation Vehicles (PTVs) to make local trips to area office complexes, schools, shopping centers, religious institutions, libraries and parks.

Objective 4. Support and encourage cultural activities, events and festivals.
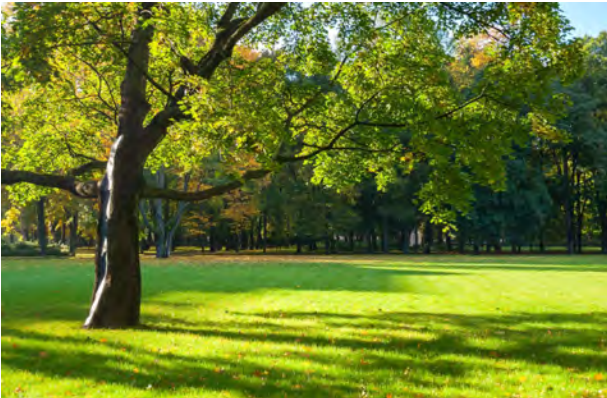
GOAL 3: PROTECT THE CITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HISTORIC RESOURCES.

Objective 1. Conserve natural areas such as floodplains, wetlands, tree groves, and specimen trees from future land development.

Strategy: Revise existing development regulations to encourage the minimization of grading and the removal of existing vegetation as part of development.

Strategy: Revise existing development regulations to encourage land to be developed in new subdivisions for use as open space and amenity space beyond the minimum requirements in the existing regulations.

Strategy: Integrate the preservation of natural areas, rivers and streams and environmental aesthetics into site plan designs.

Strategy: Revise existing development regulations to encourage green building design, technology and sustainable site design in all new development.

Strategy: Work with environmental stakeholders to obtain advice on environmentally responsible policies and practices.

Objective 2. Encourage the preservation of large tracts of undeveloped land as natural resources.

Strategy: Encourage parks, large agricultural areas and other green spaces to be protected in perpetuity.

Strategy: Acquire undeveloped lands to protect natural resources from development, if City funding allows.

Strategy: Support local land trusts to acquire stream corridors and their tributaries to provide floodway protection, natural habitat corridors and passive recreation resources.

Objective 3. Ensure existing properties with historical and/or architectural importance are protected.

Strategy: Adopt a historic preservation ordinance.

Objective 4. Protect, preserve and restore the City's State Waters, buffers and river corridors.

Strategy: Enforce the provisions of the City's Storm Water Management Program and the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System permit.

Strategy: Study the feasibility of a stormwater utility or other alternative methodologies that will ensure the protection and restoration of existing and future Stormwater Facilities located within the City.

Strategy: Where feasible, encourage the implementation of new techniques and products that will decrease impervious surface areas within the City's impaired watersheds.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 4: EXPAND THE CITY'S ECONOMIC BASE.

Objective 1. Attract new private companies to Technology Park to ensure a strong economic future.

> **Strategy:** Target, retain and support the expansion of businesses that include health innovation and wellness, technology, information and software which will complement the existing businesses located in Technology Park.

> **Strategy:** Create a walkable town center for Technology Park that contains a mix of housing options, restaurants, entertainment and public spaces to attract targeted companies.

> **Strategy:** Support and encourage the private sector development of Class A office space and high quality meeting and event space.

Objective 2. Encourage private entities to redevelop existing neighborhood commercial shopping centers with high vacancy rates into village centers with public gathering spaces surrounded by mixed uses and/or retail uses.

Objective 3. Support the private development of small businesses and live-work spaces within the mixed-use areas identified in the future land use map.

Objective 4. Encourage the creation and retention of local businesses in Johns Creek.

> **Strategy:** Collaborate, support and partner with local businesses desiring to bring healthcare innovation and wellness businesses into the City.

Objective 5. Implement the City's adopted 2016 Strategic Economic Development Plan.

GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S IDENTITY.

