



# Gwinnett's Unified Plan in a Nutshell

It is easy to take Gwinnett's good fortune for granted. Decades of growth, excellent schools, good services, new roads, community parks, and convenient shopping suggest that these good times will last forever. The Unified Plan is a chance to pause, look around carefully and then look ahead thoughtfully. How is the world around us changing? How are we changing? What do these changes mean for planning and preparing for the future?

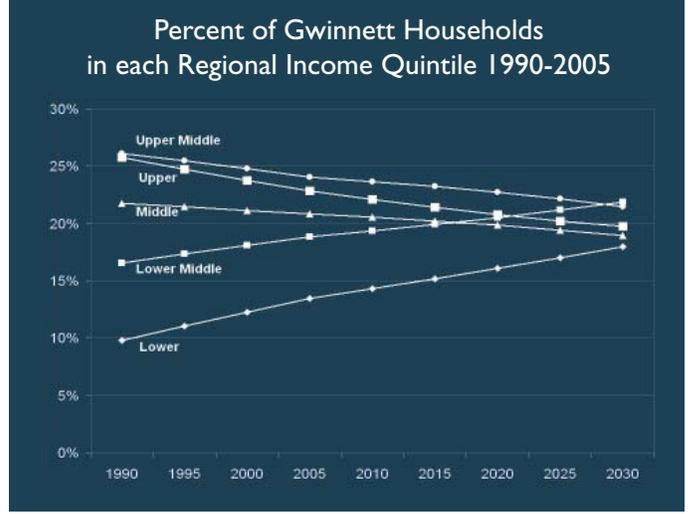
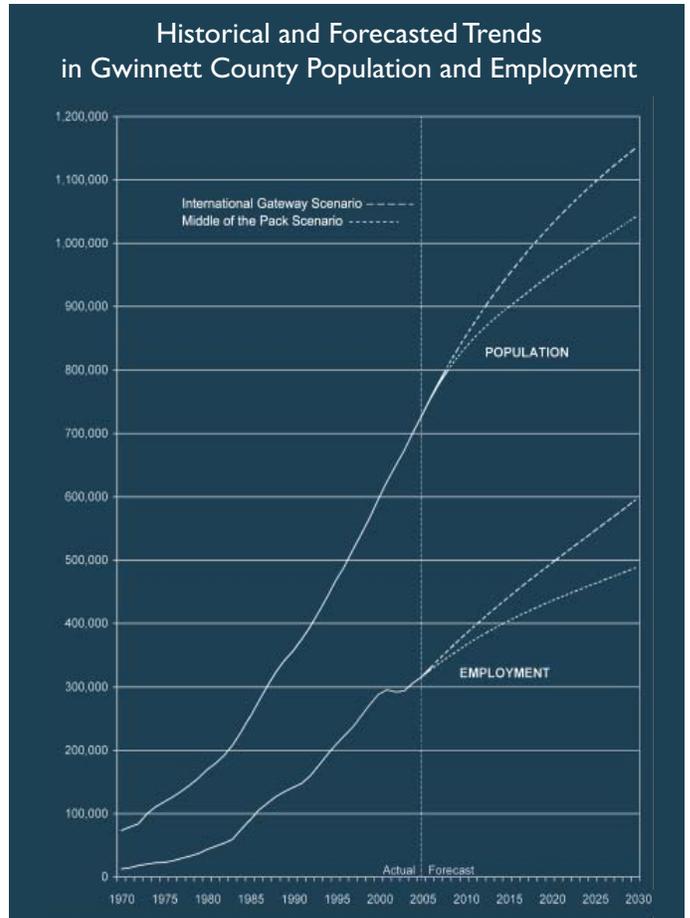
## Trends

Gwinnett's growth in population is expected to slow somewhat over the next 25 years as its supply of land is developed. Job growth is expected to remain strong, but will increase more slowly as some sectors of the economy mature, relocate for better access (e.g., light industry, warehousing/distribution), correspond to slowing residential growth (e.g., construction, retailing). Gwinnett's population and employment figures expected to remain high, but the rate of growth will slow. The County's growing ethnic and racial makeup is projected to result in a mix with no majority group by 2013. Regional shifts in population over the past decades have resulted in a steady leveling of incomes within Gwinnett toward the regional average. Part I of the Plan describes current conditions and the issues they raise.

