

**Garden City
Land Use
Draft**

CHAPTER 5
LAND USE ELEMENT

Introduction and Purpose

The Land Use Element guides the location, type, intensity, and character of development in Garden City through 2045. More fundamentally, it establishes a framework for integrating Garden City's emerging role as a regional logistics and industrial hub with the community's commitment to protect established neighborhoods, support quality of life, and create opportunities for reinvestment and housing diversity.

The Land Use Element:

- Establishes a vision for Garden City's physical development emphasizing strategic nodes and corridors rather than the past spread-out automobile-dependent pattern, with particular attention to protecting residential neighborhoods and traditional community character while sustaining important industrial and logistics functions.
- Implements the Strategic Nodes and Corridors framework as the city's primary growth management strategy to identify suitable locations for residential, employment, commercial, institutional, parks, and public uses based on infrastructure capacity, transportation connectivity, environmental constraints, coastal hazard risk, and neighborhood compatibility.
- Coordinates land use decisions with the Transportation Element, Economic Development Element, Housing Element, and Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Protects and preserves the city's natural systems, historic character, cultural resources, and environmental quality.
- Promotes equitable access to employment, services, housing, and community assets across all neighborhoods and demographic groups.
- Recognizes and facilitates Garden City's specific role within the Savannah-Chatham regional economic system as the "first mile" of the National Highway Freight Network, where port-scale logistics operations interface with neighborhood-scale residential environments.

This element includes a Character Area Map (CAM) and Future Land Use Map (FLUM), which work together to create a cohesive framework for future growth and development. In addition to these components, this element includes a summary of physical context, regional development patterns, existing land uses, and historical context, as well as analysis of key issues and opportunities for Garden City.

Garden City in the Regional System

Garden City occupies a central position within Chatham County and the broader Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The City is inextricably linked to the Port of Savannah's Garden City Terminal, which generates high volumes of daily truck movements and channels a significant share of U.S. East Coast container trade through Garden City's road network and industrial districts. This role as a regional freight hub creates prosperity and employment for the City and the region but also creates specific pressures on land use, infrastructure, and neighborhood livability that the Land Use Element is designed to address.

At the same time, emerging commercial and mixed-use development nodes in neighboring jurisdictions and the presence of regional employers such as Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and Gulfstream Aerospace shape expectations for higher-intensity commercial and mixed-use development in Garden City's southern corridors. Growth in the Bryan County manufacturing corridor, anchored by the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant, has elevated regional demand for logistics, warehousing, and service-related employment, amplifying pressure on Garden City's industrial land, infrastructure and housing demand.

- Within this regional context, Garden City's land use framework must address three fundamental challenges:
- The Industrial North must continue to function as a regional employment engine tied to national freight corridors, supporting port operations, logistics, warehousing, and related manufacturing while improving operational efficiency and environmental resilience.
- The Residential South and Traditional Neighborhoods designated areas require protection from incompatible land use impacts and targeted reinvestment to ensure that residents are not asked to absorb disproportionate quality-of-life burdens and to support community stability and reinvestment.
- The planned Town Center and commercial corridors must be positioned to capture service, retail, office, and medical field growth that would otherwise bypass the community, reducing retail leakage and supporting a more diverse economic and housing base.

Development Patterns

Garden City's built environment is defined by distinct eras of planning philosophy, resulting in a pattern that reflects both its origins as a bedroom community for Savannah and its transformation into a regional logistics center.

Residential Foundation (1937–1960)

Garden City was established in 1937 as a bedroom community and suburb of Savannah, centered around the Industrial City Gardens subdivision. This era produced compact, walkable residential neighborhoods with a grid street pattern, modest single-family homes, local commercial corridors, and civic institutions such as schools, churches, and parks. These neighborhoods, including areas such as Rossignol Hill, Chatham Villa, and surrounding blocks, established a foundation of neighborhood-scale urbanism that remains the residential core of the city today. The legacy of this era is a land use pattern that is relatively efficient in its use of infrastructure and that reflects community values around walkability and neighborhood identity.

Industrial Growth Transformation (1948–2020)

The 1948 establishment of the Georgia Ports Authority's Garden City Terminal fundamentally altered Garden City's development trajectory. What had been a primarily suburban residential community began a sustained shift toward industrial and logistics activity. Development pressure from Savannah, combined with the strategic advantages of port proximity and freight network access, led to the gradual conversion of land designated for residential and mixed-use to industrial, warehousing, and heavy commercial. The 2016 Urban Redevelopment Plan documented that this transformation resulted in "disinvestment in some of the older neighborhoods, encroachment of industrial uses, declining pockets of commercial, and deteriorating buildings" in certain areas.

This industrial growth has been the primary economic engine for the city and has generated significant tax base and employment. However, it has also created spatial and functional conflicts: neighborhoods that were originally designed at a pedestrian and neighborhood scale now abut large-scale logistics facilities; commercial corridors that once served neighborhood residents have been displaced or deteriorated by industrial uses and through traffic, becoming fast food “swamps” and commercial retail chain strips; and infrastructure designed for light residential traffic now accommodates heavy truck and freight movements.

Logistics Acceleration and Regional Integration (2020–Present)

From 2020 to the present, the region has experienced significant industrial investment and consolidation. Manufacturing now accounts for 18.5% of the regional GDP, reflecting a structural shift anchored by the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant and its supplier network. The Port of Savannah has deepened its facilities and increased capacity. This period has solidified Garden City's identity as a logistics and industrial hub, with industrial land now absorbing the majority of new development. Rapid speculative warehouse construction has resulted in over-building and a corresponding high vacancy rate, which the City is carefully monitoring during the permitting process.

The central challenge for the Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update is to manage a jurisdiction that contains both efficient industrial districts and residential neighborhoods that require protection and reinvestment. The strategy moving forward is to retrofit and reinforce positive existing patterns and continue taking steps to preserve the quality of life for its residents and expand housing stock: introducing connectivity, buffering, resilience, and nodes of mixed-use density to strengthen the urban fabric and reconcile competing land use demands.

Garden City's Regional Role

Within this regional setting, Garden City functions as a key employment hub and logistics gateway rather than a large residential center. The Port of Savannah's Garden City Terminal, located within the city's boundaries, is the largest single-terminal container facility in North America and a major driver of freight and warehousing activity in ZIP code 31408. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau's *OnTheMap* tool confirms that Garden City is a primary employment destination for regional commuters, with thousands of workers traveling into the city each day to staff port operations, trucking companies, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities. At the same time, a large share of Garden City residents commute to jobs elsewhere in the MSA, underscoring the importance of regional transportation investments and coordinated housing and workforce strategies.

Regional Employment Centers

The Savannah MSA contains several major employment centers that influence land use patterns and commuting across jurisdictions, discussed in detail and depicted on **Exhibit 4.1** in the **Economic Development Element**:

- **West Chatham Aviation** – Located between Augusta Road and I-95, encompasses Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and Gulfstream Aerospace operations in Chatham County, providing employment in airport operations, aircraft design, manufacturing, and marketing.

- **Georgia Ports Authority** – Consists of Garden City Terminal and Ocean Terminal, providing employment in marine transportation and logistics.
- **Downtown Savannah** – Major employment hub with jobs in tourism, hospitality, retail, and educational/public services, accessible by multiple transportation modes.
- **South Savannah Medical** – Located along DeRenne Avenue near Truman Parkway, includes Memorial Health University Medical Center and Candler Hospital.
- **Abercorn Extension Commercial Corridor** – Located along Abercorn Street Extension, serves as centerline for regional commercial activity, home to major employers including Walmart, Kroger, and Georgia Southern University (Armstrong Campus).

Existing Conditions: Development Patterns, Land Inventory, And Neighborhood Character

Physical Context

Garden City is located in the western portion of Chatham County and encompasses an area of 9,152 acres, or 14.3 square miles. The City is bounded by the city of Savannah to the southeast, the city of Pooler to the west, the Georgia Ports Authority/Savannah River to the northeast, and unincorporated Chatham County to the south. Major thoroughfares include:

- GA Highway 21 (Augusta Road)
- US Highway 80
- I-16 (Jim Gillis Historic Savannah Parkway)
- US Highway 17 (Ogeechee Road)
- SR 307 (Dean Forest Road)

The City is primarily industrial, commercial, and residential in nature, with large concentrations of commercial and industrial activity near transportation corridors. The city's location at the intersection of national freight networks gives it strategic regional importance while creating specific challenges locally for land use management and neighborhood protection.

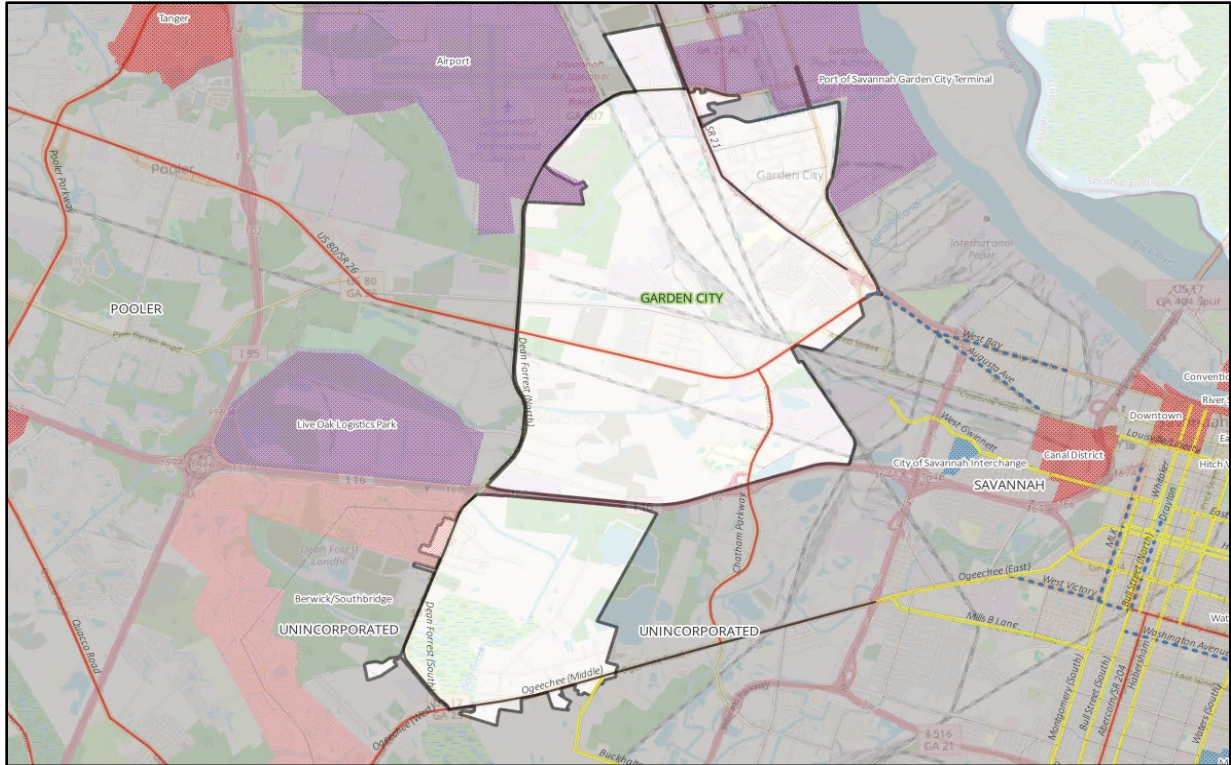


Exhibit 5.1 – Regional Location

Plan 2040 Period Development Activity & Investment Trends

During the period since the adoption of *Plan 2040*, Garden City has experienced a pronounced shift in land use intensity, driven primarily by the rapid expansion of the logistics and warehousing sectors. Between 2020 and 2025, development activity was characterized by the consolidation of large tracts of heavy industrial zoned land to accommodate port-related logistics along western corridors and strategic commercial infill along historic thoroughfares.