Objective 1. Create a vibrant Town Center for the City in the heart of Technology Park to provide a place for citizens, workers and visitors to live, work, eat, play and shop.

Objective 2. Improve the City's auto-centric, suburban identity by creating a small town feel with walkable villages in designated Community Areas.

Objective 3. Reinforce the City's identity as a premier residential community by creating and maintaining attractive streetscapes throughout the City.

Objective 4. Enhance the City's identity by supporting the private development of a performing/visual arts and event space as an entertainment venue and community resource.

Objective 5. Complement the City's identity by supporting and encouraging public art throughout the City's public spaces.

GOAL 6: CREATE A CITYWIDE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK.

Objective 1. Provide alternative ways to make local trips within the City.

Strategy: Complete missing sections of sidewalks throughout the City.

Strategy: Where feasible, develop a complete street grid system to create alternate ways to travel around major intersections and through existing shopping centers to improve vehicular safety and traffic flow.

Strategy: Encourage residential subdivisions to identify locations where multi-use path connections can be made to encourage bicycle and pedestrian connections.

Strategy: Provide a system of multi-use trails located along arterial, collector and local roadways to connect residential subdivisions to community destinations (schools, libraries, shopping, parks and religious institutions) to minimize the need to utilize adjacent roadways for short trips.

Strategy: Allow for the use of PTVs on all City roads posted with a 25 mile per hour or less speed limit.

Strategy: Allow for the use of bicycles on all City trails where appropriate.

Strategy: Where supported by residential neighborhoods, connect subdivisions to a public local street, collector, or arterial via a new street developed by the City to increase the number of ways in and out of residential subdivisions.

Strategy: Preserve existing public rights of way to ensure the development of future trails.

Objective 2. Create safe pedestrian and bike pathways.

    Strategy: Where feasible, separate sidewalks and trails from vehicular lanes by landscaped medians.

    Strategy: Reduce speed limits along arterial and connector roadways, where appropriate.

    Strategy: Develop ways to separate pedestrian/bike/PTV traffic movements from vehicular traffic movements at the City's main intersections.

    Strategy: Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety along major arterial and connector roadways by enhancing pedestrian crossings, providing pedestrian under/overpasses where necessary and feasible.

Objective 3. Improve traffic movements.

    Strategy: Proactively manage and improve traffic signal timing and coordination on all major arterial and collector roadways.

    Strategy: Where supported by the community, provide capacity improvements to arterial roadways.

    Strategy: Where feasible, provide new roadways to enhance traffic movements.

    Strategy: Where feasible, remove turning lane bump outs that restrict the flow of traffic in the turning lane.

    Strategy: Where supported by existing subdivisions, provide left turn lanes to allow residents easier access to collector and minor arterial roadways.

Strategy: Where supported by existing subdivisions, provide roundabouts to allow residents easier access to collector and minor arterial roadways.

Strategy: Where feasible, remove existing traffic signals and replace with appropriate-sized traffic roundabouts to improve safety and reduce wait times at lights.

Objective 4. Improve traffic safety.

Strategy: Maintain a traffic calming program that involves physical improvements designed to decrease traffic speed.

Strategy: Where feasible, separate pedestrian movements from vehicular movements at major intersections.

Strategy: Where feasible, reduce or eliminate left turns at intersections and create alternative methods or locations in which to turn left.

Strategy: Repair, replace or enhance older bridges to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.

Objective 5. Reduce personal vehicle trips to/from schools by improving alternative transportation options near public schools.

Strategy: Encourage greater levels of school bus ridership.

Strategy: Where supported by existing subdivisions, connect subdivisions with pathways to schools.

Strategy: Create new pathways through easements, buffers and landscape strips that offer students safe walking, biking and carting.

GOAL 7: ENSURE THE CITY HAS THE APPROPRIATE TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT THE GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Objective 1. Ensure the City's existing ordinances and regulations that control land development are aligned with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

> **Strategy:** Create a Unified Development Code by combining the City's zoning, tree, and sign ordinances with the City's stormwater and land development regulations.

