

Character Area Descriptions

All of the land within the Cities of Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals and Watkinsville, and within the unincorporated area of Oconee County, is located within one or another of the Character Areas described in this section. Some of the Character Areas are located in only one or several jurisdictions, as noted under each.

Within each Character Area are listed the primary land uses that predominantly characterize the area, whether now existing or encouraged over the next twenty years. Also are listed secondary land uses that are compatible and could be considered for zoning at appropriate locations within the Character Area, as well as the level of infrastructure—public water, sewer and roads—expected to support the area. As a general rule, uses such as churches, public schools and governmental facilities are allowed as secondary uses in all Character Areas.

Finally, policies to maintain or encourage the character of each area are listed as strategies and development guidelines for consideration during the rezoning process. Importantly, every proposed change in use must stand on its own to be rezoned; every jurisdiction has standards for their zoning decision-making process that are site specific and consider the impacts of the specific rezoning. A determination of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is one of the standards but is not sufficient for a zoning approval.

The standards adopted by Oconee County in the Unified Development Code provide an example of the items that are considered in the rezoning process; each city has similar standards, all adopted pursuant to State law requirements. The County standards are:

In consideration of a rezoning, the Board of Commissioners shall consider factors relevant in balancing the interest in promoting the public health, safety, or general welfare against the right of the individual to the unrestricted use of property and shall specifically consider the following objective criteria. Emphasis may be placed on those criteria most applicable to the specific use proposed:

1. Existing uses and zoning of nearby property.
2. The extent to which property values are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions of the current zoning.
3. The extent to which the destruction of property values of the individual property owner promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public with consideration to:
 - a. Population density and effect on community facilities such as streets, schools, water and sewer;
 - b. Environmental impact;
 - c. Effect on adjoining property values.
4. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner.
5. The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned, considered in the context of land development in the area in the vicinity of the property.
6. Consistency of the proposed use with the stated purpose of the zoning district that is being requested

7. Conformity with or divergence from established land use patterns.
8. Conformity with or divergence from the Future Land Use Map or the goals and objectives of the Oconee County Comprehensive Plan.
9. The availability of adequate sites for the proposed use in districts that permit such use.
10. The suitability of the site for the proposed use relative to the requirements set forth in this Development Code such as off-street parking, setbacks, buffer zones, and open space.

Thus, although many primary and secondary land uses may be listed for a particular Character Area, the determination of the actual location where a specific land use would be “appropriate” is guided by the jurisdiction’s adopted standards and “approved” through the rezoning process.

■ Agricultural Preservation

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area is composed chiefly of open land and active agricultural production of food crops, fiber crops, animal feed, poultry, livestock and commercial timber production. Individual farms tend to be large and homes sparsely distributed on large, existing tracts. Uses in the area may result in odors, dust, noise or other effects that may not be compatible with residential development.

Much of Oconee County’s identity is tied to its rural and small town heritage. This Character Area includes lands in row crops, hay fields or in pasture, woodlands and areas under forestry management, commercial wholesale nurseries and sparsely settled homes on individual tracts, in addition to areas of sensitive natural resources.

Agricultural Preservation Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active agricultural crop and animal production, horse farms, timbering ▪ Homesteads on large individual lots ▪ Manufactured homes on large individual lots ▪ Large-lot (5 acres and larger) subdivisions and low-density conservation subdivisions along State highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Crossroads at major intersections ▪ Compatible “cottage” industries ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses, such as churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water typically not available or planned ▪ Public sewer is not available or planned ▪ Rural roadways

Development Strategies

- Preserve the Character Area for active agricultural activities.¹

¹ Creation of a cohesive and integrated process for agricultural preservation is a cornerstone recommendation of this Plan—see the Guiding Principles and Policies section of this Community Agenda for details.

- Allow subdivision development only along State highways where the level of service is good, and limited to a density of 5 acres or more per dwelling unit; encourage such development to be conservation subdivisions.
- Foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies and opportunities to both live and work in a rural setting.
- Allow home-based or farm-based “cottage” industries as home business accessory uses in support of or related to agricultural activities in the area.
- Allow small “country crossroads” commercial uses at major intersections (see the Country Crossroads Character Area, below).