Approximately 95% of newly approved development acreage between 2020 and 2025 was designated for industrial use. For example, the rezoning and development of the CenterPoint Logistics Park on Dean Forest Road converted over 250 acres of previously underutilized land into a major logistics hub. Consequently, the Dean Forest Road corridor has solidified its function as a primary freight artery, necessitating updated buffers and performance standards to mitigate impacts on adjacent uses.

Although not a major land consumer, commercial development accounted for nearly 45% of individual land use applications. Activity was concentrated along U.S. Highway 80 and Highway 21, focusing on fuel services, convenience retail, and fleet maintenance to support the growing workforce and freight traffic. Simultaneously, the City moved to diversify its housing stock, approving the conversion of "Town Center Block 3" from commercial to multi-family residential use, signaling response to a market demand for higher-density housing near employment centers.

To manage this growth, the City Council enacted several strategic text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

Key Policy Actions 2020-2025			
Year	Project/Action	Location/Type	Impact / Description
2021	CenterPoint Logistics Park	Dean Forest Road	Rezoning of 252 acres from I-1 to I-2; established major logistics anchor.
2022	Town Center Amendment	Dean Forest & I-16	Master Plan amendment converting commercial space to Multi-Family Residential.
2022	Constantine Rd Townhomes	Constantine Road	Approval of 17.69-acre residential subdivision (76 townhome units).
2023	Zoning Text Amendment	Citywide	Modernization of buffer requirements to protect residential edges.
2024	Commercial Infill	U.S. Hwy 80	Approval of multiple general development plans for retail and service stations.
2025	Modification of Planning Commission Role	Citywide	Text amendment clarifying Council authority over final "P" district site plan approvals.

Figure 5.1 – Key Policy Actions 2020-2025

Key policy actions included:

- **Buffer Zone Enhancements:** Strengthening visual barriers between industrial and residential zones (Code Section 90-262).
- **"P" District Management:** Refining the review process for Planned districts to ensure Council oversight on complex site plans.
- **Updating permitted uses** to address emerging trends such as Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, short-term rentals, and industrial outdoor storage.

Existing Land Inventory

The official zoning map and parcel data confirm that Garden City dedicates a substantial portion of its land area to employment-generating industrial uses. Residential zoning accounts for a smaller share of land area, much of it either fully built out or constrained by infrastructure or environmental conditions.

Commercial and mixed-use districts are concentrated along major corridors including Highway 21, Highway 80, and Highway 17, reflecting automobile-dependent built environment patterns and limited pedestrian connectivity. Within these corridors and adjacent areas, assessor data indicate that some parcels remain underutilized or vacant, confirming the presence of infill and redevelopment opportunities that could support a more diverse housing mix and higher-quality commercial development if infrastructure and zoning frameworks are aligned.

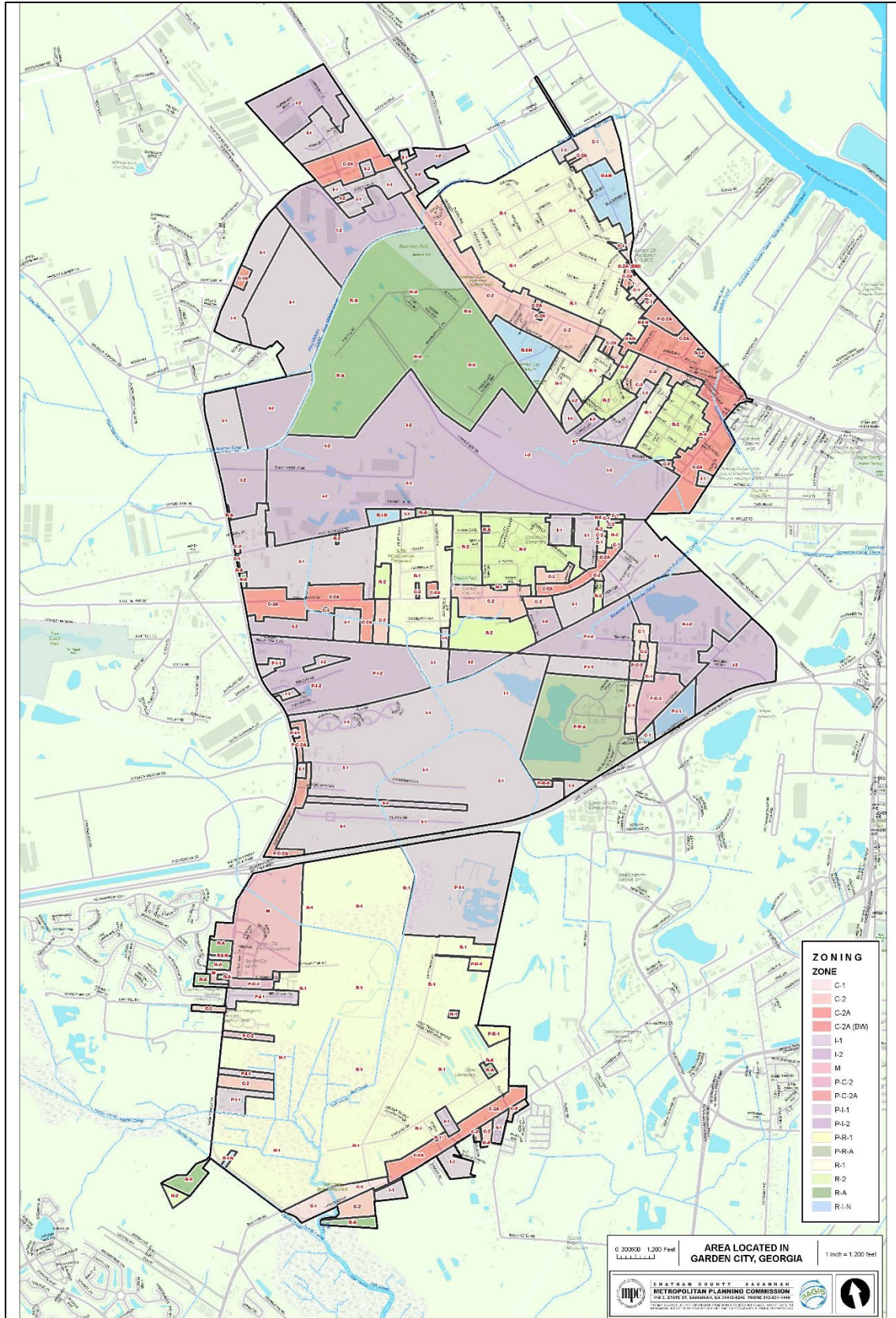


Exhibit 5.2 –Garden City Current Zoning

Housing Stock, Vacant Land, and Development Constraints

Assessor records suggest that Garden City continues to serve as a source of relatively affordable workforce housing, predominantly single-family units. Multifamily and "missing middle" formats (duplexes, small multifamily, townhomes, ADUs) represent a smaller share of the inventory, indicating limited diversity of homes available to current and future residents.

A meaningful share of residentially designated parcels remain vacant or underdeveloped, particularly in areas served by basic urban infrastructure, creating an opportunity for infill that adds both variety and supply to the housing market. However, the contrast between the market value of older housing stock and the cost of delivering new construction suggests a "replacement gap," in which deteriorated homes are not easily replaced by private market activity alone without supportive tools such as redevelopment incentives, targeted infrastructure upgrades, or partnership-based revitalization.