Objective 2. Ensure new development and future redevelopment maintains each Community Area's natural and physical character.

> **Strategy:** Create site and architectural design standards for new development/ redevelopment based on the updated Community Areas' visions.

> **Strategy:** Develop specific area plans or master plans for Community Areas that have been designated to have village centers.

Objective 3. Ensure safe and healthy living environments throughout the City through ongoing code compliance efforts.

## GOAL 8: IMPROVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Objective 1. Encourage efforts with neighboring jurisdictions to proactively discuss planning activities that may impact adjacent jurisdictions that fall below the Atlanta Regional Commission's Development of Regional Impact thresholds.

Objective 2. Encourage efforts with neighboring jurisdictions to develop and share solutions for addressing regional issues, such as growth management, watershed management and traffic congestion solutions.

Objective 3. Work with the Fulton County School District to increase bus ridership and use of sidewalks and trails in lieu of vehicles to transport students to and from schools.
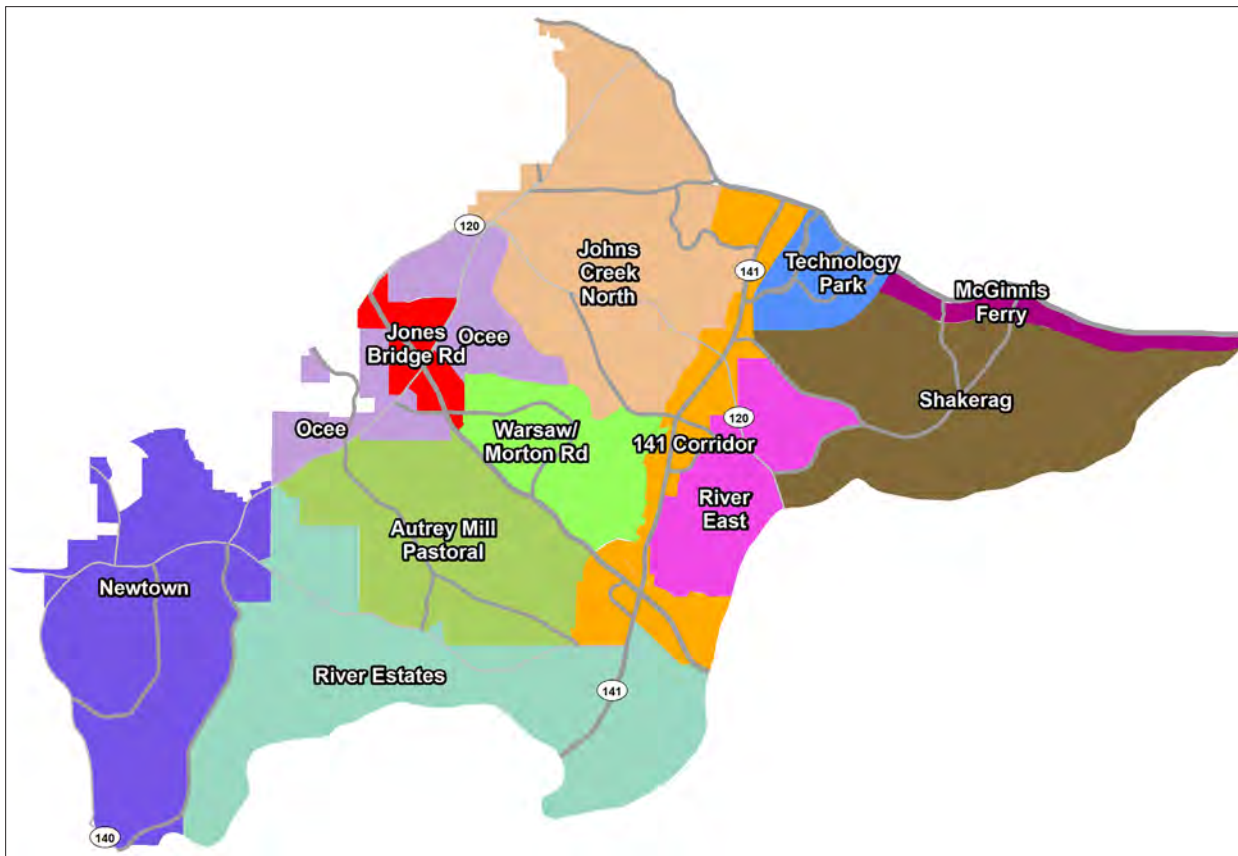
Map 22: 2008 Character Areas