## Future Scenarios

Taken together, the trends characterize a future scenario the Plan calls "Middle of the Pack" in which Gwinnett's phenomenal economic performance is not sustained, but remains respectable. The County's fiscal resources in this scenario are stretched thin and tough choices on the provision of services loom large if budget deficits are to be avoided.

The trends are powerful. They are not, however, inevitable. But to bend them to its advantage, Gwinnett will have to get involved and participate in ways it has not needed to before. An alternative future that maintains Gwinnett's dynamic momentum is also envisioned in the Plan. It is called the "International Gateway" scenario. The title recognizes the County's unique potential to capitalize on its diverse population near the international hub that Atlanta has become.



## Plan Themes

Much of the work on the Plan involved playing out these contrasting scenarios and comparing their performance. While the International Gateway scenario is the preferred outcome, the Plan also provides guidance on the realities of a Middle of the Pack outcome. A summary of the fiscal performance of the two scenarios is shown in the table below. It underlines the need for proactive intervention by the County.

Population and Job Growth by Scenario			
	2005	2030 Middle of the Pack	2030 International Gateway
Population	727,000	1.04 million	1.15 million
Jobs	316,000	483,000	595,000

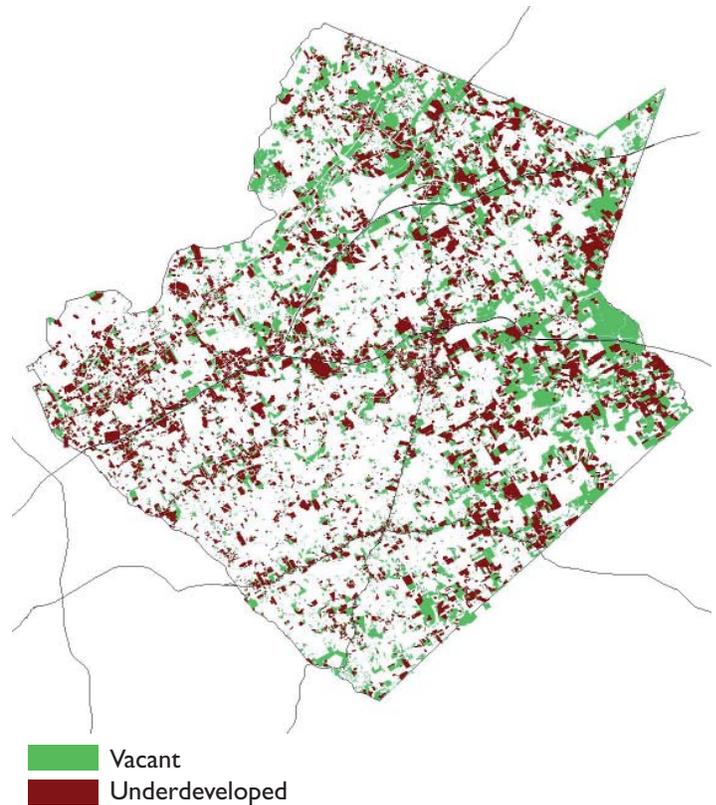
Revenue and Expenditures by Scenario			
	2005	2030 Middle of the Pack	2030 International Gateway
Revenue	\$675 million	\$1,025 million	\$1,090 million
Expenditures	\$675 million	\$1,028 million to \$1,109 million	\$1,028 million to \$1,045 million

Intervention, however, must go beyond economic development and needs to confront the new and complicated challenges of guiding redevelopment efforts. This is especially important within the County's southwest quadrant, where Community Improvements Districts (CIDs) have already begun to organize for this challenge. Another 20 percent of Gwinnett's land area can be considered redevelopment candidates over the coming decades. One economic development and redevelopment challenge facing Gwinnett is that many of its vacant and potential redevelopment parcels are small and not contiguous. The limited availability of prime parcels is one reason behind the Plan's policy to protect large, well-located parcels for the development or redevelopment of regional office space, an emerging market for Gwinnett.