Development Guidelines

This Character Area is intended primarily to remain in open or forested land, developed only for agricultural purposes along with farm houses, barns, silos and other related structures. The majority of the Character Area is zoned A-1, which does not allow “subdivisions” in the traditional sense (those involving new streets and public utilities), but allows “lot splits” fronting along existing paved roads as follows: the creation of a single 1-acre lot, or the creation of up to five 5-acre lots, or the creation of any number of 25-acre tracts.² Subdivisions involving new streets within this Character Area, allowed only along State highways, are limited to densities of five acres or more per dwelling unit (DU). The zoning and density designation in the unincorporated area is determined by the following criteria:

Subdivisions in the Agricultural Preservation Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County		
	1 DU per 1, 5 or 25 Acres (See text)	1 DU per 5 Acres
County Zoning District	A-1 (Agricultural)	AR-5 (Agricultural Residential Five Acre)
Subdivision Type	Subdivisions Not Allowed—Restricted to specific lot splits only	Conventional or Conservation
Water Availability	No	No
Sewer Availability	No	No
Minimum Roadway Type	Paved public road	State Highway only

Note that, in all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

² Once a property has been divided as a lot split, no further divisions are allowed except as a “major subdivision,” which would require rezoning.

■ Rural Places

Location: Bishop, North High Shoals, Unincorporated Oconee County.

The spread of urban uses into open space found in rural areas has made much of that open space potentially developable for housing and ancillary uses. Even if not all the space is needed for housing, the possibility of selling it for development has increased the perceived market value of the land above its value in traditional and customary rural land uses. When this happens, holders of such land are discouraged from making permanent fixed investments in the land that might increase productivity in traditional agricultural uses but add no market value for potential future suburban uses. The inevitable result of this process is to crowd out many traditional rural land uses. In addition, scattered suburban development tends to raise the cost of providing local public services. The Rural Places Character Area is characterized by a balance between the natural environment and human uses with very low-density residential, farms, forests, outdoor recreation and other open space activities. Commercial uses should be small in scale that will provide convenience services to the rural neighborhood. Home-based and farm-based businesses are allowed in the rural area provided they are compatible with existing nearby residential uses.



The intent of this Character Area is to provide a residential-agricultural community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape with much of its identity based on its agrarian past while accommodating limited residential growth. Large-scale suburban development is not compatible within this Character Area due to conflicts with active animal agriculture, and dust and chemical drift from agricultural operations.

Rural Places Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active agricultural crop and animal production, horse farms, timbering ▪ Mini-farm estates on lots of more than 5 acres ▪ Homesteads on individual lots ▪ Large-lot residential subdivisions in appropriate locations ▪ Low-density conservation subdivisions in appropriate locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Crossroads at major intersections ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water may not be available ▪ Public sewer is not available or planned ▪ Rural roadways

Development Strategies

- Provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities.
- Avoid the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, residential developments.

- Accommodate the development of mini-farm estates that blend into the overall fabric of the area, on tracts 5 acres and greater in size.
- The uses and building scale of new development should maintain the character of the rural environment and surrounding area.
- All residential development will be limited to single-family homesteads on individual (non-subdivision) lots except for large-lot subdivisions and low-density conservation subdivisions in appropriate locations.
- Allow small “country crossroads” commercial uses at major intersections (see the Country Crossroads Character Area, below).

Development Guidelines

Subdivision densities within this Character Area, when allowed, range from a minimum of 2 acres (in Bishop) per dwelling unit, to five acres or more (in North High Shoals and the unincorporated area). Appropriate zoning districts are:

- In Bishop, A-1 (Agricultural) and AR-2 (Agricultural Residential Two Acre).
- In North High Shoals, A-1 (Agricultural).
- In the unincorporated area, the appropriate zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

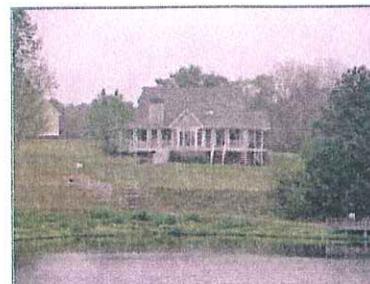
Subdivisions in the Rural Places Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County			
	1 DU per 5 Acres	1 DU per 4 Acres	1 DU per 3 Acres
County Zoning District	AR-5 (Agricultural Residential Five Acre)	AR-4 (Agricultural Residential Four Acre)	AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre)
Subdivision Type	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional or Conservation
Water Availability	No	No	No
Sewer Availability	No	No	No
Minimum Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property. Important factors in considering a rezoning include the condition and level of service provided by road access to the property (higher level of service may support higher density), the location of the property relative to other Character Areas (Country Estates or Agricultural Preservation), and the existing uses and zoning of other properties in the area.

■ Country Estates

Location: Bishop, North High Shoals, Unincorporated Oconee County.

Areas within this Character Area are lands that are undeveloped but rarely or no longer in agricultural production, or have been developed as “estate farms” or large-lot subdivisions. The intent of the Country Estates Character Area is to provide a low-intensity residential community reminiscent of a rural environment. This Character Area provides a transition between the more rural areas of the county and traditional suburban residential development, and provides an “edge” between the urban and rural fringe.