The City's Character Areas were first introduced in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The residents decided on twelve Character Areas that they felt represented the different land uses within the City. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan prescribed a set of development goals for each Character Area, as well as appropriate zoning designations, land uses, densities, and intensities.

Out of the twelve Character Areas, eight were identified as prioritizing low-density, single-family housing development. Those areas were: Ocee, River East, Warsaw/ Morton Road, River Estates, Newtown, Autrey Mill Pastoral, Shakerag, and Johns Creek North.

There were three Character Areas that prioritized commercial and mixed-use development: Jones Bridge Road at State Bridge Road, Medlock Bridge Road Corridor, and McGinnis Ferry Road Corridor.

Technology Park was the only area prioritizing a high density of offices and institutional uses, with special attention given to corporate offices as well as secondary uses, such as food and retail establishments to support office workers.

During the Comprehensive Plan Update process, residents expressed a need to get more involved in planning for and caring about the City's future, but believed that most residents would not get involved unless issues were "in their own backyard." With that in mind, the Character Area map was revisited, and residents considered ways to define the City, not based on the physical differences between areas (i.e. a commercial node or corridor versus a grouping of like residential subdivisions), but by where people lived and shopped – where they would feel that changes to the area would personally impact their quality of life.

Ultimately, instead of twelve Character Areas, eight Community Areas emerged. A few like Newtown, Autrey Mill, River Estates and Johns Creek North changed very little from the 2008 Character Areas. On the contrary, the Ocee Character Area grew to incorporate the Jones Bridge Road Area and subdivisions along Morton Road. The Warsaw Character Area and the River East Character Area combined with the area along Parsons Road and the part of the Medlock Bridge Corridor Character Area that previously bisected their community. The Technology Park Character Area was reunited with the western half of the commercial area, which was a part of the Medlock Bridge Road Corridor Character
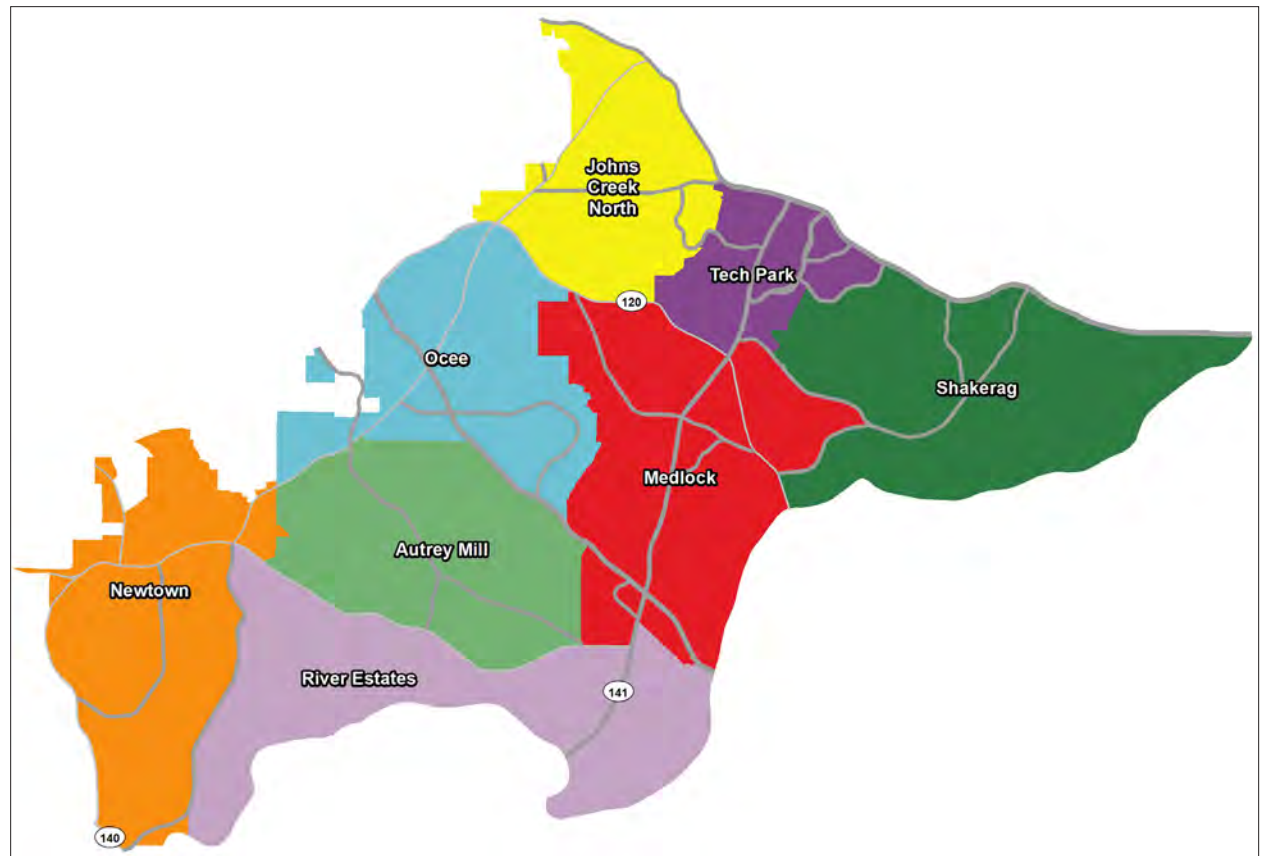
Map 23: 2018 Community Areas

Area. Lastly, the Shakerag Character Area was combined with the McGinnis Ferry Character Area, as the residents living in subdivisions along McGinnis Ferry, east of Technology Circle, consider themselves as part of the Shakerag community.

The long-term goal of creating eight Community Areas is to foster community involvement through the establishment of eight Community Area Planning Committees that will actively monitor their community's issues, such as planning for new sidewalks, trails and parks, deciding on how to reduce traffic congestion or having a voice on rezoning cases.