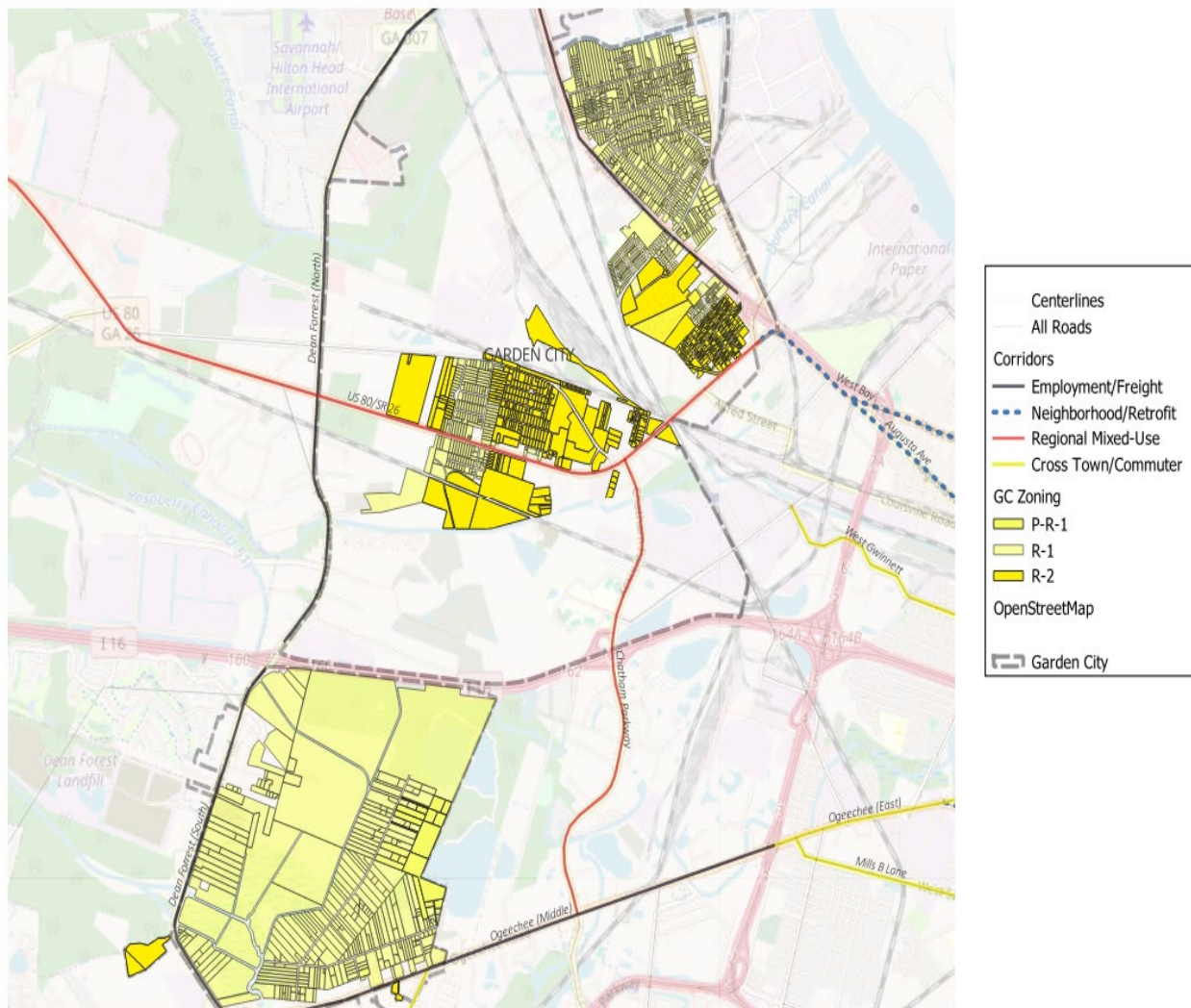


Exhibit 5.3 – Residentially Zoned Parcels

Future Growth Strategies

Growth Scenarios and Public Preference

During development of the Plan 2040, three alternative growth scenarios were presented to the public: Business as Usual (continued outward development), Strong Corridors (reinvestment along existing multi-modal nodes), and Compact Growth (infill and redevelopment within existing boundaries). Public feedback strongly supported the **Strong Corridors** approach, with 42% of survey respondents selecting it as their first preference.

The Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update builds on this preference by advancing the **Nodes and Corridors framework**, with particular emphasis on:

- Managed growth of development volume and geographic focus
- Urban rehabilitation and infill of existing developed areas
- Mixed-use zoning and development integrating residential, commercial, and civic uses
- Housing diversity including middle-density and mixed-income options
- Development concentration at existing nodes and along identified corridors
- Parks, trails, and natural area preservation
- Land conservation and environmental protection
- Regional cooperation among municipalities
- Brownfield redevelopment and adaptive reuse of obsolete structures

Nodes & Corridors Objectives

- Reduce infrastructure extension costs and maintenance burdens
- Support transit and multimodal connectivity where feasible
- Maintain neighborhood stability in residential conservation areas
- Create opportunities for mixed-use, walkable environments
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and support sustainability goals
- Improve equity and access to employment, housing, and services

Strategic Framework: Nodes and Corridors

The Nodes and Corridors framework emphasizes concentrated development at strategic locations with strong transportation connectivity and infrastructure capacity and land use compatibility supporting responsible growth. Within this framework, Garden City recognizes distinct types of growth nodes and corridors:

- **Industrial and Logistics Nodes:** Port-adjacent and freight-corridor-aligned districts that support regional economic functions and employment
- **Mixed-Use and Town Center Nodes:** Locations south of I-16 and at key corridor intersections where residential, commercial, office, and civic uses can be integrated

- **Neighborhood Commercial Corridors:** Linear commercial areas that serve local and regional needs while maintaining compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods
- **Residential Conservation Areas:** Established neighborhoods where infill and reinvestment should respect existing form and community character

Consistent with the Urban Redevelopment Plan and Plan 2040, this update identifies three strategic nodes and five strategic corridors.

Strategic Nodes			
Node Name	Type	Description	Strategic Character
Highway 21 Gateway	Strategic Node	Identified in the URP as a critical entry point to the city, currently suffering from deteriorating industrial buildings, vacant lots, and poor property maintenance. It serves as the primary northern gateway into Garden City.	Gateway Revitalization. The strategic focus is transforming this area from a blighted industrial strip into an attractive entryway. Priorities include demolition of dilapidated structures, strict code enforcement, and establishing design standards to improve aesthetics and signal community investment.
Town Center (Dean Forrest & I-16)	Strategic Node	Positioned at a major regional interchange, this area is envisioned as the commercial and civic heart of Garden City. It benefits from high visibility and accessibility but currently lacks a cohesive "downtown" identity.	Civic & Commercial Hub. The goal is to create a true "Town Center" with mixed-use development. Strategic character focuses on vertical density, walkability, and concentrating retail, office, and civic uses to create a sense of place distinct from the industrial zones.
Ogeechee Redevelopment Corridor	Strategic Node	Corresponds to the "Garden City South" target area in the URP. This corridor faces challenges such as poor housing conditions, lack of public infrastructure (water/sewer), and vacant commercial buildings. It aligns with the broader Middle Ogeechee Corridor strategy.	Corridor Retrofit & Stabilization. Strategic priorities include extending water and sewer infrastructure to unlock development potential, implementing traffic calming measures, and incentivizing infill development. The focus is on revitalizing the commercial spine while stabilizing adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Figure 5.2 – Garden City: Strategic Nodes

Strategic Logistics Corridors				
Name	Type	Typology	Description	Strategic Character
SR 21	Corridor	Strategic Logistics Corridor	The primary freight artery connecting the Port of Savannah to I-95. It serves as the economic lifeline for the region, carrying the highest volume of heavy truck traffic while bisecting Garden City.	Freight Spine. Critical for regional competitiveness. Design focus is on maximizing freight efficiency, minimizing curb cuts, and preventing residential access points to ensure the rapid movement of goods.
Dean Forrest (North)	Corridor	Strategic Logistics Corridor	The northern segment of Dean Forrest Road, heavily utilized by port-related freight traffic. It connects major industrial parks directly to the interstate system and port terminals.	Strategic Logistics. Design focus is maximizing freight throughput. Residential curb cuts are prohibited, and infrastructure must be engineered to support heavy truck weights and turning radii.
Dean Forrest (South)	Corridor	Strategic Logistics Corridor	The southern segment of Dean Forrest, serving as a connector between residential zones and the landfill/industrial areas. It faces pressure from a mix of heavy industrial and local residential traffic.	Industrial Access. Focus on managing the mix of heavy trucks and local traffic. Requires widening and the addition of safety shoulders to accommodate continued industrial growth without compromising safety.
Ogeechee (Middle)	Corridor	Strategic Logistics Corridor	The central segment of Ogeechee Road traversing mixed commercial and industrial zones between I-516 and Dean Forrest. It serves as a critical link between the interstate and port-related facilities.	Freight Mobility. Prioritizes efficient truck movement while managing existing access points. Future improvements should focus on signal synchronization and separating through-traffic from local turning movements.
Old Louisville Road	Corridor	Corridor Revitalization Zone	A historic connector running parallel to the major freight routes, serving Garden City's legacy industrial and residential fabric. It suffers from aging infrastructure but is vital for local connectivity.	Community Connectivity & Retrofit. Strategic focus is on upgrading roadway standards to support mixed traffic (local + industrial) while improving drainage and aesthetics to match the "Highway 21 Gateway" revitalization goals.
US 80/ SR 26	Corridor	Regional Commercial Corridor	A historic highway serving as Garden City's "Main Street" before connecting the mainland to the coast. It functions as a vital commercial and commuter route lined with legacy businesses.	Coastal Lifeline & Commerce. Focus on maintaining traffic flow while managing commercial access. Resilience to flooding is a key long-term consideration, alongside aesthetic improvements to support the Town Center vision.