Country Estates Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horse farms and residentially compatible agricultural activities ▪ Homesteads on individual lots ▪ Mini-farm estates on lots of more than 3 acres ▪ Large-lot conventional subdivisions ▪ Low-density conservation subdivisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water may be available or planned ▪ Sewer is typically not available ▪ Rural roadways

Development Strategies

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area with a residential density of 1 to 2 acres per dwelling unit.
- Accommodate limited farming activities in the area; including horse farms, and appropriate accessory uses such as barns, corrals, grazing areas, stables and similar structures, and equestrian-related commercial usage such as equestrian centers, boarding stables, riding academies and tack shops.
- Encourage upscale executive housing to meet the market demand.
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of estates and “gentlemen’s farms” that blend into the overall fabric of the area.
- Residential developments should use design elements or features such as meadows, woodlots, existing vegetation, mature landscaping and historic farm sites in order to main rural characteristics.



Development Guidelines

Subdivision densities within this Character Area, when allowed, range from a minimum of one to two acres per dwelling unit. Appropriate zoning districts are:

- In Bishop, AR-1 (Agricultural Residential One Acre) and AR-2 (Agricultural Residential Two Acre).
- In North High Shoals, A-2 (Agricultural Residential), R-1 (Single-Family Residential), and PUD (Planned Unit Development).
- In the unincorporated area, the appropriate zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Subdivisions in the Country Estates Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County			
	1 DU per 2 Acres	1 DU per 1 Acre +	1 DU per ± 1 Acre
County Zoning District	AR-2 (Agricultural Residential Two Acre)	AR-1 (Agricultural Residential One Acre)	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
Subdivision Type	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional only
Water Availability	No	Varies	Yes
Sewer Availability	No	No	No
Minimum Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Suburban Living

Location: Bishop, Bogart, Watkinsville (edges), Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area includes established suburban neighborhoods in conventional subdivisions and master planned developments. This Character Area consists principally of single-family detached houses with some higher density housing included in a planned development or near an established nonresidential area. Houses tend to be on ¾-acre to 1-acre or larger lots on public water or sewer. This area is characterized by low pedestrian orientation, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominately residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. Water and sewer are either existing or planned within this Character Area. Vacant tracts are often scattered throughout the area between existing neighborhoods. The intent of this Character Area is to provide for future development projects that are suitable with existing residential development in



size, scale and overall density. New development requests should be reviewed in terms of impact on the surrounding area; conventional neighborhood developments and properly located planned developments are both encouraged.

Suburban Living Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single-family residential subdivisions ▪ Conservation Subdivisions ▪ Master Planned Developments (MPDs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available or planned ▪ Public sewer is available or planned in some areas ▪ Well developed network of local, collector and arterial roads ▪ Parks and recreation facilities serve the area; schools are nearby

Development Strategies

- Protect existing neighborhoods from negative impacts.
- Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock.
- Promote new residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space, while assuring suitability with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Encourage appropriate reuse, redevelopment or refurbishment of areas where activity and attractiveness have declined.
- Promote innovative and mixed-use development in appropriate locations, such as MPDs in the unincorporated area.
- Promote walkability within each community through path systems or sidewalks, particularly connecting to such focal points as schools, parks, community centers or commercial activity centers within walking distance of residences.
- Limit higher intensity attached residential development to areas where existing critical infrastructure (i.e. roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) is available, as a transition between established nonresidential centers and single-family neighborhoods.
- Encourage natural resource protection by allowing conservation subdivisions in the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district in the unincorporated area.

Development Guidelines

Residential subdivision densities within this Character Area range from a minimum of ¼ to over one acre per dwelling unit (DU), depending on the availability of public water or sewer. Appropriate zoning categories applicable to this Character Area are:

- In Bishop, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), AR-1 (Agricultural Residential One Acre), and R-2 (Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.
- In Bogart, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), and R-2 (Medium Density Single-Family and Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.

- Within Watkinsville, Suburban Living areas should be zoned DR (Detached Residential).
- In the unincorporated area, the appropriate zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Residential Development in the Suburban Living Character Area			
County Zoning District	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)	R-2 (Two-Family Residential)	R-3 (Multi-Family Residential)
Minimum Lot Size (Conventional Development) on public water or sewer	30,000 sf per Single-Family Detached Dwelling Unit	15,000 sf per Dwelling Unit (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)	8,000 sf per Multi-Family Dwelling Unit
Common Development Type	Conventional or Conservation Subdivision, or MPD	Conventional Subdivision or MPD	Multi-Family Development or MPD
Water Availability	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Sewer Availability	No	Yes*	Yes
Minimum Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial

*Larger lot sizes are required if public water or sewer are not available.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

Traditional Neighborhoods

Location: Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, Watkinsville, Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area is intended primarily for a variety of detached single-family housing units. This area is also appropriate for supportive land uses servicing the neighborhood population including, but not limited to, parks, playgrounds, fire stations and child-care centers as part of the effort to create complete planned neighborhoods.