More detailed analysis of each Community Area is available in Chapters 3-10.
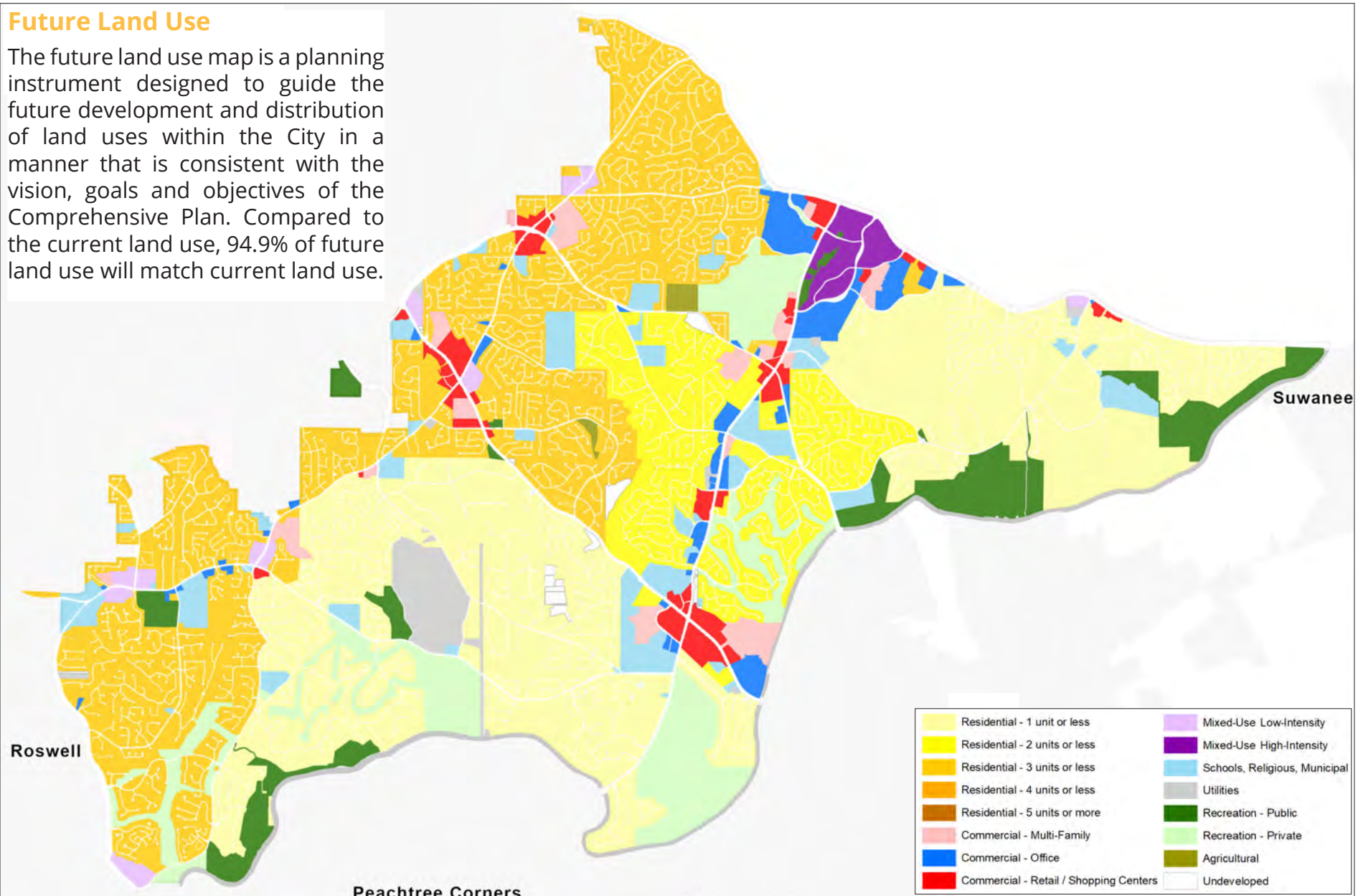
Current Land Use