Figure 5.3 – Strategic Logistics Corridors

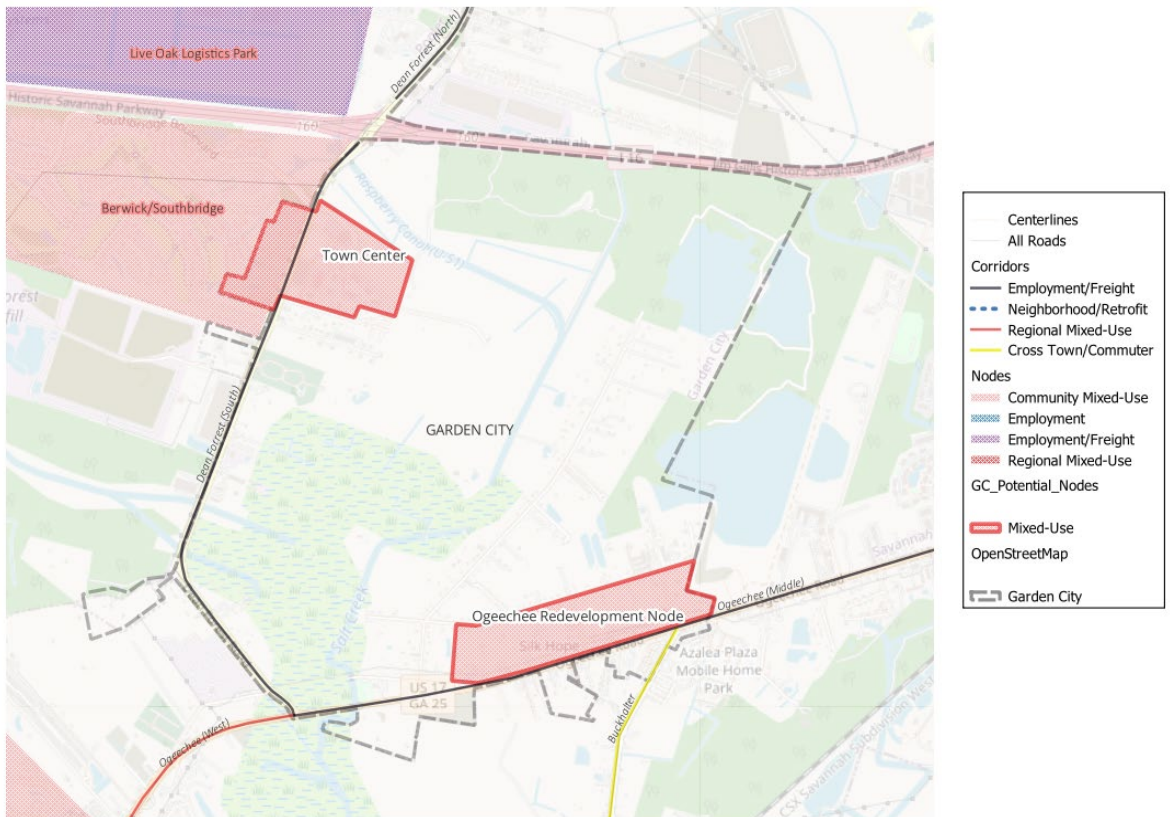
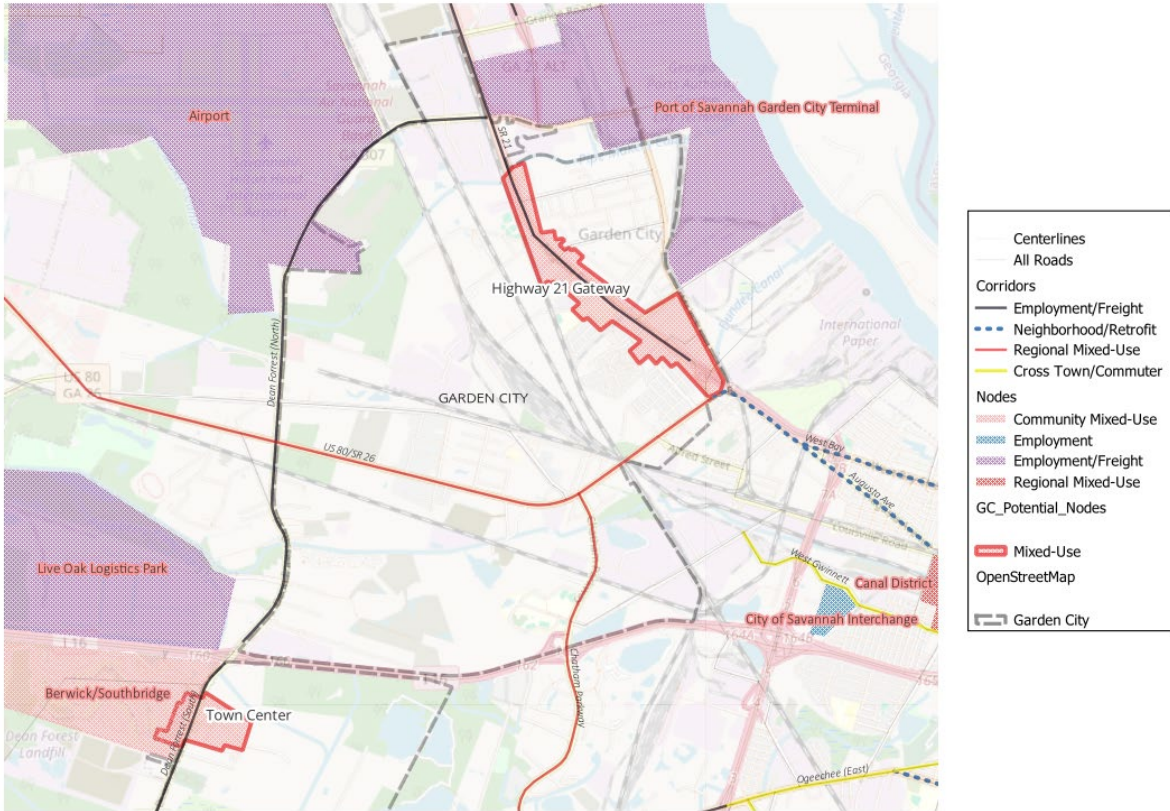


Exhibit 5.4 – Strategic Nodes and Corridors

Growth Centers

The Growth Centers Map highlights areas of Garden City and broader Chatham County that may be suited to accommodate future development or redevelopment/infill efforts that have implications for guiding future land use decisions in Garden City. These areas include suburban, commercial, and employment centers that warrant further study to determine appropriate redevelopment and/or infill approaches and are not to be interpreted as zoning. Due to their proximity to major road systems and potential sites for transit-oriented, traditional neighborhood, or mixed-use development, these centers are priority focus areas for strategic reinvestment. The Growth Centers Map prioritizes lands with existing public investment (water, sewer, utilities, roadways, services) and considers historic development patterns, employment centers, service areas, existing transportation nodes, and environmental constraints such as flood zones and wetlands.

Chatham County Growth Centers

The following growth areas have been identified throughout Chatham County through prioritized land analysis and the preferred nodes and corridors strategy. Three of these areas are specifically located within Garden City. The areas listed below are in no particular order and do not indicate the level of importance or priority of one area over another:

Chatham County Growth Centers		
New Hampstead	Berwick	Historic Mainstreet
Highlands	Georgetown	West Savannah
Godley Station	Rockingham Farms	Tremont
Garden City South (<i>Garden City</i>)	Chatham Parkway (<i>Garden City</i>)	Savannah Mall GSU – Armstrong Vicinity
US 80 Corridor	Highway 21 (<i>Garden City</i>)	Oglethorpe Mall
Quacco Corridor	Yamacraw Village	Abercorn Corridor
Megasite	Canal District	Medical Arts
Hopeton	Hutchinson Island	Sandfly
Fort Argyle	Kayton-Frazier	Marshpoint
Derenne Ave Corridor	Victory Square/Olympus	Waters Ave Corridor
Skidaway	Wilmington Island	Whitemarsh Island
Beech & Capital		

Figure 5.4 – Chatham County Growth Centers

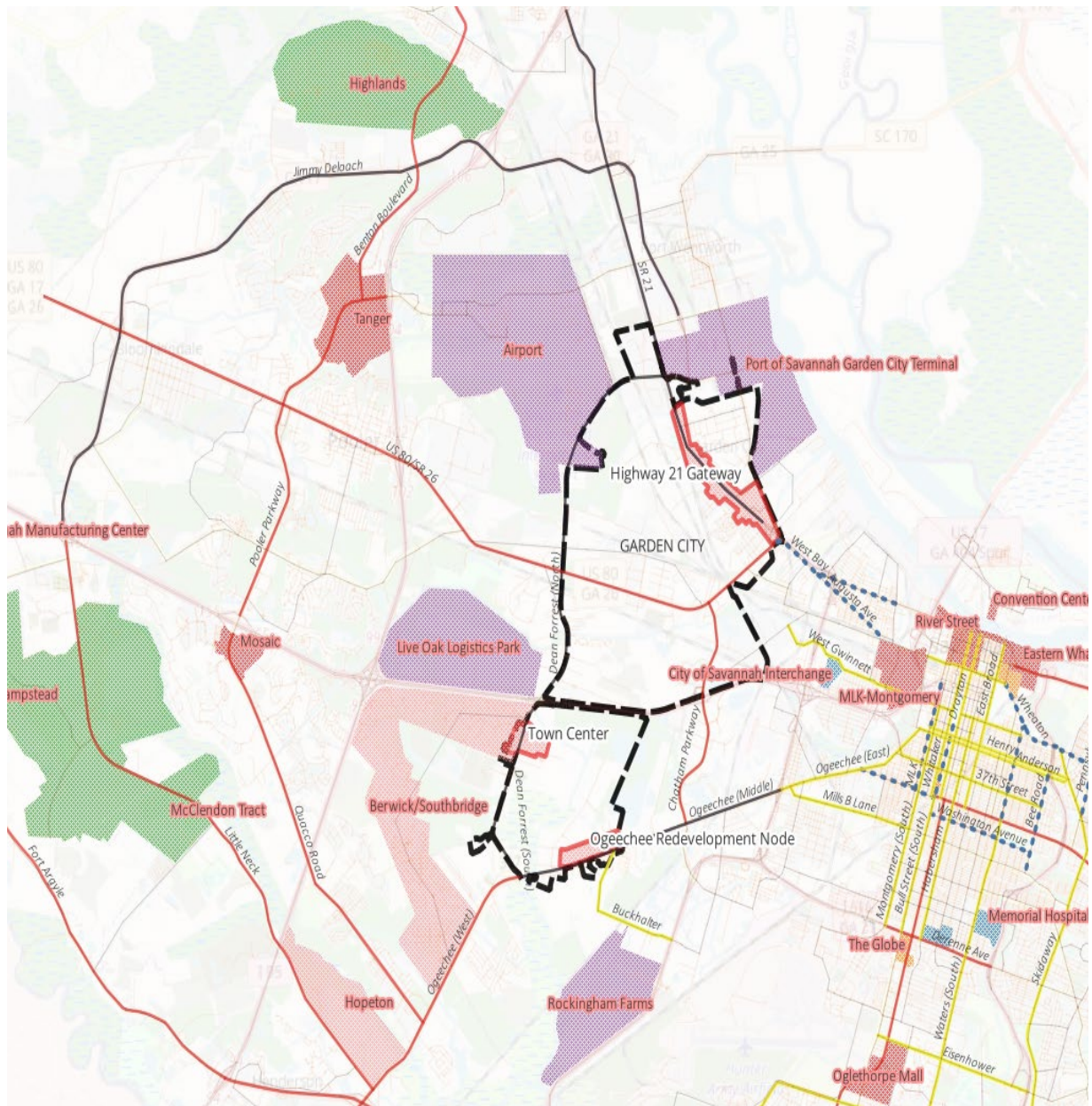


Exhibit 5.5 – Garden City Growth Areas Throughout Chatham County

Approaches To Accommodate Growth

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Transit-oriented development is defined as moderate- to high-density mix of uses, such as residences, retail shops, offices, and civic and entertainment spaces, located within one-half mile of a transit station and designed to encourage transit use. The typical "station area" is within a half-mile radius, considered to be an acceptable 10-minute walking distance for most transit users if the area contains a destination, provides dedicated walking routes, is safe, and is visually appealing.

Within the U.S., TOD is typically associated with rail transit; however, TOD can occur with other fixed guideway transit services, such as bus rapid transit, if facilities and service levels similar to rail transit are provided. Implementation of a TOD ordinance can help ensure that investments made in regional transit systems are utilized continuously and that related codes and processes are supported.