Insignificant area

Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single-family detached residences ▪ Single-family attached and accessory housing units in appropriate locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child care center ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ City streets ▪ Parks and recreation facilities serve the area

- Developments should be built to the scale and character of the community with standards regarding the size and design of all structures.
- Adequate buffers should be provided screening the development from incompatible adjacent land uses where appropriate.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning in the City Living Character Area in Watkinsville is AR (Attached Residential). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Country Crossroads *(Fits in Ag. Pres. or Rural Places)*

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

Country Crossroads are very small commercial areas that have developed (or will be created) to serve local needs at historic crossroads in the rural and agricultural areas of the county. Due to the rural nature and low-intensity single-family orientation of the surrounding area, Country Crossroads are envisioned to be localized service providers that offer limited local convenience goods and services to the adjacent single-family and farming environment.



Typical Country Crossroads uses include convenience retailers, local groceries, family-run restaurants, "feed and seed" stores, hardware stores and gas stations.

Country Crossroads Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial retail and service businesses of a local-serving or agriculture-support nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Day care center ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water may not be available ▪ Sewer is not available or planned ▪ Access from collector or arterial roads at intersections

Development Strategies

- Existing Country Crossroads businesses are expected to remain, and possibly even expand, but further new development of a Country Crossroads node as such should be limited to key major intersections.
- Country Crossroads should be compatible with nearby residential and agricultural properties and developed to serve the immediate service area and pass-by traffic.
- Country Crossroads are limited to buildings of 8,000 square feet and under, unless otherwise approved by the local jurisdiction.
- Country Crossroads should be designed to reflect the rural attributes of the community.

- Country Crossroads may be located or rezoned within the Agricultural Preservation or Rural Places Character Areas without amending the Future Development Map. If the location merits expansion, it may be changed to a Neighborhood Village Center by amending the Future Development Map.

Development Guidelines

Country Crossroads should be zoned NSS (Neighborhood Shopping and Services) or B-1 (General Business) but only with conditions limiting the zoning to be consistent with the Country Crossroads Character Area,³ and depending on the proposed local serving or agricultural-based use and potential impact on the surrounding area such as noise, traffic and lights. In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Neighborhood Village Center

Location: Bishop, Unincorporated Oconee County.

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses are arranged in a village-like setting that might include a neighborhood park, pedestrian circulation and public spaces. Thus, a Neighborhood Village Center is envisioned as a compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores and services to address the demands of nearby residents. From a community design perspective, sidewalks or pedestrian paths are important circulation features in Neighborhood Village Centers. Given a Neighborhood Village Center’s small scale and emphasis on local-serving stores, the scale and size of individual businesses and the village center as a whole are very important.

Examples of uses within a Neighborhood Village Center include small scale corner markets, prescription shops, bakeries, cafes and small retail shops; personal services such as laundromats, dry cleaners and barber/beauty shops; professional services such as lawyers, accountants, insurance agents, physicians and dentists; and small scaled semi-public/institutional community services.

Neighborhood Village Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that are primarily oriented to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer may be available or planned ▪ Access from a collector or arterial roadway, or planned within a mixed-use development

³ NSS and B-1 are existing County zoning districts. A new zoning district tailored to the unique nature of Country Crossroads is proposed—see the Implementation Strategies of this Community Agenda.

Development Strategies

- Each Neighborhood Village Center should include a mix of retail, services and offices that are primarily oriented to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods with their day-to-day needs. A retail development anchored by a coffee shop would be an example of an appropriate use. Residential development may be located adjacent to these villages.
- Neighborhood Village Centers are intended to contain buildings of no greater than 8,000 square feet in total, with individual stores in a multi-tenant building no greater than 3,000 square feet total.
- Buildings should be clustered, one and two stories in height, and should respect the predominant scale of development in the surrounding area by designing with elements of similar scale and providing a gradual transition to any taller or higher-density buildings proposed.
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses and the surrounding neighborhood. Site design elements such as low-level pedestrian lights, consistent signage and landscaping contribute to the quaint character of Neighborhood Village Centers and create a sense of place.
- The use of coordinated and identified elements such as awnings, varying shingle styles or other natural materials, archways and landscaping are required.
- Adaptive re-use of existing structures and buildings is encouraged to serve as a focal point.
- There should be adequate buffering of adjacent residential uses from light and sound; buffering between uses within a Neighborhood Village Center development is not required.

