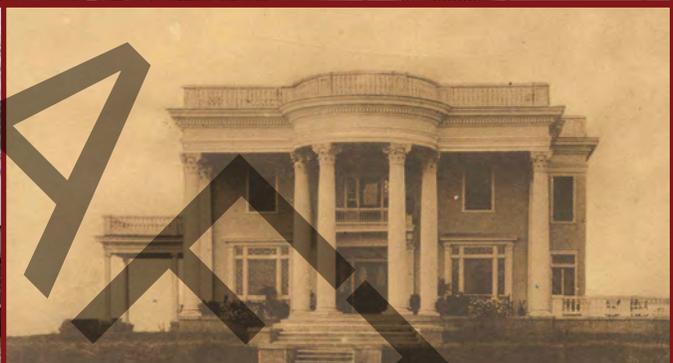


THE CITY OF



PARTA, GEORGIA



2016 - 2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Sparta Comprehensive Plan 2016-2026

Produced for: City of Sparta

Produced by:
Central Savannah River Area Regional
Commission

May 2016

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MAP 1.1

LOCATION MAP

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The City of Sparta has prepared a new comprehensive plan document for the purpose of providing a comprehensive plan for their community that reflects changes to priorities and conditions. The City of Sparta, Georgia's 2016-2026 Comprehensive Plan will serve to guide elected and appointed officials to development and growth decisions over the next ten years.

This Comprehensive Plan also provides the City of Sparta a general "statement of intent" regarding the policies which will be observed, actions that will be taken, promotion of locally generated and preferred goals related to multiple topics

INTRODUCTION

The planning standards procedures established by this Act were intended to provide guidance a jurisdiction could follow when making decisions about providing future public facilities and services. The comprehensive plan should be referenced by local elected and appointed officials when making decisions regarding land use and economic development.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The comprehensive plan is the official guiding document for the future of Sparta. It is designed to formulate a coordinated, long term planning program which lays out a desired future and guides how that future will be achieved. It serves as a guide to both the public and private sector providing guidance on how land will be developed within the city, how housing will be made available, how employers will be influenced to come to the city and be retained, how open space environments will be protected, and how public services and facilities will be provided. In short the comprehensive plan is a unified document providing a consistent policy direction.

The comprehensive plan is structured as a dynamic document that can be amended when conditions change within the city significantly. Updates to the plan are periodically necessary to ensure that the plan meets the needs of its residents. The previous plan for the City of Sparta was created in 1993 and over the years recommendations within this plan were either completed or no longer found to be necessary. This current planning effort addresses changes in Sparta since the last plan was adopted and inserts new or evolving priorities among residents and community leaders

HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This comprehensive plan is a guide for action and is intended to serve as a reference for potential users. A member of city council or city staff should refer to this plan's policies to decide on the approval of a rezoning or location of new development. Companion planning documents should be used in conjunction with the comprehensive plan. This include but are not limited to the CSRA Regional Plan, Hancock County Solid Waste Management Plan, the Hancock County Comprehensive Plan, and other local and state regulatory documents.

Unlike sector or single issue planning documents which generally refer to issues such as transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, annexation and community services, the comprehensive plan addresses these issues in a coordinated manner. If at some point the comprehensive plan no longer reflects a consensus of the path the City of Sparta wishes to be on, it should be amended.