Benefits of a TOD Ordinance:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Increasing transit ridership
- Increasing pedestrian access
- Providing long-term return on investment for property owners
- Providing easy access to goods and services for families, seniors, and people with disabilities
- Creating vibrant centers and corridors for pedestrians

Possible Developer Incentives:

- Fast-track development review (expedited review process)
- Incentives for constructing multi-unit housing projects with 25 or more units
- Prohibiting certain uses within one-quarter mile of existing or proposed transit nodes to enable and promote more pedestrian-oriented development

Cluster Development

Cluster development is a land development design tool that provides a means of preserving open space while allowing development to be directed away from natural and agricultural resources considered important for protection. It is often best applied in suburban landscapes with larger undeveloped parcels. Cluster development regulations are implemented through municipal zoning, subdivision, and land development ordinances to provide applicants with appropriate design standards and municipalities with adequate information on development plans.

Implementation Approaches:

- Allow as a permitted use "by right"
- Density incentive or bonus
- Possible requirement for subdivisions with parcels larger than a specified acreage threshold

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance

Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinances can involve development of previously undeveloped areas or construction on vacant or underdeveloped parcels within already developed communities. Though this method is often driven by the private sector, TNDs are regulated by the zoning, subdivision, and land development ordinances of local governments for planned growth areas.

Town Center (TC) Overlay

Town Center overlay districts are intended to be developed based on standards consistent with the community character of surrounding neighborhoods. This type of center is typically low in scale, generally not exceeding two stories in height (unless greater height is allowed on an incentive basis), and emphasizes landscaping and pedestrian access. Town Center overlays provide a mechanism to ensure that new development in mixed-use nodes contributes to a coherent, walkable public realm.

Planned Development (PUD/PD)

Conventional ordinances often result in automobile-oriented subdivisions and single-use development patterns. A planned unit development (PUD) or planned development (PD), however, can provide the flexibility needed for transit-oriented development and can encourage innovative site planning and lot design. A PUD allows jurisdictions to control development of individual tracts of land by specifying the permissible form of development in accordance with the local ordinance. Care should be taken to protect and preserve natural resource areas during the design and planning process, with minimum open space and buffer requirements.

Suburban Retrofit

Suburban locations exist in Garden City's landscape, although principles of urbanism can be introduced to suburban communities. Retrofitting is a reconfiguration of existing uses and building types to create a more typical urban environment and improve connectivity, walkability, and mixed-use integration.

Elements of Suburban Retrofit:

- Creating a street grid and improving connectivity
- Rezoning single-use commercial to mixed-use
- Creation of public spaces
- Developing missing middle housing
- Preservation of wetlands and marshlands
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity

In the suburban retrofit, exciting opportunities exist to integrate a range of multi-family or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family or transitional neighborhoods, including duplexes, small multifamily buildings, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units, into the fabric of the community.

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse is the repurposing of existing older buildings for new uses. While commonly associated with historic preservation, the term encompasses any underused, abandoned, vacant, obsolete, or dilapidated structure. Adaptive reuse conserves energy and waste, supports economic development, and enhances community character. Within Garden City, adaptive reuse opportunities exist for older commercial buildings, light industrial structures, and obsolete institutional facilities that can be repositioned for new employment, residential, or mixed-use purposes.

Urban Redevelopment Plan and Redevelopment Strategies

The Urban Redevelopment Plan: Purpose and Authority

The 2016 Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) remains a foundational document for the City's revitalization efforts, specifically in the Highway 21 Gateway and Garden City South areas. However, while the URP is foundational, recent market data and the regional shift toward advanced manufacturing suggest that these strategies require realignment. The City should chart a course that updates URP implementation to focus on the "New Logistics" reality, emphasizing workforce housing and the fundamental infrastructure improvements necessary for modern industry.

The URP and the Future Land Use Map work together to enforce a unified vision and strategy for urban growth aligned with countywide and city strategies. The plan provides a framework for targeted use of public resources, coordination of infrastructure investments, and facilitation of private redevelopment in designated areas.

The URP operates under authority provided by the Urban Redevelopment Act of Georgia (OCGA 36-61-1) as a mechanism to support public–private partnerships for community revitalization. The URP is implemented by Garden City Council with the assistance of city staff and partners. The plan is reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changing conditions and priorities

Redevelopment Areas and Target Strategies

According to the URP, Garden City has identified three Redevelopment Areas:

Highway 21 Commercial Corridor (Highway 21 Gateway)

- Primarily commercial with scattered residential development
- Character: Auto-oriented commercial strip with vacant or underutilized buildings
- Strategy: Infill development, adaptive reuse, design standards enhancement, traffic calming

West Highway 21 Residential Area

- Primarily residential with mixed incomes and community assets
- Character: Traditional neighborhood with grid pattern, schools, parks, community center
- Strategy: Property maintenance, infill housing, targeting of housing team and partnership organizations

Garden City South

- Mix of commercial and light industrial with residential
- Character: Emerging mixed-use area with Town Center development, infrastructure gaps
- Strategy: Infrastructure extension, land assembly, mixed-use development standards, design standards

Each identified area has unique characteristics and intensity of redevelopment strategy. The three areas collectively represent the full cross-section of community development opportunity and challenge, positioning the URP as a tool applicable to various redevelopment scenarios across the city.

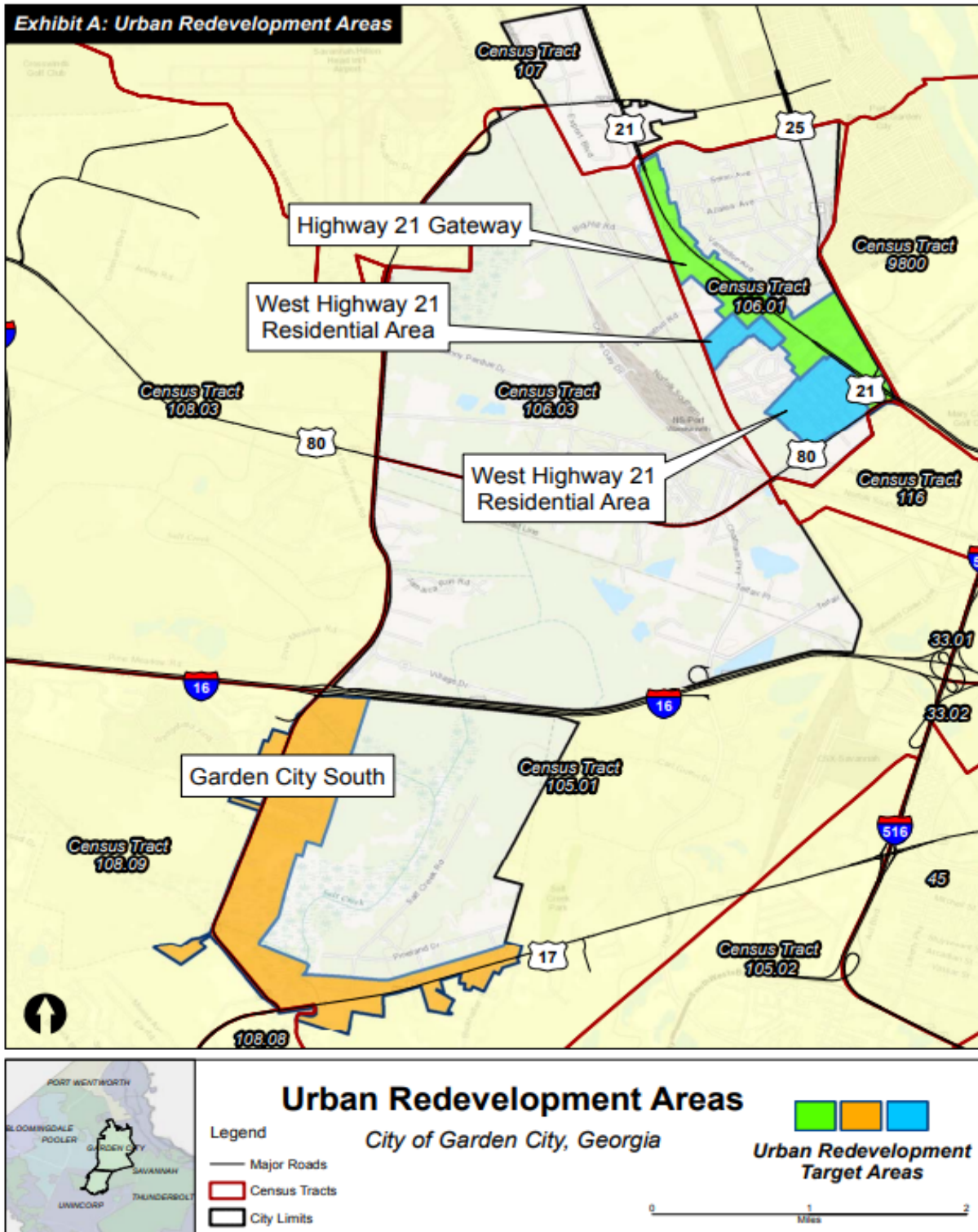


Exhibit 5.6 – Urban Redevelopment Areas

Existing Zoning

Garden City's Existing Zoning Map classifies, regulates, and restricts the uses of land, buildings, structures, and other open spaces. The city is divided into the zoning districts shown in Figure 4.1 below. Zoning districts provide the regulatory mechanism by which the Future Land Use Map is implemented and by which community character is protected.