Development Guidelines

Neighborhood Village Centers should be zoned:

- In Bishop, B-1 (General Business) with size limitations.
- NSS (Neighborhood Shopping and Services) in the unincorporated county, or as part of a Master Planned Development.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Community Village Center

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

Typically located at the convergence of important transportation corridors, Community Village Centers are envisioned as places where a compatible mixture of higher-intensity commercial uses are located, such as larger-scaled shopping centers, professional offices and services. Mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, service and recreational uses integrated and linked together by a comprehensive circulation system

are encouraged in these areas. Community Village Centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a market area consisting of many neighborhoods. Whereas someone might live near a neighborhood village center but work outside the area, the commercial village concept may include a variety of housing options, small businesses, offices, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas and open spaces that create a small community where it is possible to live, work and play. Land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Natural and historic resources within Community Village Centers should be enhanced and preserved as a means of defining a distinct identity or sense of place. Improved connections to natural assets, both pedestrian and vehicular, particularly from existing and developing higher density residential communities, will tie the village together. A Community Village Center should create a focal point for its surrounding neighborhoods. Entertainment and cultural arts could be an important focus of investment in the village.

Types of uses typical of a Community Village Center include a large grocery or drug store, small office complexes such as "office condominiums," financial institutions, full service restaurants and medical/dental clinics, gas stations, a residential component such as lofts or residences above ground level office or retail; community gathering spaces, and institutional uses such as libraries, churches and community centers.



Community Village Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Larger commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that serve residents of a large portion of the county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loft housing ▪ Higher-density residential duplexes, townhouses and apartments (depending on the jurisdiction) ▪ Smaller lot residential subdivisions ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Access from a collector or arterial roadway, or within a mixed-use development

Development Strategies

- Each commercial development in a Community Village Center should include a mix of retail, office, services and employment to serve a wider market area than a neighborhood village, but not regional in nature. A shopping plaza anchored by a major grocery store, or a stand-alone drug store or supermarket, are examples of appropriate uses.
- Community Village Center developments may contain multi-tenant buildings of no greater than 125,000 square feet in total, with no individual or stand-alone business greater than 70,000 square feet unless specifically approved by the governing body. "Big box" retail uses are not compatible with this Character Area.
- Primarily retail-oriented developments should form nodes around major intersections. Intervening properties between commercial nodes should be devoted to other

uses such as institutional uses, higher density residential developments and reverse frontage/residential subdivisions;

- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Outdoor restaurant seating is encouraged.
- The pedestrian-friendly environment should be enhanced by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, community centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.
- Civic uses and gathering places should be part of the overall design of a Community Village Center.
- The design of a building that occupies a pad or portion of a building within a planned project or shopping center should share similar design characteristics and design vocabulary. Precise replication is not desirable, instead, a development should utilize similar colors, materials and textures as well as repeating patterns; rhythms and proportions found within the architecture of other buildings in the center can be utilized to achieve unity.
- There should be adequate buffering of adjacent residential uses from light and sound; buffering between uses within a Community Village Center development is not required.

Development Guidelines

Community Village Centers should be zoned primarily B-1 (General Business), B-1-MPD, B-2 (Highway Business) or B-2-MPD (with appropriate use and intensity limitations), with OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), R-2 (Two-Family Residential) or R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) in appropriate locations, depending on their location and potential impact on the surrounding area.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the County and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Historic Main Street

Location: Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, Watkinsville.

This Character Area is intended primarily for small-scale retail and office development that is pedestrian oriented in nature, and compatible with the historic character of the city. The Character Area comprises "original" downtown areas in the county's four cities and each includes a number of historic structures that contribute to the city's cultural resources. The Historic Main Street Character Area is located along Main Street in Watkinsville, US 441 in Bishop, Atlanta Highway in Bogart, and at the Apalachee River crossing in North High Shoals. Protection of these Character Areas furthers each city's desire to retain the "small-town feel" that is characteristic of each city and rooted in its history.



■ Corridor Commercial

Location: Bogart, Watkinsville, Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Corridor Commercial Character Area is intended primarily for larger-scale commercial development that is more auto-oriented in nature, requiring increased visibility and road access. The designation targets retail, service, light industry or office development that is incompatible with a Downtown environment and require additional space to accommodate their activity.