Confronting the mobility and accessibility challenges of increased growth under both future scenarios will require new funding sources and approaches for transportation; to simply build its way out of congestion will be cost-prohibitive for Gwinnett County. The scenarios tested also show the consequences of Gwinnett County continuing to approve development without making corresponding improvements in transportation capacity.

Rush hour traffic is heavily influenced by where people work and live. Providing more opportunities for people to live near where they work across the income spectrum,

## Vacant and Underdeveloped Land

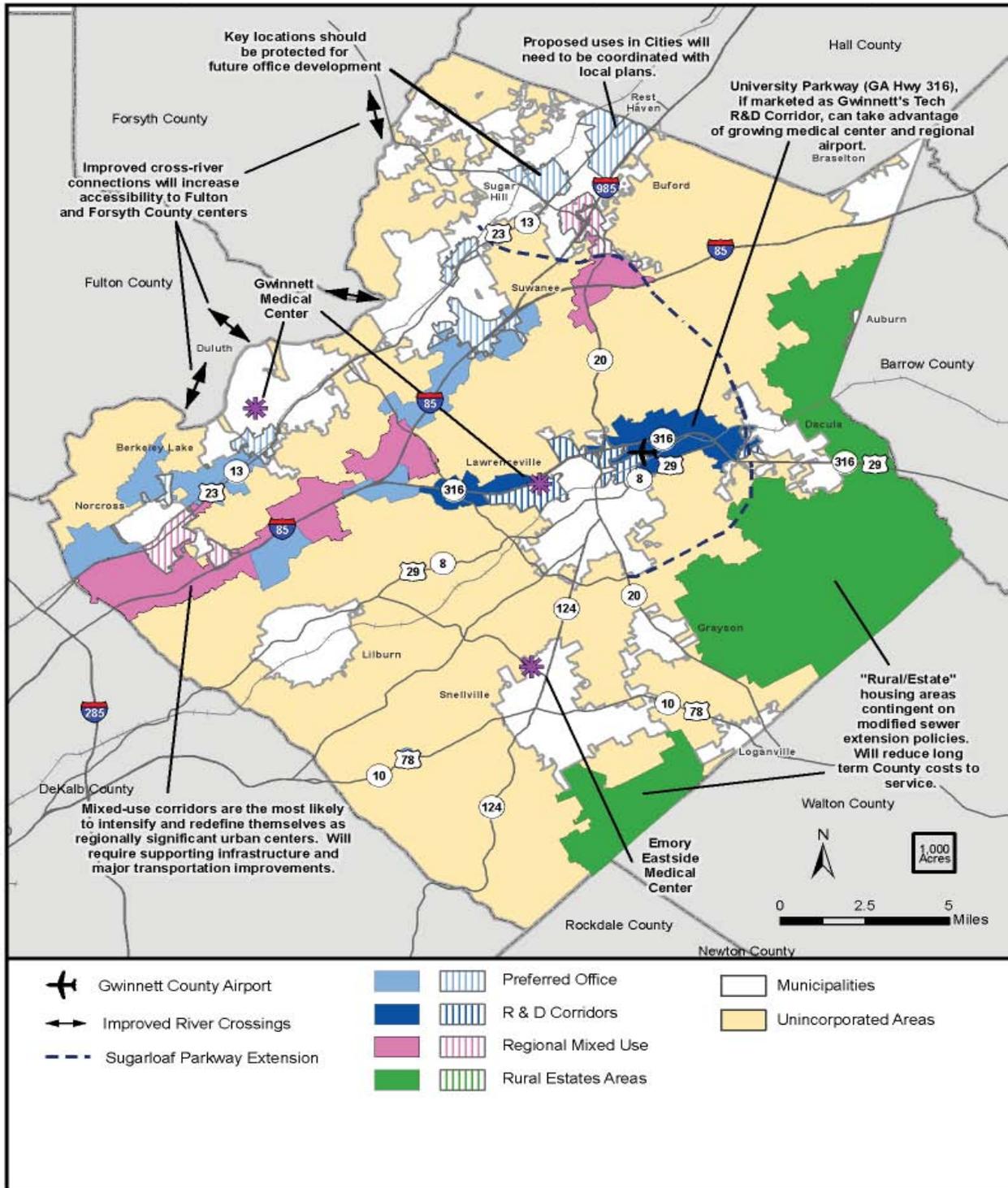


is therefore an appropriate focus of this Plan as well. As they are across the country, households in Gwinnett are shrinking and becoming less family-based. This means the County needs to take a fresh look at its emerging housing market.

The powerful demographic and employment shifts occurring in the region and the country require reframing Gwinnett's image. The County will have to go beyond the "bread and butter" of suburban living if it is to remain the preferred place for the emergent, footloose, information workers who crave more than the suburban lifestyle. Amenities – cultural choices, nightlife, pocket parks, transit options, and urban housing types – exist little outside of some of the County's cities. Government can help seed this evolution towards a more urban environment focused on the I-85 Corridor. Again, it is a new role for Gwinnett.

These important issues – maintaining economic development and fiscal health, fostering redevelopment, maintaining mobility and accessibility, providing more housing choice and keeping Gwinnett a preferred place – are the organizing themes of the Unified Plan. The next five pages treat each theme separately. The following theme maps highlight the key products of Part 2 of the Plan.

## Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health

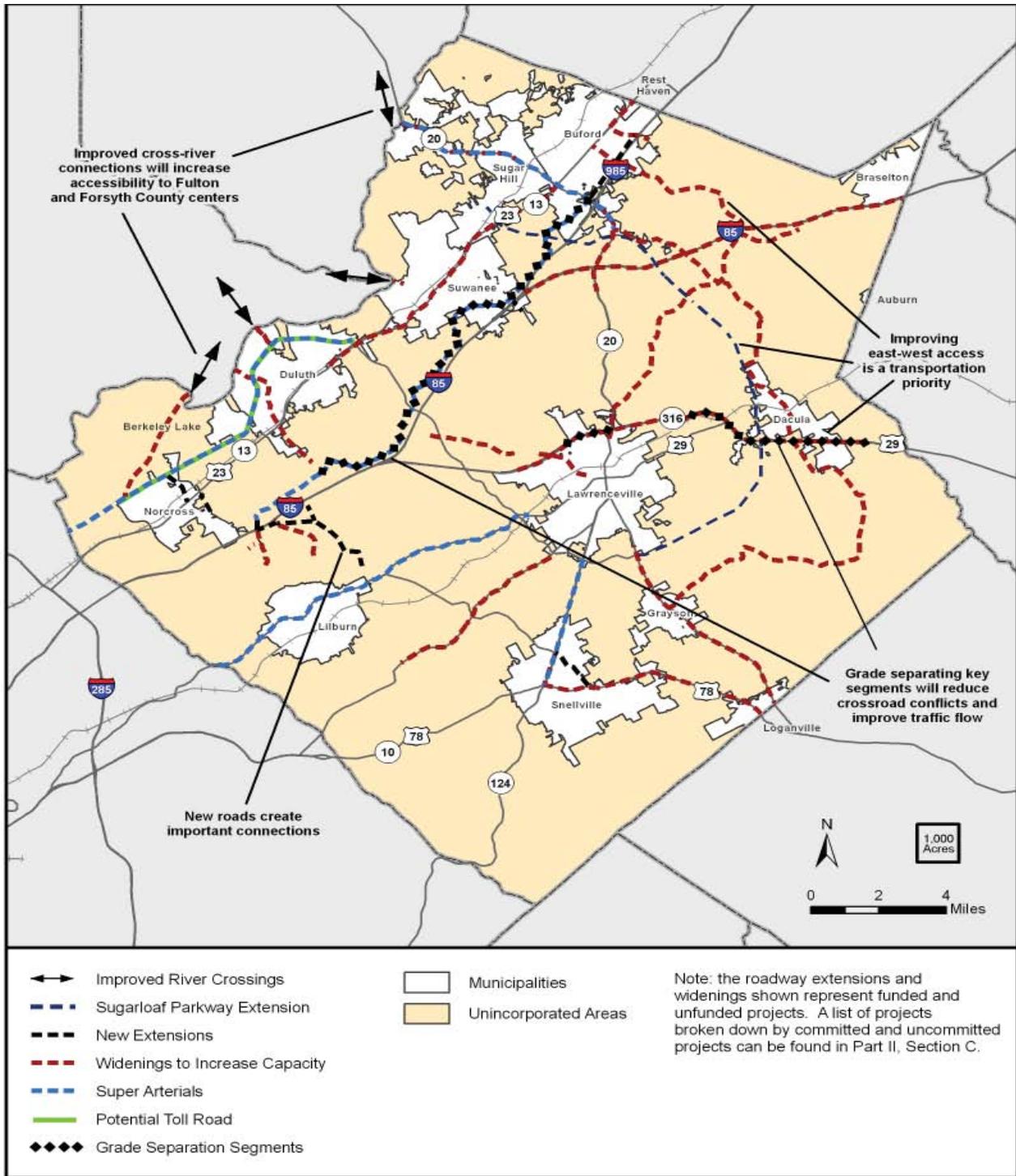


The major economic development and fiscal health policies are:

- Promote Major Mixed-Use Developments
- Protect Large, Well-Located Parcels/Areas for Office Use through Proactive Rezoning
- Strategic Placement of Sewer
- Use Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for Rural Estate Housing in the East
- Revise Current Millage Rates
- Promote University Parkway (GA Hwy 316) Corridor as Gwinnett's Research and Development Belt
- Employ Debt Financing of Major Infrastructure
- Obtain Appropriate Balance of Retail