Garden City Zoning Classifications			
Zone	Full name / description	Stated Intent/Purpose of District	Common Permitted Land Uses*
R-A	Agriculture (residential agriculture)	Protect rural areas within urban expansion areas for future urban development; prevent blight and depreciation from premature development; encourage coordinated, orderly development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-family dwellings - Customary home occupations - Incidental/accessory uses and buildings - Public uses (incl. public schools) - Cemeteries/churches/child day care as allowed
R-1	Residential	Create a district in which one-family dwellings and certain non-dwelling uses are permitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-family dwellings - Customary home occupations - Incidental/accessory uses and buildings - Public uses (incl. public schools) - Neighborhood recreation, churches, child day care as allowed
R-2	Residential	Create a district in which one-family, two-family, multifamily dwellings and certain non-dwelling uses are permitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-family dwellings - Two-family dwellings - Multifamily dwellings - Garage apartments/group developments as allowed - Public, institutional and child day care uses as allowed
R-I-N	Institutional	Create an area where residential, institutional, and professional uses can be intermixed while achieving a healthful living environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-, two-, multifamily dwellings - Rooming/boarding/tourist homes - Institutional/professional uses - Public and civic uses - Churches, child day care, employee housing as allowed

Garden City Zoning Classifications			
Zone	Full name / description	Stated Intent/Purpose of District	Common Permitted Land Uses*
C-1	Commercial	Provide and encourage proper grouping of roadside service areas that accommodate needs of the traveling public while preventing traffic congestion, traffic hazards, and blight on streets and highways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roadside commercial and service uses - Retail and personal services - Eating/drinking establishments as allowed - Public and civic uses - Neighborhood recreation, churches, child day care as allowed
C-2	Commercial	Create and protect areas where heavy commercial and certain industrial-like activities are permitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General and heavy retail - Service and repair establishments - Wholesale/showroom uses - Selected industrial-like uses - Public, civic, and child day care uses as allowed
C-2A	Commercial	Create and protect areas where heavy commercial and certain industrial-like activities are permitted, including activities related to the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heavy commercial uses - Eating/drinking establishments with alcohol - Entertainment/commercial recreation as allowed - Selected industrial-like uses - Public and civic uses
C-2AB W	Commercial	Create and protect areas where heavy commercial and certain industrial-like activities are permitted, and provide an area for the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages limited to malt beverages and wine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heavy commercial uses - Establishments serving malt beverages and wine - Restaurants and bars as allowed - Selected industrial-like uses - Public and civic uses
I-1	Industrial	Create and protect areas for industrial uses that do not create excessive noise, odors, smoke, dust, or other objectionable characteristics detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods or other permitted uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light manufacturing and processing - Warehousing and distribution - Manufactured home parks (with standards) - Service/contractor yards as allowed - Public and utility uses

Garden City Zoning Classifications			
Zone	Full name / description	Stated Intent/Purpose of District	Common Permitted Land Uses*
I-2	Industrial	Create and protect areas in which industries not permitted in the I-1 district can be permitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heavy manufacturing and processing - Intensive warehousing and freight operations - Large contractor/industrial yards - Utility and infrastructure facilities - Related support and accessory uses
P	Planned Development District	Create areas that must be developed under a general development plan approved by the planning commission, functioning as an overlay in addition to the underlying standard zoning district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential uses per approved plan - Commercial uses per approved plan - Industrial uses per approved plan - Civic and institutional uses per plan - Parks/open space per plan
M	Mixed-Use Districts	Encourage a balance and compatible mix of retail, professional, residential, civic, entertainment, and cultural uses while promoting a coherent architectural identity and a safe, attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential, multifamily, live-work - Retail and restaurants - Offices and services - Civic and institutional uses - Lodging and cultural/entertainment uses
Source: Garden City Zoning Ordinance			

Figure 5.7 – Zoning Classifications

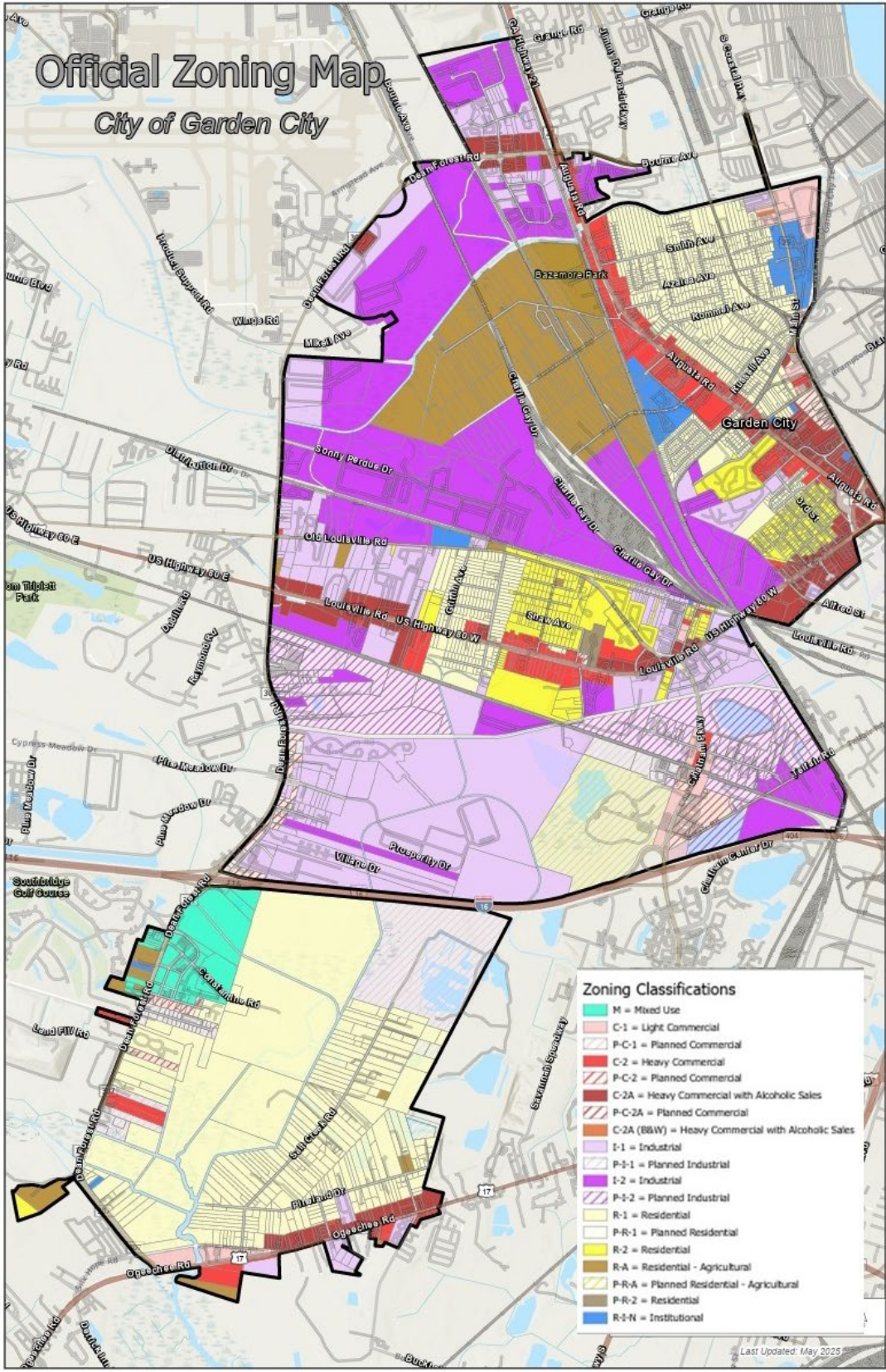


Exhibit 5.7 - Zoning Classifications

Character Areas

Character areas are places that may contain multiple specific land uses but share defining characteristics such as development intensity, transportation orientation, or environmental condition. Character areas describe the desired physical form and community character for different geographic areas, guiding future land use decisions and development review.

The Character Area Map (CAM) identifies the land use character vision for Garden City and is intended to work in coordination with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to establish a framework that guides responsible growth, reinvestment, and conservation through 2045.

The CAM does not assign specific land use classifications or zoning but provides policy guidance regarding the form, intensity, and organization of development. When considered together, the CAM and FLUM support informed decision-making related to land development proposals and long-term planning initiatives.

The following character areas are described and mapped on the Character Area Map:

- Local Commercial Corridor
- Commercial Redevelopment Corridor
- Mixed-Use Urban Anchor
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Greenspace

Character areas are defined through a consistent set of development factors that reflect existing conditions and anticipated growth trends:

- Primary and secondary uses
- Typical density ranges
- Transportation orientation and roadway classification
- Parking and utility characteristics
- Open space and environmental features
- Building orientation and pedestrian connectivity
- Transitions and buffers to adjacent character areas

Local Commercial Corridor

The Local Commercial Corridor character area is intended to provide neighborhood-scale retail, services, and small-scale office uses that meet daily needs of nearby residents. These corridors serve as transitional edges between purely residential neighborhoods and more intensive commercial or industrial zones. They are not designed for heavy auto-oriented retail or high-traffic regional uses, but instead for modest infill and reinvestment that enhances walkability, safety, and compatibility with surrounding areas.

This character area plays a vital role in Garden City's land use framework by supporting small businesses, improving access to goods and services close to where people live, and reducing pressure on residential zones. While these corridors are not as intense as major commercial arteries, they still benefit from strategic design guidance and development incentives to steer appropriate growth.

Current Zoning:

R-I-N, C-1, C-2, C-2A, C-2A(B&W), M, P

Future Zoning Classification:

Over 50% of the land in this character area remains zoned for industrial or residential uses, which are misaligned with the intended local-serving commercial purpose. The City should prioritize rezoning these areas to appropriate commercial or mixed-use classifications and explore the creation of a **form-based overlay** to guide reinvestment. Future zoning updates should prioritize compatibility, pedestrian orientation, and transitional density to adjacent neighborhoods.

Implementation Measures:

- **Rezone** key properties to neighborhood commercial or mixed-use zoning to align with the corridor's intent.
- **Apply design standards** that promote walkable development, such as buildings fronting the street, reduced setbacks, and parking to the side or rear.
- **Require context-sensitive land uses** that match local market needs and do not conflict with adjacent residential uses.
- **Introduce a Local Corridor Overlay District** that includes architectural guidance, signage controls, lighting standards, and landscape requirements to raise corridor aesthetics and functionality.
- **Improve site access and traffic flow** by developing consistent access management plans: limit curb cuts, consolidate driveways, and promote shared parking where feasible.

- **Support small business development** with incentives for façade upgrades, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and tenant buildout assistance.
- **Encourage multimodal access** through sidewalk upgrades, ADA improvements, and dedicated pedestrian crossings to reinforce the corridor as a neighborhood asset.

Commercial Redevelopment Corridor

Commercial Redevelopment Corridors are Garden City’s most visible and heavily trafficked thoroughfares, typically composed of aging strip commercial, highway-oriented retail, and light industrial uses. Many of these corridors—such as State Route 21 and U.S. Highway 17—also contain scattered residential pockets or older subdivisions along their edges.

This character area plays a key role in revitalizing underperforming commercial environments, promoting safer and more efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians, and reducing negative impacts on nearby neighborhoods. The goal is to guide strategic reinvestment that enhances aesthetics, improves multimodal access, supports market viability, and introduces compatible higher-density housing options where appropriate.

