

## CHAPTER 6 POLICIES

The Community Agenda must contain “policies” that will guide future actions of the Grayson City Council. The term “policy” is not specifically defined in the administrative rules of the state Department of Community Affairs for local comprehensive plans, but they are required “to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the community vision or addressing community issues and opportunities.” In addition, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides detailed suggestions for policies in its State Planning Recommendations, which have been considered in articulating the policies herein. Here, “policy” is interpreted as general statements of intent.

On the other hand, there is sometimes a “fine line” between policy statements and implementation measures. The term “policy” is interpreted here to include more specific “objectives” for accomplishing the city’s intended outcomes. In some cases, therefore, the policy statements included here are quite specific, and they read as if they are most appropriate in the “short-term work program.” Where such specific language is used in the following policy statements and an “action” is directly called for or implied in the policy statement, that statement is also reflected in the city’s short-term work program.

Policies in this chapter are organized by functional element or component (natural resources, economic development, land use, etc.)

### NATURAL RESOURCES

1. **Environmental Protection.** The natural environment should be preserved as much as possible.
2. **Environmentally Sensitive Areas.** Prevent development from occurring in, or significantly encroaching upon environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains and wetlands.
3. **Water Quality.** The location and intensity of development should be sited so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality.
4. **Pervious Surfaces.** Encourage use of pervious surfaces whenever possible, to increase groundwater infiltration.
5. **Wetlands.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).
6. **Flood Ways and Flood Plains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains.
7. **Flood Insurance Program.** Continue the City’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
8. **Conservation Subdivisions.** Encourage conservation subdivision development, where opportunities exist.

9. **Street Trees.** Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
10. **Tree Protection and Replacement.** Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees lost to development with trees of like species and value.
11. **Tree Canopy.** Consider and if appropriate implement additional regulations that encourage the maintenance, retention, or expansion of tree canopy cover in the City.
12. **Open Space.** Require a certain percentage of land be set aside for green space in new land developments.
13. **Sustainability and Energy Efficiency.** Promote sustainable and energy-efficient development (2006 Regional Development Plan Policy #10).

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

1. **Quality Community Objective, Historic Preservation.** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
2. **Protect Historic Resources.** Provide strategies to preserve and enhance historic resources (2006 Regional Development Plan Policy #13).
3. **National Register Listings.** Add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

## HOUSING

1. **Accessible Senior Housing.** Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways.
2. **Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.
3. **Single-Family Residential Character.** Maintain the low-density character of Grayson's single-family residential neighborhoods.
4. **Incompatibilities.** Protect existing residential development from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
5. **Compatible Infill Development.** The development of vacant or underutilized land in single-family residential zoning districts must be compatible in terms of existing densities, housing types, and general character.

6. **Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Provide opportunities for traditional neighborhood development in locations between Uptown Grayson and established, low density, detached, single-family neighborhoods.
7. **Quality Architecture.** Residential zoning districts that allow more density will be required to have higher levels of architectural standards than those residential districts that allow less density.
8. **Location of Attached Housing.** Limit attached housing to the Uptown Grayson area, preferably as a part of a mixed use building.
9. **Apartments.** Freestanding apartments are discouraged in Grayson.
10. **Mixed-Income Housing.** The city does not, at this time, embrace the concept of “mixed income” housing.
11. **Substandard Housing Units.** Encourage the rehabilitation and upgrade of substandard housing units, or encourage their redevelopment where it is not economical or appropriate to renovate such housing units.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business.** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in the community should be suitable in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the community or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
2. **Quality Community Objective, Employment Options.** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
3. **Quality Community Objective, Educational Opportunities.** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in the City – to permit City residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.
4. **Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the City.
5. **Partnering.** Partner with private industry and/or other agencies to promote economic development opportunities that will benefit the city, county, region, and state.
6. **Redevelopment along SR 20.** Encourage the redevelopment of single-family dwellings and older, less viable commercial buildings along SR 20, into compatible non-residential and/or mixed-use developments that are consistent with the vision for the City.
7. **Downtown Development Authority.** Operate a Downtown Development Authority to guide redevelopment and development efforts in Uptown Grayson (established in September 2008)..

8. **Home Occupations.** Home occupations, when compatible with the neighborhood, are recognized as part of the overall City economic development strategy and are encouraged, subject to compliance with applicable zoning laws.