## Maintain Mobility and Accessibility

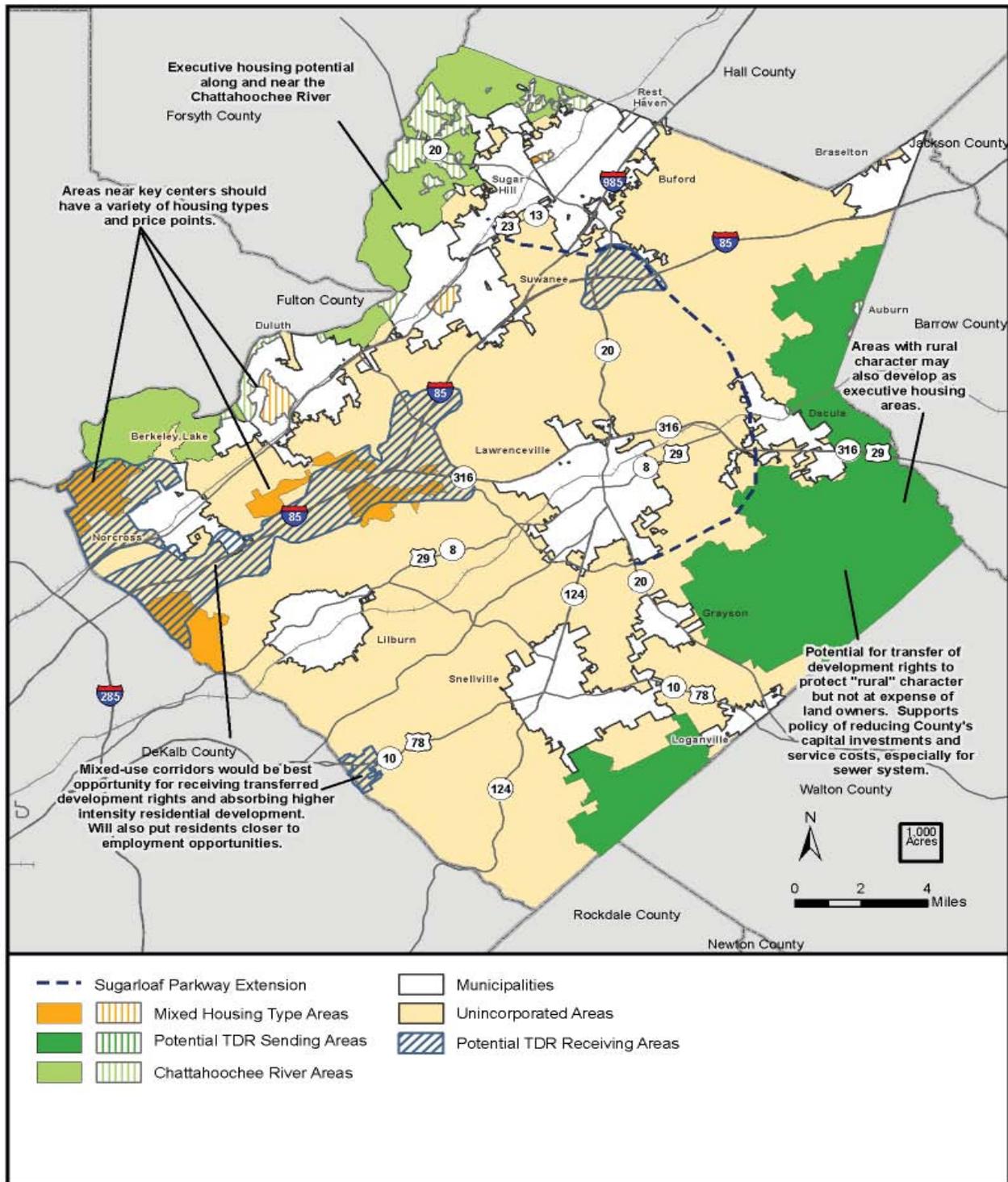


The major mobility and accessibility policies are:

- Enhance Signal Coordination and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Manage Access on Arterials
- Enhance Incident Management (Traffic Control Center)
- Establish a Road Connectivity Requirement for New Development
- Create Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) at Appropriate Sites through Proactive Zoning
- Establish a More Extensive Transit System
- Pursue Strategic Road Widening and New Alignments