These corridors are priority areas for *form-based overlays*, *access management*, and *corridor-specific design strategies* aimed at transforming outdated, car-dominated spaces into attractive, functional commercial environments.

Current Zoning:

R-I-N, C-1, C-2, C-2A, C-2A(B&W), M, P

Future Zoning Classification:

The base zoning generally aligns with this area’s intended commercial and light industrial focus. However, zoning updates should incorporate:

- **Overlay Districts** to require enhanced design, building orientation, landscaping, and signage
- Flexibility to support **vertical or horizontal mixed-use**, and context-sensitive multifamily development along frontage
- Zoning changes or text amendments that prohibit incompatible residential-only districts in high-traffic highway contexts

Corridors such as SR 21 and Highway 17 should be prioritized for regulatory updates to encourage reinvestment aligned with the City’s “Strong Corridors” growth strategy.

Implementation Measures:

- **Establish corridor-specific overlays** to guide redevelopment form, especially at key intersections and gateway segments.
- **Allow higher-density housing and mixed-use infill** along segments with infrastructure and market readiness (e.g., near the new Groves school campus).
- **Apply context-driven design standards** including reduced setbacks, defined corners, improved site access, and pedestrian realm upgrades.
- **Promote access management practices:** shared driveways, internal parcel circulation, curb cut consolidation.
- **Introduce incentives** for redevelopment of underutilized commercial parcels: reduced parking minimums, expedited permitting, or façade improvement grants.
- **Target infill programs** toward strategic vacant or blighted parcels to reestablish street edges and reintroduce viable commercial activity.
- **Coordinate infrastructure improvements** (sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, stormwater upgrades) to support corridor revitalization.
- **Monitor land use compatibility** at corridor edges and buffer nearby neighborhoods using transitions such as live-work units or civic uses.

Mixed-Use Urban Anchor

The Mixed-Use Urban Anchor character area is intended to serve as a energetic district where residential, retail, civic, office, and recreational uses are unified into a walkable environment. Developments in this area should include **at least three distinct land uses** in close proximity, promote pedestrian access, and foster a strong sense of place.

This character area acts as Garden City’s civic and commercial core, supporting an integrated lifestyle and acting as a focal point for investment, identity, and community activity. The Highway 80 corridor and the area surrounding Main Street and City Hall are central to this vision. Development within this area should reflect a human-scale urban form with active street edges, high connectivity, and a consistent public realm experience.

Current Zoning:

M, P

Future Zoning Classification:

While several parcels contain a blend of uses, existing zoning categories are not designed to yield cohesive mixed-use form. To fully implement this vision, the City should:

- **Rezone to the M (Mixed-Use) zoning district** where appropriate, especially along Highway 80.

- **Establish a Mixed-Use Urban Overlay District** with form-based standards for building orientation, block structure, and streetscape design.
- **Tailor zoning** to allow vertical mixed-use, flexible ground-floor commercial, and diverse residential types without requiring individual variances or PUDs.

Implementation Measures:

- **Rezone strategic parcels** within the anchor area to M (Mixed-Use) or create an overlay district along Highway 80 and Main Street to codify urban design intent.
- **Encourage compact, vertical mixed-use development** with active ground floors, residential or office above, and unified design standards.
- **Require pedestrian-oriented design**, including shallow setbacks, street trees, wide sidewalks, and strong pedestrian connectivity between uses.
- **Support diverse housing options**, including townhomes, apartments, and live-work units to meet local demand and support commercial vibrancy.
- **Incentivize infill and redevelopment** through density bonuses, expedited permitting, or infrastructure support (e.g., shared parking solutions).
- **Require connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods**, schools, and public facilities through street grid extensions, trails, or mid-block crossings.
- **Plan for civic and open space integration**, such as plazas, small parks, and gathering areas that activate the public realm and support community events.
- **Develop architectural and signage guidelines** to ensure visual consistency and a strong urban identity within the node.

Industrial

Garden City’s Industrial character area leverages the city’s premier location near the Port of Savannah, major freight corridors, and interstate infrastructure. This area is central to the city’s economic base and includes a mix of heavy industrial, logistics, warehousing, and commercial support uses.

The purpose of this character area is to designate and preserve lands that are functionally and locationally appropriate for industrial use—while carefully managing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, the environment, and transportation systems. As demand for logistics and port-related facilities grows, it is critical to establish policies that support industrial expansion while ensuring safe, compatible, and sustainable development.

Current Zoning:

C-2, C-2A, C-2A(B&W), I-1, I-2, P

Future Zoning Classification:

Future zoning should prioritize protection and concentration of industrial uses in suitable areas and establish a framework for buffering and transitioning adjacent residential zones. The City should consider:

- Refining industrial zoning districts to distinguish **light industrial** from **heavy port-oriented operations**
- Creating a **Port/Logistics Hub sub-area** with tailored policies for truck movement, security, and regional freight infrastructure
- Introducing a **Transitional Overlay** to guide buffering between industrial and residential zones

Implementation Measures:

- **Preserve and strengthen core industrial zones** through zoning protections, infrastructure investment, and land banking where appropriate
- **Establish buffer and transition policies** at industrial-residential edges, including landscaped setbacks, commercial/office transitions, and conditional use limitations
- **Encourage clustering of heavy industry** (e.g., port and logistics) in designated sub-areas to reduce conflicts and improve efficiency
- **Limit encroachment of incompatible uses**, especially new residential development in active industrial corridors or port-adjacent zones
- **Align transportation planning** with freight logistics needs: prioritize road and rail access improvements, truck route planning, and intersection upgrades
- **Promote green infrastructure and mitigation strategies**, such as stormwater controls, noise reduction, and emissions buffers within industrial districts
- **Support workforce development and local hiring initiatives** through partnerships with logistics employers and training institutions
- **Coordinate with regional and state entities** (GPA, GDOT, neighboring jurisdictions) on long-range port and industrial land use forecasting,

Public/Institutional

The Public/Institutional character area includes lands used for schools, government buildings, emergency services, libraries, and other civic infrastructure. These areas form the backbone of community support, service delivery, and neighborhood identity. Properly locating and maintaining institutional uses is essential for ensuring equitable access, promoting quality of life, and managing future growth.

This character area emphasizes long-range planning for public facility siting, expansion, and coordination with private development. It also plays a strategic role in leveraging civic spaces for resilience (e.g., flood refuge, emergency response) and activating underutilized land for dual-purpose community benefits such as shared-use open space.

Current Zoning:

R-1, R-2, R-A, R-I-N, P

Future Zoning Classification:

Most of the land in this character area is appropriately zoned for institutional use. However, as Garden City continues to grow and development patterns shift, the city should:

- **Proactively reserve land for future civic and institutional needs**, particularly in underserved or redeveloping areas
- **Consider public facility overlays** to guide co-location, buffering, or form expectations when institutional uses are placed within residential or mixed-use contexts

Implementation Measures:

- **Conduct a citywide public facility capacity audit** to determine gaps in service coverage, aging infrastructure, and future needs
- **Establish service area thresholds** for key facilities (e.g., fire/EMS, schools, community centers) tied to population projections
- **Develop a Public Infrastructure and Facilities Plan** that prioritizes facility expansion in step with growth nodes and underserved communities
- **Evaluate opportunities for shared-use and multi-functional civic spaces**, such as school-park combinations or libraries co-located with community centers
- **Explore the feasibility of infrastructure impact fees or development contributions** to fund future facility expansion
- **Align public facility investment** with hazard mitigation and climate resilience goals (e.g., site emergency services outside flood zones)
- **Ensure zoning and site design standards support civic visibility, access, and pedestrian orientation**, particularly along corridors or near neighborhoods

Traditional Neighborhood

Traditional Neighborhood character areas are defined by walkable street grids, a mix of modest single-family homes, sidewalks, and a strong sense of community identity. These areas, largely developed in the early to mid-20th century, are located near the heart of Garden City and are some of the city's most intact legacy neighborhoods.

Preserving and reinvesting in these areas is essential to maintaining affordability, cultural heritage, and community cohesion. Many homes are aging and may require reinvestment, while underutilized lots offer opportunities for context-sensitive infill housing or small-scale redevelopment. The intent is to reinforce neighborhood character while enhancing livability and infrastructure over time.

Current Zoning:

R-1, R-2, R-I-N

Future Zoning Classification:

Future zoning should reinforce the scale and pattern of existing neighborhoods. The City should:

- Rezone adjoining areas currently designated as incompatible commercial or industrial back to residential or neighborhood-scale mixed-use
- Explore a Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District to protect architectural patterns, tree canopy, and walkability standards
- Align zoning with modern housing needs by supporting ADUs, duplexes, and cottage homes in appropriate locations without compromising neighborhood character

Implementation Measures:

- **Maintain and extend the historic street grid** where possible to improve connectivity and emergency access
- **Establish design guidelines** to ensure new homes, additions, and infill reflect the scale and architectural style of the neighborhood
- **Survey and protect historic structures**, including mid-century homes that reflect the city's development identity
- **Upgrade aging infrastructure**, especially sidewalks, street lighting, and stormwater facilities in older neighborhoods
- **Strengthen code enforcement and housing rehabilitation programs** to improve quality of life and reduce vacancy
- **Permit small-scale infill housing types** (ADUs, duplexes, courtyard homes) with compatibility standards and community engagement

- **Prioritize tree canopy preservation** and expand urban forestry efforts in areas with heat island vulnerability
- **Enhance walkability and traffic calming**, particularly in school zones or near parks, through sidewalk completion and crosswalk improvements
- **Target community reinvestment funds** for homeowner repair, façade upgrades, and storm resilience in vulnerable or low-income neighborhoods

Suburban Neighborhood

Suburban Neighborhood character areas are predominantly composed of single-family homes located in subdivisions or along large residential parcels. These areas generally exhibit uniform housing types and densities, curvilinear street networks, and limited connectivity to adjacent uses. Some newer developments include multi-family or attached housing types and may feature sidewalk networks, parks, or nearby schools.

While these neighborhoods often offer privacy and space, they also face challenges related to car dependence, limited internal destinations, and barriers to walking or biking. The goal for this character area is to enhance livability and long-term resilience through improved pedestrian connectivity, modest infill, and inclusion of small-scale, neighborhood-supportive uses where appropriate.