## LAND USE

1. **Land Use Guidance.** Use the Future Development Map (Character Areas) and Future Land Use Plan Map as guides to decision-making.
2. **Incompatibilities.** Protect the city's established residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
3. **Uptown Grayson.** Development in Uptown Grayson should include mixed uses developed at a pedestrian scale.
4. **Commercial and Offices.** Encourage commercial and office development where appropriate in the City.
5. **SR 20.** The conversion of existing single-family residences fronting on SR 20 to office or light commercial land uses within the existing residential structure is considered acceptable, although redevelopment of such properties is preferable.
6. **Transitional Uses.** Development occurring between the SR 20 corridor and single-family residential subdivisions should be "transitional" in nature (i.e., office or low-impact neighborhood commercial uses within buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet per establishment), or in other words, developed to a scale and intensity that is compatible with the adjacent residential development.
7. **Light Industry.** Discourage light industrial development outside of Grayson Industrial Park.
8. **Churches and Large Institutions.** Restrict the location of new churches or substantial expansion of existing churches, and other large institutional land uses, in residential zoning districts.
9. **Innovative Techniques.** Encourage innovative land use planning techniques to be used in protecting the environment and meeting other stated policies of this Community Agenda.
10. **Code Enforcement.** Maintain a local code enforcement board.

## URBAN DESIGN

1. **Image and Character.** Enhance the City of Grayson's image as a unique community and retain that image in attractive and orderly development that preserves existing character.
2. **Architectural Theme.** Maintain the look and feel of a turn-of-the-century (1880-1930) Georgia village through architectural styles, massing, themes, and details.

3. **Quality Development Standards.** Require adherence to standards for site design, building design, landscaping, tree preservation, lighting, signage, and buffer requirements in all new land developments, to enhance the aesthetics of the community.
4. **Streetscapes and Aesthetic Enhancements.** Improve the visual quality of local streets and state routes through streetscape improvements (e.g., sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, etc.). Focus community improvement initiatives in the uptown Grayson area as well as along and within the State Route 20 corridor. This includes landscaping the median of SR 20 when complete.
5. **Streetscape Standards.** Pedestrian lighting and street furniture should be consistent throughout the City, unless varied to be consistent with character. Street furnishings and landscape elements should possess long-lasting quality and be well-maintained.
6. **Gateways.** Create gateways to the City that produce a sense of arrival. These entryways may incorporate streetscape elements, signage, and landscaping that enhance the image and function of the City.
7. **Compatible Character.** Ensure that new developments respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences, to maintain small town character.
8. **Design Guidance and Control.** Continue to implement some means of design control or guidance in new non-residential development through requirements in the zoning ordinance and other appropriate means, but balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of non-residential development with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.
9. **Lighting.** Develop lighting requirements or guidelines that promote energy efficiency and safety and reduce light pollution or "sky-glow," light trespass on adjacent properties, and glare.
10. **Beautification.** Support community-based partnerships for streetscape beautification.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. **Relationship to Development.** Limit development to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure, and ensure that new development does not cause a decline in locally desired level of service standards.
2. **Parks and Recreation.** Plan, construct and maintain municipal park and recreation facilities and open spaces in the city, to supplement countywide park and recreation facilities.
3. **History and Cultural Resources.** Continue to support historic preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the City of Grayson, by employing a city historian and continuing to provide a history center.

4. **Civic Space/City Hall.** Consider in advance the long term needs for administrative space for city government functions, and plan in advance for appropriate building additions or expansions, or a new city hall, as may be appropriate in the long term.
5. **Investment Location.** The City should confine its investment in civic buildings to Uptown Grayson, in order to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in that area.
6. **Public-Private Partnerships.** Identify, and capitalize on, opportunities for innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various city facilities and services.
7. **Stormwater Management.** Consider and if appropriate implement a regional stormwater management system, using the several lakes and ponds in the city as regional (multiple parcel) detention facilities.
8. **Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management.** Participate in preparation of disaster preparedness and emergency management plans in conjunction with Gwinnett County.
9. **Public Safety.** Monitor the effectiveness of continuing to rely on Gwinnett County for public safety and law enforcement services.
10. **Technology and E-Governance.** Make the best possible use of technology and embrace the concept of “e-governance.”
11. **Capital Improvement Program.** Prepare, adopt, and implement a capital improvement program for facilities and services provided by the City.
12. **Water Conservation.** Promote the conservation of water by residents and businesses to meet regional and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.
13. **Sewerage.** Coordinate with Gwinnett County to expand sewerage services, promoting increased opportunities for desired types of development.
14. **Solid Waste Management.** Implement the City’s comprehensive solid waste management plan. Pursue waste diversion, composting, and recycling strategies.