*Transit is not shown on this map.*

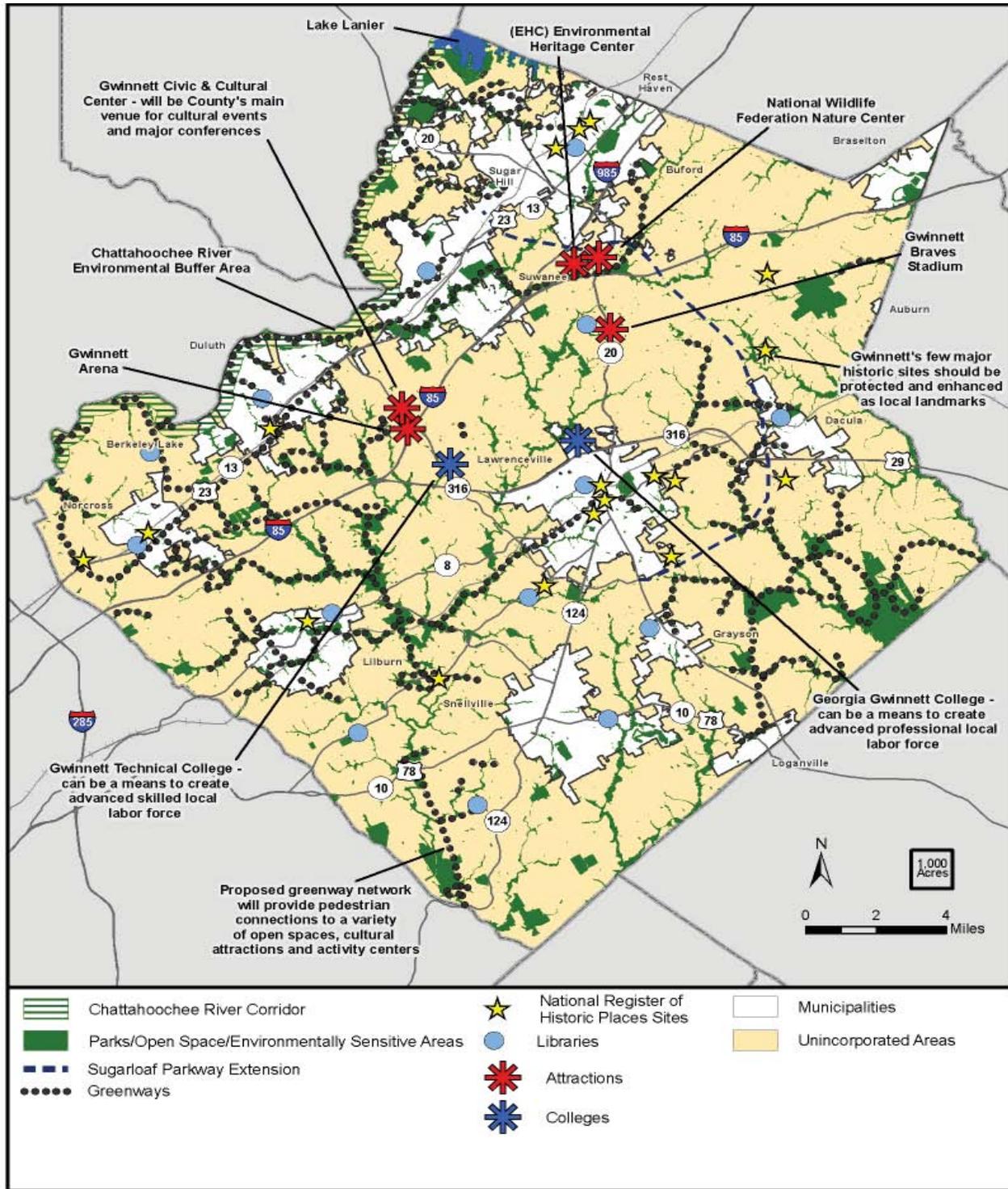
# Provide More Housing Choices



The major housing policies are:

- Establish and Provide Access to More Executive Housing Areas
- Preserve Existing Workforce Housing
- Expand Maintenance and Rehabilitation Assistance to Homeowners and Small Businesses