Corridor Commercial Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Auto-oriented retail, service and repair ▪ Larger-scale commercial uses that serve the driving public ▪ Corporate and professional offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses ▪ Nursing home, retirement community, personal care home ▪ Day care center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full urban services common to the city

Development Strategies

- The Character Area is intended to accommodate land intensive commercial uses requiring major road access.
- Developments should conform to the scale and character of the community.
- Buffers and landscaping are important aspects of development to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses. Buffers should also be utilized to screen incompatible adjacent land uses as appropriate and to enhance the aesthetic character of the area.
- Exterior lighting and signage should be regulated to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties and roadways.
- Developments should include shared driveways and inter-parcel access, where possible, minimizing the number of curb cuts along major thoroughfares.
- This Character Area is not directly connected to residential neighborhoods but should be reasonably accessible to residents by foot or bicycle.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning districts for the Commercial Corridor Character Area are:

- B-2 (Highway Business) in Bogart and the unincorporated county.
- In Watkinsville, CC (Commercial Corridor).

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Civic Center

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Civic Center Character Area is, quite literally, the center of civic activities in unincorporated Oconee County. The Character Area includes a relatively high-intensity mix of businesses and retail shopping, office and employment opportunities, sports and recreational complexes, the full range of public schools, a college campus and other public and



semi-public uses (such as the Oconee Civic Center, religious institutions and cemeteries, and libraries and potentially museums) that create a multi-dimensional environment. A residential component is in place that adds people to the area and creates a 24-hour Character Area. A limited number of higher density townhomes, live-work units, lofts, senior housing and residential over retail would be appropriate as the area grows. Typical of nonresidential development are: a

shopping center anchored with a large grocery or drug store, small office complexes such as “office condominiums,” financial institutions, full service restaurants and medical/dental clinics, gas stations, lofts above ground level office or retail, and public and institutional uses such as schools, parks, libraries, churches and community/civic centers. This Character Area is a vibrant place where people can live, work, recreate and shop.

Civic Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consumer-based commercial establishments that offer goods and services to the residents of central Oconee ▪ Employment-based business offices ▪ Civic, institutional and semi-public uses, such as religious organizations, educational and sports/recreation facilities, museums, libraries, senior centers, YMCAs, civic and convention centers ▪ Single-family detached subdivisions and planned developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium density multi-family housing as a component of a master planned development ▪ Senior housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Transportation network to adequately support traffic demands

Development Strategies

- Residential development should be guided by the Suburban Living Character Area, including:
 - Protect existing neighborhoods from negative impacts.
 - Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock.

- Promote new residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space, while assuring suitability with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Promote innovative and mixed-use development, such as MPDs, in appropriate locations.
- Promote walkability within each community through path systems or sidewalks, particularly connecting to such focal points as schools, parks, community centers or commercial activity centers within walking distance of residences.
- Limit higher intensity duplex and multi-family development to areas where a transition between established nonresidential centers and single-family neighborhoods is needed.
- Housing designed for senior residents should be encouraged in master planned developments where appropriate retail and professional services can be close at hand.
- Commercial retail and service development should be guided by the Community Village Character Area, including:
 - Commercial retail and service development areas that can accommodate a mix of retail sales, professional and personal services, and offices that serve a wider market area than a neighborhood village, but not regional in nature. A shopping plaza anchored by a major grocery store, or a stand-alone drug store or medical/dental clinic, are examples of appropriate uses. Outdoor restaurant seating is encouraged.
 - Commercial retail and service development areas may contain multi-tenant buildings of no greater than 125,000 square feet in total, with no individual or stand-alone business greater than 70,000 square feet unless specifically approved by the governing body. "Big box" retail uses are not compatible with this Character Area.
 - The design of a building that occupies a pad or portion of a building within a planned project or shopping center should share similar design characteristics and design vocabulary. Precise replication is not desirable; instead, a development should utilize similar colors, materials and textures as well as repeating patterns; rhythms and proportions found within the architecture of other buildings in the center can be utilized to achieve unity.
- There should be adequate buffering between commercial and adjacent residential uses from light and sound; buffering between uses within a planned mixed-use development, such as an MPD, is not required.

Development Guidelines

Single-family detached residential subdivision densities within this Character Area range from a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ to over one acre per dwelling unit (DU), depending on the availability of public water or sewer.

- In the unincorporated area, higher density duplex and multi-family development may be allowed as a transition between high-intensity uses (such as commercial centers

or public/civic facilities) and single-family neighborhoods. The appropriate residential zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Residential Development in the Civic Center Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County			
County Zoning District	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)	R-2 (Two-Family Residential)	R-3 (Multi-Family Residential)
Minimum Lot Size (Conventional Development) on public water or sewer	30,000 sf per Single-Family Detached Dwelling Unit	15,000 sf per Dwelling Unit (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)	8,000 sf per Multi-Family Dwelling Unit
Common Development Type	Conventional or Conservation Subdivision, or MPD	Conventional Subdivision or MPD	Multi-Family Development or MPD
Water Availability	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Sewer Availability	No	Yes*	Yes
Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial
*Larger lot sizes are required if public water or sewer are not available.			