Single-family residential is the most prominent land use in Johns Creek, at 64.5% of total land. Only a small amount of land (2%) is being used for multi-family housing. Commercial Office and Commercial Retail account for 5.5% of total land. Recreational uses consume 14% of City land. Institutional uses and utilities make up 5.1% and 1.9%, respectively. Mixed-Use Low-Intensity and Mixed-Use High-Intensity account for 0.1% and 1.1% of total land.
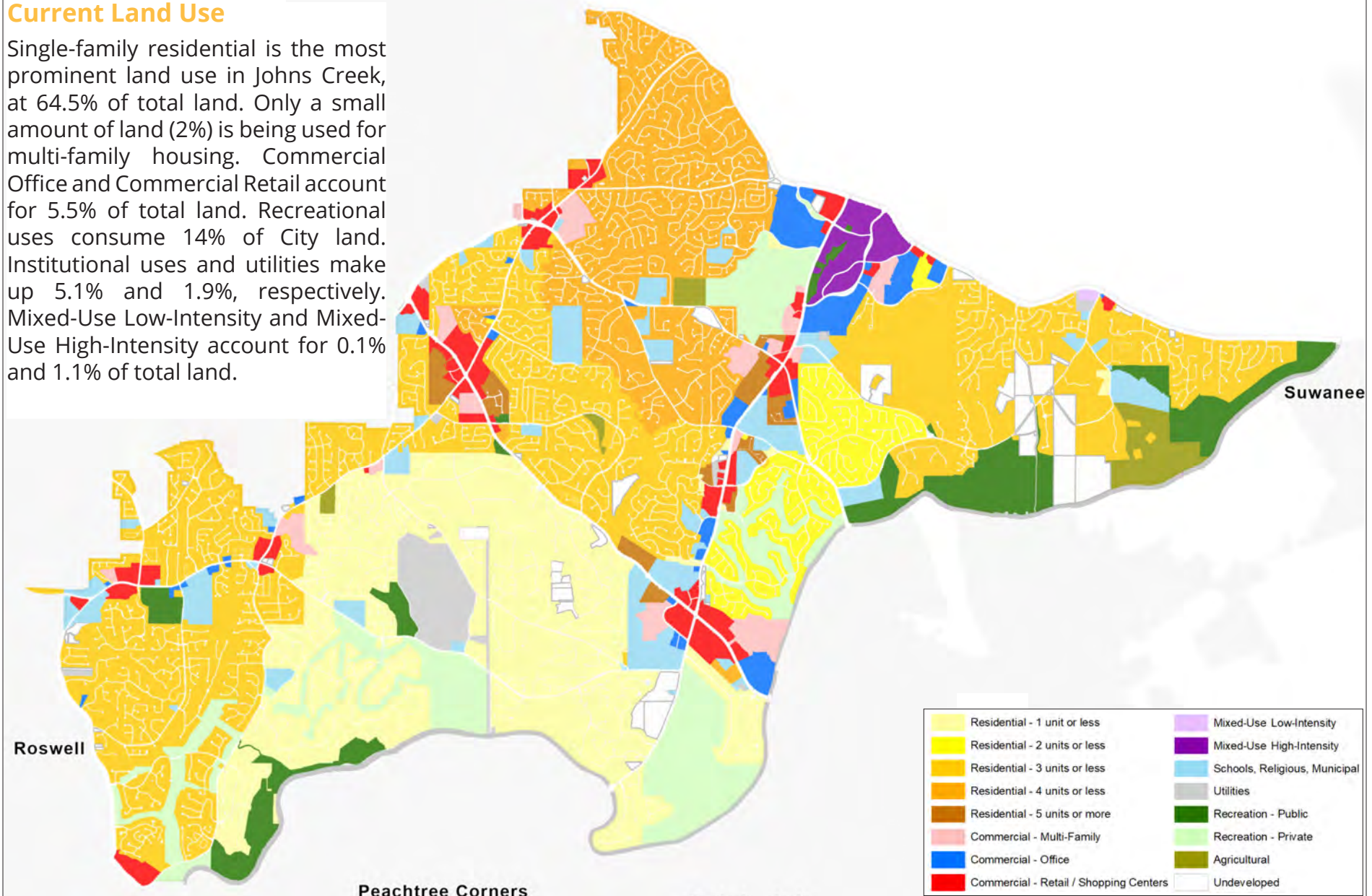
Map 19: Current Land Use

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, 94.9% of future land use will match current land use.

Suwanee

Roswell

Peachtree Corners

Legend:

- Residential - 1 unit or less
- Residential - 2 units or less
- Residential - 3 units or less
- Residential - 4 units or less
- Residential - 5 units or more
- Commercial - Multi-Family
- Commercial - Office
- Commercial - Retail / Shopping Centers
- Mixed-Use Low-Intensity
- Mixed-Use High-Intensity
- Schools, Religious, Municipal
- Utilities
- Recreation - Public
- Recreation - Private
- Agricultural
- Undeveloped