PRIOR PLANS

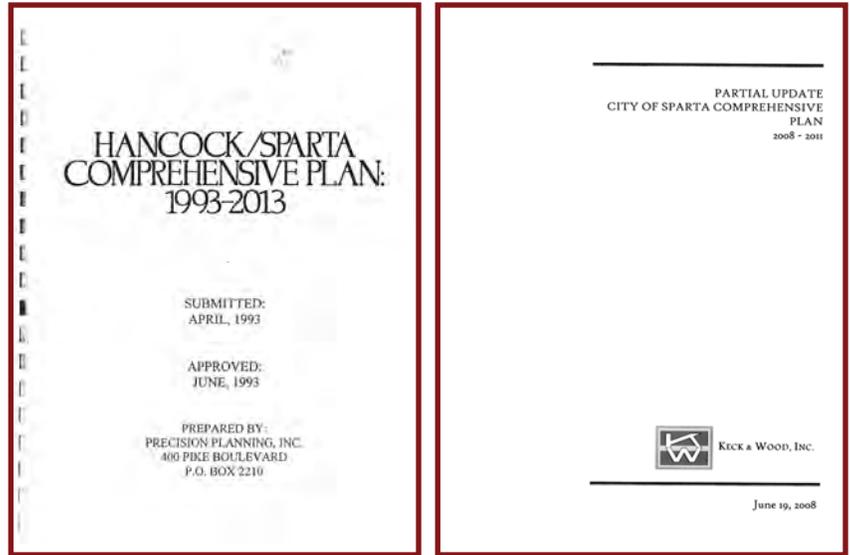
A comprehensive plan is a dynamic document which should be altered as community conditions change. Updates of these documents are required to ensure community needs are met. Prior versions of the Sparta Comprehensive Plan have diminished in relevance as implementation recommendations have been completed or, due to the passage of time, have been found to be no longer a community priority. This allows the new plan to address relative community changes since the prior plan was adopted.

The Joint Hancock County-City of Sparta Comprehensive Plan 1993-2013 was completed by Percision Planning and adopted in May June 1993. The format of the document was consistent with the standards established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) prior to 2005. This document outlined county and municipal conditions of significance to each community and created goals with regards to economic development, natural and cultural resources, land uses, housing, and community facilities. The comprehensive plan was to be used by community leaders to make coordinated decisions regarding public expenditures and land uses.



The City of Sparta Comprehensive Plan: Partial Update 2008-2011 was produced in 2008 by Keck and Wood, Inc. This document was prepared in response to changes to Georgia DCA requirements which now included a Quality Community Objectives Assessment and Analysis of Areas Requiring Special Needs in conjunction with identifying new issues and opportunities and an updated plan implementation program.

These two documents served as the initial reference point for the Sparta Comprehensive Plan which will supersede all prior comprehensive plans once adopted.



SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Georgia “Service Delivery Strategy Act” (O.C.G.A 36-70) was adopted in 1970 by the Georgia Assembly to require all Georgia counties and incorporated municipalities to adopt a joint “service delivery strategy” document. The purpose of this Act and the service delivery strategy document is to provide local governments the opportunity to examine public services, identify overlap or gaps in provided services, and develop a better approach to allocating delivery and funding of these services among local governments and other authorities within each county.

The service delivery strategy is an action plan supported by appropriate ordinances and intergovernmental agreements, for providing local government services and resolving land use conflicts within a county. The Taliaferro joint service delivery strategy document has been reviewed and updated in cooperation with government officials from Taliaferro County, the City of Crawfordville, and the City of Sharon during the comprehensive planning effort. Figure 1.2 illustrates the components and criteria addressed by the joint service delivery strategy.

FIGURE 1.1: GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY DOCUMENTS

An identification of all services provided in the county by all cities, counties, and authorities.	A description of how all services will be funded
An assignment of which local government will be responsible for providing which services in what area of the county.	Jurisdictions charging water and sewer rate differentials to customers outside their boundaries must be able to justify such differential
An Identification of intergovernmental contracts, ordinances, resolution, etc., to be used in implementing the Strategy, including existing contracts.	Services provided primarily for unincorporated areas must be funded by revenues derived exclusively from unincorporated areas.
Should provide for the elimination of duplication of services and or explanation for its existence.	Conflicts in land use plans within a county, between the county and its cities must be eliminated.
A process must be agreed upon for resolving land use classification disputes between a county and city over property to be annexed.	

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.1: List of Components and Location within Visualizing the Future



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STRUCTURE

The Central Savannah Area Regional Commission has been selected as the planning coordinator for the new comprehensive plans for the City of Sparta. This document has been prepared to meet and exceed the minimum requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's 2014 Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning which were made effective in 2014.