- Appropriate zoning categories applicable to this Character Area for nonresidential uses in the unincorporated area are OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), B-1 (General Business), B-1-MPD, B-2 (Highway Business) and B-2-MPD (with appropriate use and intensity limitations), depending on their location and potential impact on the surrounding area.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Technology Gateway

Location: Bogart, Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Technology Gateway Character Area extends along the western portion of SR 316. This corridor, which includes the "Orkin" tract, is primed to experience major office, research and development, and light industrial development, to become the County's premier employment center. As a large employment center of regional and statewide importance, the Technology Gateway Character Area incorporates many aspects of commerce such as professional office buildings, corporate and regional offices, high-tech and research facilities, small office and business park complexes, and light industrial uses such as warehousing and wholesale. Retail and residential are appropriate secondary uses that complement these employment centers. High intensity residential integrated into a mixed-use development is appropriate to create a live, work and play environment. Such internal housing would provide a customer base for offices, cafés, restaurants and retail uses located in the corridor, and enhance the safety of the area by maintaining a continuous population base in a location that is typically unpopulated in the evening hours. Retail uses are expected to be primarily local-serving for the businesses and em-

ployees in the Character Area. Redevelopment of low-density residential uses to employment-based uses can be anticipated as the area develops.

Technology Gateway Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High tech, bio-medical and research facilities ▪ Light industrial and light manufacturing that will not have an adverse impact on the environmental quality of the area ▪ Regional, headquarter and professional offices ▪ Office complexes and campuses; ▪ Business parks and small office complexes such as "office condominiums" ▪ Mixed use projects with a vertical integration, such as ground floor retail with office or living units above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial retail and services that support the business and employment base in the area ▪ Multi-family residential development within a mixed-use master planned environment ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Transportation routes adequately scaled to employee and business traffic

Development Strategies

- Continue to focus economic development promotional activities within the Character Area.
- Encourage development in mixed-use urban centers or compact activity centers that include supporting commercial and higher density components.
- Require master planning of individual sites to address access management, landscaping and streetscape elements.
- Plan and design transportation improvements that support development of the area.
- Require buffers to protect nearby lower-density residential areas that would be impacted by development of the Character Area. Buffering between uses within a planned mixed-use development, such as an MPD, is not required.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning districts for the Technology Gateway Character Area are:

- In Bogart, P-O-R (Professional-Office-Research).
- In the unincorporated area, appropriate zoning would be primarily TB (Technology Business), OBP (Office-Business Park) and OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), and secondarily (in appropriate locations) R-2-MPD, R-3-MPD, B-1 (General Business) and B-1-MPD.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Regional Center

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Regional Center Character Area embraces the eastern portion of SR 316, leading into Athens-Clarke County. The area is characterized by regional-serving retail and commercial services, office complexes for medical and corporate offices, hotels, restaurants and entertainment facilities, higher-density residential planned developments and single-family detached subdivisions. While the area is currently a “multi”-use area of distinct and separate uses, planned mixed-use developments are encouraged.

Regional Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional medical and professional offices ▪ Small office complexes such as “office condominiums,” financial institutions and other service providers ▪ Hotels and meeting facilities ▪ Shopping centers with major retail anchors ▪ Department stores, large marketers and individual “big box” retail stores ▪ High density residential development within a mixed-use master planned environment ▪ Single-family subdivisions and planned developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior housing ▪ Recreational uses such as theaters, roller skating rings, arcades ▪ Entertainment, restaurants and cultural arts ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Transportation network to adequately support traffic demands

Development Strategies

- Provide a wide variety of mixed uses, size and intensity of uses (from low to high), and types of uses in order to create and maintain the regional-serving role of the Character Area.
- Require buffers to protect lower-density residential areas within and near the Character Area that would be impacted by higher-density and commercial development of the Character Area. Buffering between uses within a planned mixed-use development, such as an MPD, is not required.
- Transitions in intensity of development should be established approaching the boundaries whenever possible, moving in gradations from high-intensity regional office parks and retail shopping centers down to low-intensity single-family neighborhoods. Where a gradual transition is impractical, major buffering between the development and adjacent uses or other solutions should be established through zoning and site plan restrictions.
- Plan for a community trail and sidewalk network that is as friendly to alternative modes of transportation as to the automobile.
- Require master planning of individual sites to address access management, landscaping and streetscape elements.