# Keep Gwinnett a Preferred Place

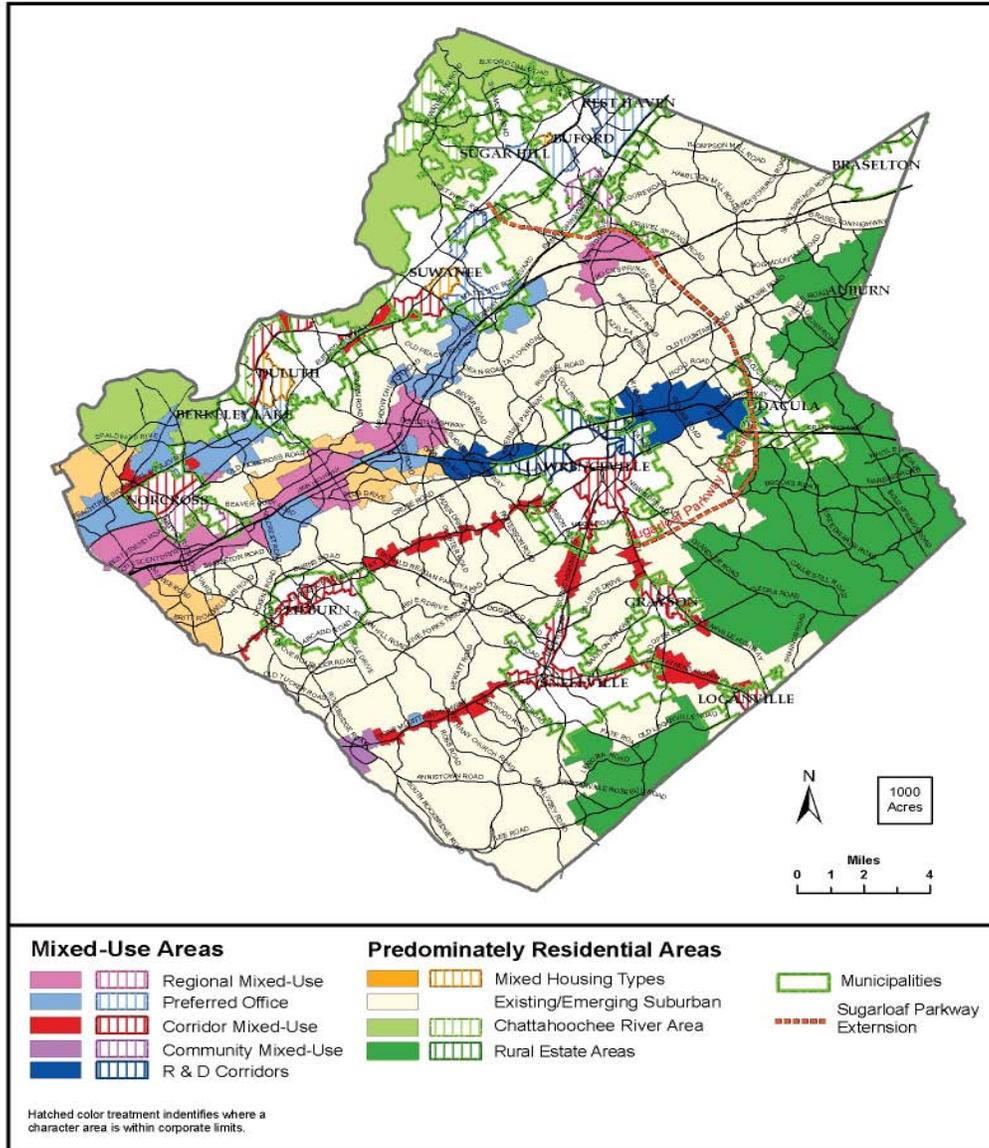


The major preferred place policies are:

- Improve the Walkability of Gwinnett's Activity Centers and Neighborhoods
- Support and Promote the Expanded Four Year College
- Invest in After School Programs
- Enhance Development Aesthetics
- Provide Venues to Celebrate Growing Cultural Diversity of County
- Expand Presence of "Arts Community"
- Provide Incentives for Enhanced Open Space/Trails
- Use Development Regulations to Create Local Parks
- Acquire Surplus Industrial or Commercial Sites for Open Space/Recreation

## Future Land Development Map

The Future Land Development map reflects the outcomes of the International Gateway scenario. It shows where extensive rezonings and development will be required to carry out the intentions of the Plan and where suburban character will be maintained.



## Implementing the Plan

Part 3 of the Plan focuses on its implementation. A section detailing the policies comprises the bulk of this part of the Plan. Each Policy is numbered and the policies are extensively detailed, noting implementation steps, entities responsible for them, assumed benefits, challenges, and costs and monitoring benchmarks. A section on policy prioritization presents those policies selected for inclusion in the Short Term Work Plan (2009 – 2014). The Plan divides the County in eight Character Areas. Land Uses to be encouraged and discouraged in each Character Area are described in a section on using the Plan and its maps. A section on recommended changes to the Zoning Resolution and development regulations addresses several

items central to the Plan's implementation: the different scale and purposes of Mixed-Use Districts; the protection of future Office Employment Sites; Rural Estate Land Uses and the Transfer of Development Rights option to achieve this goal; increasing access management on arterial roads to preserve their capacity; a needed Major Thoroughfare Plan that will classify existing and future roads and sets up access management; and finally, guidance on future roadway spacing. Ways to measure whether and how the Plan's targets are met are suggested, and periodic progress reports and the plan amendment process are discussed in a final section on monitoring and updating the Plan.