Map 20: Future 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.
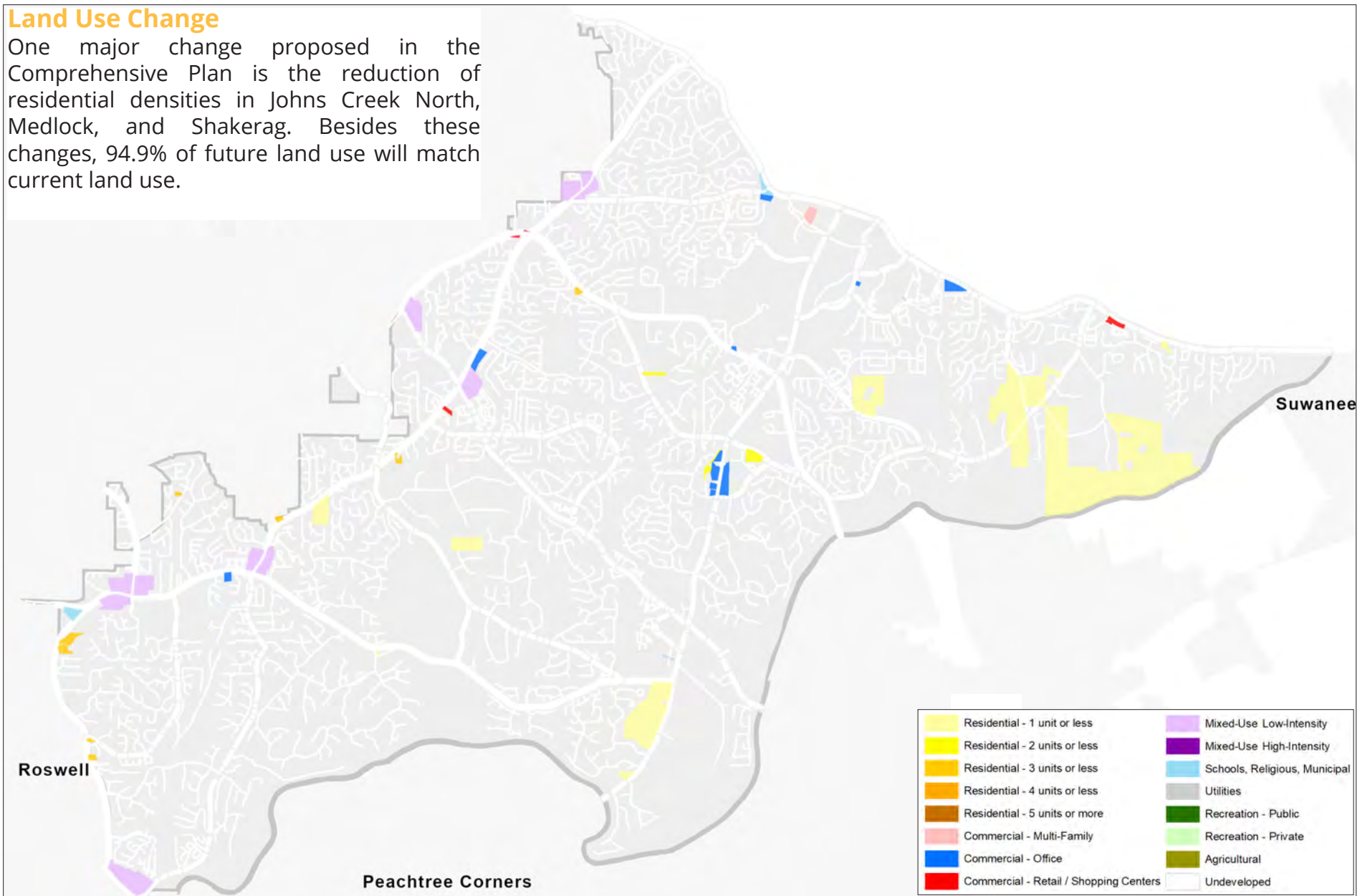
Table 3: Land Use Categories

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, 94.9% of future land use will match current land use.

Map 21: Land Use Change