- Plan and design transportation improvements that correlate traffic capacity with development of the area.
- Accessory, temporary, outdoor storage of retail goods should be shielded from public view. In the case of auto dealerships and storage/repair businesses, vehicles stored on site should be screened from view from the public right-of-way by a low wall, hedge or landscape strip. Display platforms should be incorporated into overall design.
- Encourage civic and cultural uses, recreational and entertainment businesses that will promote human interaction.

Development Guidelines

In the unincorporated area, appropriate zoning for primarily residential development (in appropriate locations) would be the R-1 (Single-Family Residential), R-1-MPD, R-2 (Two-Family Residential), R-2-MPD, R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) and R-3-MPD districts; and for primarily nonresidential development (in appropriate locations), OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), B-1 (General Business), B-1-MPD, B-2 (Highway Business) and B-2-MPD.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Workplace Center

Location: Bishop, Bogart, Watkinsville, Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area is intended primarily for larger-scale heavy commercial, industrial, wholesale, and office uses that may be land intensive, generate high employee or truck traffic, or create noise, odor, or other impacts associated with manufacturing and production uses.



Workplace Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Light industrial, warehousing and light manufacturing. Heavy industrial is restricted to locations where adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated ▪ Heavy commercial uses, such as auto repair and service ▪ Employment uses such as business parks, distribution/services ▪ Wholesaling companies, business parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Access available from arterial or major collector roads

Public Institutional Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Civic functions such as county and city government offices, library, school, law enforcement, emergency services and churches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Other areas owned or operated by city or county government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Full urban services common to the city▪ Sidewalks and bicycle lanes

Development Strategies

- Institutional development should be built to the scale and design of surrounding land uses.
- District design characteristics should include adequate landscaping and buffering from adjacent land uses.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.
- Pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities should be included as part of developments intended as major destination points.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for Watkinsville's Public Institutional Character Area is PI (Public Institutional). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the City and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Although not a Character Area itself outside of Watkinsville, lands shown as Parks/Recreation/Conservation on the Future Development Maps for Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals and the unincorporated area of the county are included within the various Character Areas within those jurisdictions. These lands include stream buffers and corridors, parks, conservation areas and other natural environmental resources that are protected from land development activities.

Within Watkinsville, parks, recreation and conservation areas are treated as a unique Character Area, which is described as follows.

Parks, recreation and conservation areas are dedicated to passive or active recreation uses or for the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands. Parks and recreation areas may be defined as community parks, neighborhood parks, community squares or greenspace.

Community parks are typically larger facilities intended to attract users from a wider radius and provide a variety of recreational activities. Additional need for community parks has been identified in two locations within Watkinsville to increase access to major recreation space community-wide. These parks should be developed in a similar fashion as

Harris Shoals Park, providing an array of recreational activities. Typical facilities located in community parks include, but are not limited to, children's playground, public restrooms, public art, group picnic areas, amphitheaters and competitive sports facilities. Additionally, because the community park is intended to attract users from a wider radius, on-site parking may be necessary.

Neighborhood parks are typically smaller facilities, of 1-to- 3 acres, located within residential developments and intended to serve a more localized population providing basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents of all ages. Parks are generally located near the center of neighborhoods and are typically open spaces intended to provide unstructured recreation but may also include playground equipment. There are no specific sites identified within Watkinsville but these parks should be included, and centrally situated, within new residential developments.

Community squares are intended to be the central park of the community and to accommodate a variety of community functions. Rocket Field has been designated as Watkinsville's community square based on its location and potential for providing unstructured recreation opportunities and hosting community events (farmer's market, community festivals, and other public activities).

The conservation areas are focused around the community's stream corridors, which serve to protect the region's water quality, natural habitats, and provide valuable tree cover and open space. Stream corridors are defined by either the delineated 100- year flood hazard boundary or a 100-foot stream corridor transition area, whichever is greater (exemptions may be considered based on topographic limitations of the property in question). Development within this area should be limited to minimize the adverse impacts of development on water quality and to preserve adequate space to accommodate multi-use trails and community infrastructure networks (such as public sewerage or stormwater treatment facilities).

Development Strategies

- All parks and recreation areas should be linked to a pedestrian and/or bicycle facility network increasing their accessibility.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all parks and recreation areas.
- Conservation areas should, to the extent feasible, accommodate multi-use trails along the river corridor providing interconnectivity throughout the city and increasing the recreational use of designated greenspace.
- Natural vegetative buffers should be maintained between the river corridor and multi-use trail.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for Watkinsville's Parks/Recreation/Conservation Character Area is PRC (Parks, Recreation, Conservation). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.