Current Zoning:

R-1, R-2, R-A, P

Future Zoning Classification:

The existing zoning broadly supports continued suburban development. However, to improve neighborhood functionality and prevent isolated enclaves, the City should:

- Rezone any parcels zoned for industrial use within this area to appropriate residential or civic designations
- Consider a Suburban Character Overlay that introduces design expectations for connectivity, sidewalk networks, and site integration
- Evaluate the potential for limited mixed-use nodes (corner stores, childcare, etc.) integrated sensitively into larger neighborhoods

Implementation Measures:

- **Promote internal street and sidewalk connections** to adjacent subdivisions, schools, and parks through development agreements or easements
- **Incorporate modest neighborhood-scale uses** (e.g., cafés, daycares, corner stores) into larger planned developments to reduce vehicle dependency

- **Ensure all new development includes sidewalks, street trees, and access to recreation or school facilities**
- **Revise subdivision regulations** to include smaller block sizes, improved pedestrian circulation, and reduced cul-de-sac reliance
- **Encourage accessory dwelling units (ADUs)** to support intergenerational housing and gentle density
- **Identify opportunities for greenway or trail links** to connect isolated neighborhoods into a broader citywide system
- **Apply traffic calming strategies** (e.g., neckdowns, raised crossings) on internal streets to improve safety
- **Preserve historic structures or landscapes** that contribute to neighborhood identity and tree canopy continuity

Greenspace

The Greenspace character area encompasses natural, open, and vegetated lands that provide ecological, recreational, scenic, and cultural value. These areas include wetlands, floodplains, forests, utility corridors, and preserved parkland, many of which also serve as buffers between neighborhoods and industrial uses or along waterways and transportation infrastructure.

Greenspace in Garden City is essential for stormwater management, urban heat reduction, and connectivity, offering both passive recreation and alternative transportation routes through planned greenways or trails. As development pressures grow, intentional preservation, restoration, and zoning protections will be key to maintaining the ecological integrity and community benefit of these areas.

Current Zoning:

R-A, P

Future Zoning Classification:

Floodplain and wetland regulations will continue to play a role in conserving greenspace; however, zoning code amendments are needed to:

- **Formalize permanent greenspace protections** within sensitive areas
- **Integrate** conservation planning into the subdivision and site development review process
- **Designate** public-access greenspace as part of the City's long-term land use map, not just as residual land

Implementation Measures:

- **Establish conservation zoning or overlay protections** for identified floodplains, wetlands, and high-value habitat corridors
- **Prioritize greenway connectivity** through utility corridors, drainage easements, and undeveloped land between neighborhoods, schools, and employment centers
- **Adopt a Green Infrastructure Plan** to guide investment in nature-based solutions for flood mitigation, tree canopy expansion, and ecological corridors
- **Incentivize conservation easements and land donations** from private landowners through density transfers, tax benefits, or reduced permitting costs
- **Integrate greenspace planning into all development reviews**, ensuring open space preservation is a first-order principle rather than an afterthought
- **Create a citywide Greenspace and Recreation Map** that identifies key ecological features, historic landscapes, and trail gaps
- **Promote low-impact public access**, such as passive trails and interpretive signage to educate and engage the community
- **Coordinate with regional conservation and water management partners** to secure funding, technical assistance, and land stewardship support

Future Land Use

Purpose and Framework

The Garden City Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update sets out a vision for the community and its future land use decisions. The Land Use Element includes a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to present information, strategies, and recommendations guiding future land use policies and decisions through specific land use categories. The FLUM and the CAM envision future land uses with attention to the interconnected elements of community character, development patterns, transportation infrastructure, equity, and environmental hazard risk.

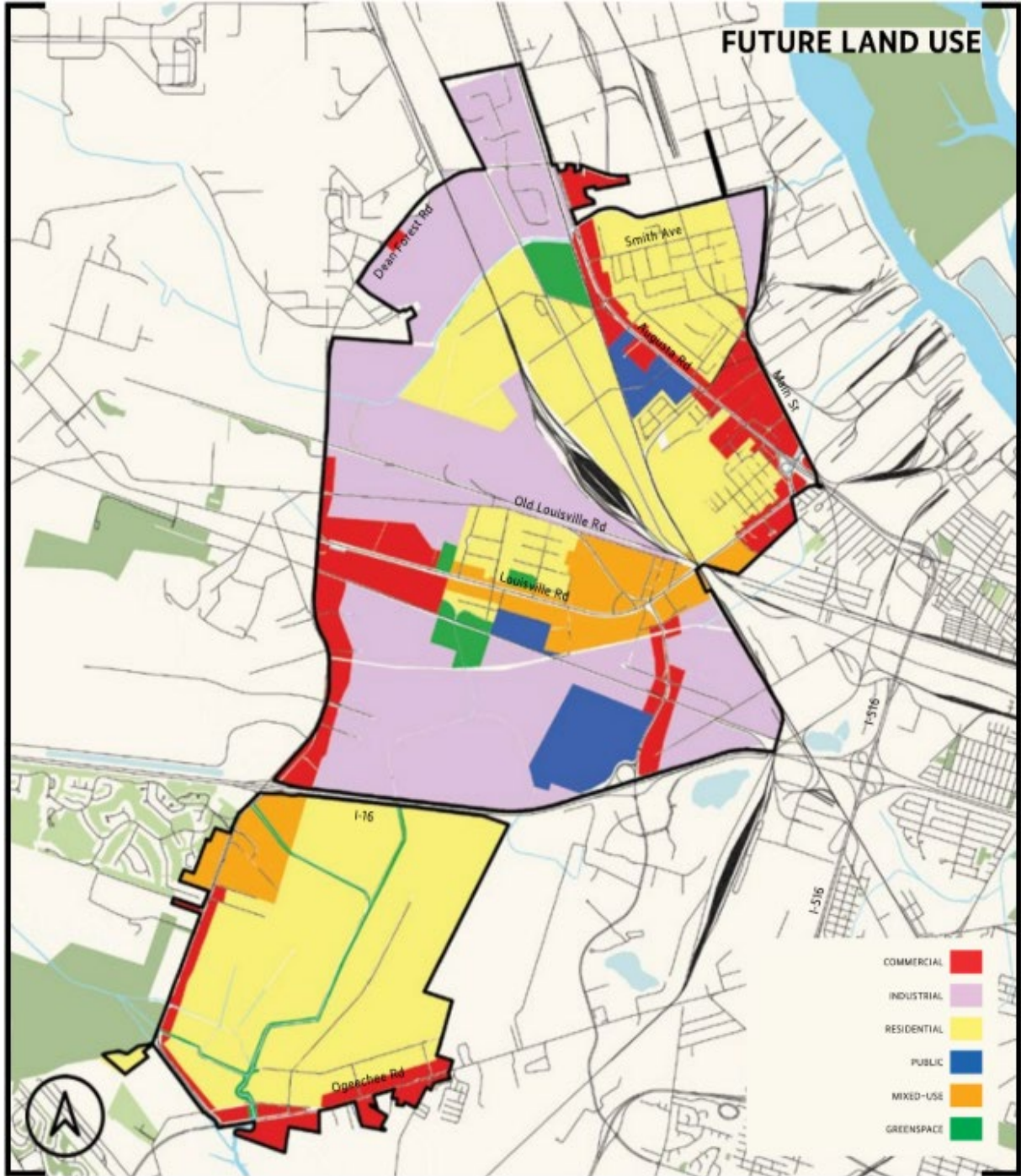
Garden City's future land use patterns are shown on Exhibit 5.8, containing land use and overlay categories which visually represent the land uses that serve to guide future zoning and development policy decisions. Land use categories are defined in detail below. Interpretation of the FLUM should be considered along with all zoning requests, local policy reviews, recommendations, and decisions when policymakers consider land development questions or requests.

Land Use Categories

The FLUM employs the following primary land use categories:

Future Land Use Map Designations			
Map Color	Land Use	Definition	Uses
Red	Commercial	Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service, and entertainment facilities—organized into general categories of intensity. Commercial uses may be single use in one building or grouped in shopping centers or office buildings.	Commercial Retail, Commercial Office
Purple	Industrial	Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing, wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or similar uses.	Light Industry, Heavy Industry, Logistics, Warehousing
Yellow	Residential	Predominant use for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.	Single-Family, Multi-Family, Mixed-Density
Blue	Public/ Institutional	State, federal, or local government uses including government buildings, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations. Includes institutional uses such as colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals.	Public/Institutional
Orange	Mixed-Use	Fine-grained mixed land use in which land uses are integrated and more evenly balanced. Categories must clearly define permissible uses, percentage distribution, and allowable density.	Mixed-use development including residential, commercial, office, entertainment, civic uses
Green	Greenspace	Land dedicated to farming, agriculture, commercial timber/pulpwood harvesting, or active/passive recreational uses. May be publicly or privately owned.	Parks, open space, nature preserves, golf courses, greenways, conservation areas

Figure 5.8 – Future Land Use Designations



Map 4.9 – Garden City: Future Land Use Map

Summary

The Land Use Element guides both short-term decisions (zoning amendments, site plan reviews, capital improvements) and long-term strategic initiatives (comprehensive zoning updates, infrastructure projects, redevelopment partnerships). Implementation occurs through:

- **Zoning and Development Code Decisions:** Day-to-day review of rezoning requests, variances, and site plans with reference to the FLUM and CAM
- **Capital Improvements Programming:** Alignment of public infrastructure investments with identified growth areas and priority nodes
- **Partnership and Incentive Programs:** Use of Urban Redevelopment Plan authority, Tax Allocation Districts, and workforce partnerships to facilitate strategic redevelopment
- **Periodic Plan Update and Monitoring:** Regular review of land use trends, development activity, and changing market conditions to inform plan refinements

The City recognizes that successful implementation requires sustained commitment, adequate resources, and ongoing coordination among city staff, elected officials, planning commissions, and community partners. The Short-Term Work Program (a separate document updated annually) identifies specific actions, timelines, and responsible parties for implementing plan strategies.

Garden City possesses several competitive advantages that position it well for continued investment and job creation:

- Tier 1 community status for state job tax credits under Georgia's Military Zone designation, allowing eligible businesses to receive up to \$3,500 per job created.
- Broadband Ready community recognition is possible, signaling that the city's regulatory framework is favorably postured toward modern, technology-enabled operations.
- Strategic adjacency to the Garden City Terminal and convergence with Interstate 95, Interstate 16, and major rail corridors operated by CSX and Norfolk Southern, enabling efficient movement of goods across domestic and international markets.
- Georgia's repeated ranking as the #1 state for infrastructure based on port capacity, highway quality, and freight logistics