## TRANSPORTATION

1. **Cooperative Planning.** Maintain active involvement in transportation planning activities by Gwinnett County, the Atlanta Regional Commission, and the Georgia Department of Transportation.
2. **Parking.** Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities in Uptown Grayson, including public parking. On-street parking opportunities and shared parking opportunities should be explored and provided where appropriate.

3. **Sidewalk Improvements.** Improve the network of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks) in the city. Create a safe and accessible pedestrian network throughout the City.
4. **Multi-use Trails.** Pursue opportunities to construct multi-use trails within designated greenways in the city.
5. **Access Management.** Apply state and local standards for access management along arterial and collector streets, including but not limited to specifications for curb cut location and separation, and the installation of deceleration lanes where warranted.
6. **Connectivity and Inter-parcel Access.** During site plan and development permit review, measures should be made to connect compatible land developments with regard to pedestrian and vehicular access; this includes requirements to provide inter-parcel vehicle access points to all compatible, contiguous parcels, where possible.
7. **Context-Sensitive Design.** Provide for street designs that pay appropriate attention to concepts of compatibility, livability, sense of place, and urban design, in addition to conventional traffic engineering considerations. Utilize context-sensitive roadway design to promote streets that are built appropriately to fit the land uses surrounding them. For example, a downtown main street should be built with narrower lanes, wider sidewalks, and streetscape elements in its design, in order to encourage lower speeds and accommodate pedestrians.
8. **Roundabout.** Consider the appropriateness of redesigning the intersection of Rosebud Road and Grayson Highway with a “roundabout,” assuming the proposed local street network recommended in the Connection Concept Plan is reasonably assured.
9. **Connection Concept Plan.** Implement the recommendations of the “connection concept” (local street network) plan, which provides suggestions for new roads and private driveway connections to ensure citywide connectivity and accessibility.
10. **Retrofit for Pedestrian Access.** Strive to connect existing subdivisions with the pedestrian network which is planned to serve the city, where opportunities exist.
11. **Traffic Impact Study.** When a development proposal would be expected to generate 1,000 vehicle trips or more, or 100 or more vehicle trips during any a.m. or p.m. peak hour, a traffic study should be required and the results of that study should be mitigated by the land developer.
12. **Mast Arms for Traffic Signals.** When new traffic signals are installed, require that mast arms be used rather than cables to support the traffic signal.
13. **Bike Paths and Bikeways.** Provide bike paths and bikeways in appropriate locations in the city. Direct bicycle path and bikeway investments toward those corridors and areas best suited for foot and bicycle traffic and which have the greatest potential to provide convenient and safe mobility alternatives (see Connection Concept Plan).
14. **Public Transportation.** Consider, over the long term, the need for and provision of public transportation from Grayson to other destinations in the region. Efforts should be

made to tie into county and regional public transportation programs, where and when they are available.

## ANNEXATION

1. **Opportunities.** Consider municipal boundary expansion opportunities as appropriate, including properties identified as potential annexation areas (see map) and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation.
2. **Relation to Small Town Character.** Annexation should not take place if it would substantially transform or threaten to overwhelm the small town character of the City.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

1. **Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation.** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.
2. **Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions.** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.
3. **Information.** Share information and resources with county government boards, agencies, departments, and authorities, as well as other local, regional, and state government agencies.
4. **Intergovernmental Agreements.** Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate, such as participating in a stormwater utility program.
5. **Board of Education.** Develop a cooperative relationship with the Gwinnett County Board of Education with regard to the development and use or reuse of properties in the City of Grayson for schools and school bus parking facilities, to ensure that mutual objectives of access, connectivity, and pedestrian safety are achieved.
6. **Reuse of School.** Work with the Gwinnett County Board of Education to consider the redevelopment or reuse of the public school in the central core of the city in a manner consistent with the city's plans for Uptown Grayson.
7. **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.
8. **Resolution of Land Use Conflicts.** Work closely with the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Department to avoid potential land use conflicts and service delivery issues in the areas surrounding the city limits.