This document includes the following state-required components:

- A list of "Community Goals,"
- A list of "Needs and Opportunities,"
- A Community Work Program detailing intended plan implementation strategies,
- A Community Involvement overview,
- An Economic Development element,
- A Land Use element (and Action Plan),

The following additional topic-related sections are required for this plan. They include

- Housing element
- Community facilities
- Cultural and Natural Resources

All state-required comprehensive planning components, and additional elective elements listed are present throughout the plan's three (3) sections, Preface, Community Profile, and Community Agenda. Figure 1.1 illustrates the location of each required element in relation to the structure of the document.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The City of Sparta is serves as the county seat for Hancock County, Georgia and is located in the East-Central area of the state. Sparta is approximately 88 miles from the Atlanta Metropolitan Area and 58 miles from Augusta, Georgia. Hancock County was named for the first signer of the Declaration of Independence, John Hancock. Revolutionary War veteran Major Charles Abercrombie was granted land grants in Hancock County and from this area Maj. Abercrombie created the plan for Sparta, Georgia.

The City of Sparta gained its charter on December 3, 1805. Prior to its receiving its charter, Sparta was located at an Indian Trading Post which was constantly in danger from issues regarding the boarders. The name of “Sparta” was chosen to honor those pioneers who bravely defended the city, similar to solders of the Greek city of Sparta.

The City of Sparta is similar to several incorporated areas in the Central Savannah River area as has experienced population loss over the last two decades. This population loss is having an e

The purpose of the Sparta Comprehensive Plan is to provide local elected officials with a tool that provides good information which will help them guide how the city will change through the year 2026. This plan also represents Gibson’s participation in the statewide coordinated planning program created by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

FIGURE 1.2: POPULATION CHANGE FOR SPARTA, HANCOCK COUNTY, AND GEORGIA

	1990	2000	2010	1990-2010 Population Change	1990-2010 Population Percent Change
Sparta	1,710	1,522	1,400	-310	-18.1 %
Hancock County	8,908	10,076	9,429	521	5.8%
Unincorporated Hancock County	7,198	8,554	8,029	831	11.5%
Georgia	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,687,653	3,209,437	49.5 %

*Warren County includes Warren County and all incorporated areas
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Summary File 1 (SF1) & CSRA-RC Staff Calculations

POPULATION

A detailed analysis of population data for the City of Sparta for the period between 1990 and 2010 has shown a steady decline in population during this time frame. Figure 1-1 illustrates that Sparta has seen a loss of approximately 18 percent of its population during this timeframe.

The City of Sparta is the only jurisdiction to experience population loss in comparison to Hancock County, in which Sparta is located, and the State of Georgia. Hancock County has seen their population fluctuate over the past 20 years with the latest population number showing a net increase of approximately 5.8 percent.

Hancock County’s population growth is consistent with the positive growth rate the state of Georgia has experienced. The state of Georgia has increased its population by nearly 50 percent since the year 1990. This population growth only slightly affected Hancock County and has not filtered down to the City of Sparta.





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CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The process of creating a comprehensive plan should reflect the shared vision, goals, and objectives of the community participating in the process. The City of Sparta has assisted in the creation of the prior comprehensive plan and comprehensive plan update.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires a set of procedures for the planning process of a comprehensive plan to ensure that the public has an opportunity to provide input in the creation and review of the comprehensive plan.

Consistent public input is necessary for the development and completion of this comprehensive plan document. In conjunction with a public hearing on May 24, 2016

A Public Open House was also held in order members of the community to come and learn about recommendations in the comprehensive plan. The open house was held on June 13, 2016

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

A stakeholder committee was created to consult with the plan preparer at different points during the creation of the plan. This committee was comprised of municipal leaders with the primary purpose of assuring that CSRA-RC planners reflect the aforementioned shared vision, goals, and objectives of each community.

The stakeholder committee was comprised of individuals which represented a cross-section of the community. Members included residents, elected official, business owners, and non-profit organizations. The following is a list of stakeholders who served on the committee:

William Evans, Jr.	Mayor of Sparta
Beth Webster	Business Owner - Webster Pharmacy
A'Keti Mayweather	Business Owner -A'keti Communications
Rosemary O'Neill	Resident
Sutreater Morgan	Resident
Virginia Brown	City Clerk for the City of Sparta
Edward Taylor	Resident
Franklin D. Williams	Resident

An initial stakeholder meeting was held on March 28, 2016. CSRA Planning Department Staff presented preliminary data about area population, housing, economic development, and land use. Staff also began a dialogue with committee members to gain their perspective of the data and their community. Planning staff also met with stakeholders on the following dates:

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

The stakeholder committee met several times over the course of the creation of this iteration of the Sparta Comprehensive Plan. A facilitated discussion allowed the group to define the needs of their community, create goals and a community work program which they feel will serve Sparta over the next five years. A key discussion was a S.W.O.T (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis which led to the mutual understanding of needs and opportunities within the community. Figure 2.1 provides a summary of S.W.O.T analysis



FIGURE 2.1: SUMMARY OF S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS		
History (historic sites, homes, and historic district)	Location of Sparta in state of Georgia	People and sense of pride/community
Unpolluted land	Lots of churches / strong religious community	Low crime rate
Excellent water quality	Undeveloped land and excess infrastructure	Agricultural Innovation
Infrastructure for bio-economy	Large number of residents willing to volunteer	Sense of "Place"

WEAKNESSES		
Inability of community to "stick" together	Population decline	Lacking broadband internet infrastructure
Lack of communication among residents	Lack of businesses and jobs	Racial understanding and
Negative people always speaking out	Outsiders view city as an eyesore	Agricultural Innovation
Issues with roadways (cleanliness, potholes, etc.)	Lack of local stimulation for young people	Sense of "Place"
Lack of privacy due to small community	Limited housing options	

OPPORTUNITIES		
New Police Department Facility	Location of Sparta	Ability to develop historic homes into potential bed and breakfast
Limited resources needed to maintain beauty due to size of city	Cultural heritage and tourism opportunities are available	Developing duckweed as an anchor to bioeconomic strategy
Tourism sites	Commercial space available downtown	Crime in Sparta is much less than urban counterparts
Local Habitat for Humanity is active	Beautify Sparta	

THREATS		
Funding to complete goals	Loss of youth population to major cities	Unwillingness to change mindset
Community Division	Shrinking tax base	Feelings of despair
Employment opportunities	Outsiders coming in and developing community	



NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
-------	---------------

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Employment opportunities for residents	Historical homes and sites which attracts visitors
Stabilize population size hinders ability to attract Commercial businesses	Innovative agricultural sites provides potential tourism site
Retain residents due to lack of employment opportunities and social opportunities	Creation of a city organization to house both the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Development Authority
Change the negative perception of community which exists	Pedestrian activity in downtown Sparta is moderate
	Duckweed Company to increase residential revenue
	Available buildings for new businesses downtown

HOUSING

Single family homes are the predominate housing types within the city.	There are a significant number of historical homes located in Sparta.
Housing conditions need to be assessed	The opportunity for mixed-use buildings exist in the downtown area.
Non-residents view parts of city as an eyesore	Housing along main corridors are well maintained

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Maintenance for Roadways	Excess capacity for water and sewer infrastructure
Technology in city operations	Pedestrian facilities along major roads
Lack of funding to update infrastructure	

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Public Parks and Greenspaces	Air and water pollution is minimum
	Historical homes and sites which attracts visitors
	Faith based community comprised of multiple institutions

LAND USE

Infill development	Abundance of undeveloped land within city limits
	Land use controls (zoning)
	Historic district which restricts development to compatible development



COMMUNITY GOALS

The following is a list of planning goals of the City of Sparta. These goals are a broad statement of understanding and intent regarding Sparta's long-term growth and development vision. In addition to the list of "Needs and Opportunities," the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Quality Community Objectives" were reviewed in order to form specific topic-specific goals to guide implementation strategies contained within the Work Program.

During the planning process participating stakeholders suggested that there existed multiple potential implementation strategies which could be initiated by participating communities to address future needs and opportunities, but for which immediate commitment in this document (via the Work Program) was unfeasible.

Such strategies may be contingent on other actions, may not have an identified resource for implementation, may not be anticipated as envisioned in this document, etc. Ultimately, such "potential" work program items were still determined to be worthy enough to be documented as shared policies, or as potential action steps, and are therefore represented herein as policy statements or other miscellaneous objectives.

When the opportunity presents itself, potential actions derived from the policy and objective statements contained in this section of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan may be incorporated as amendments into the Community Work Program at a future date.

GOALS

Encourage and facilitate new businesses within Downtown Sparta

Create a picture perfect urban garden for community use

Ensure a market is downtown to provide healthy food for city residents

Create a City Museum and Recreation Complex

Invest in new festivals to be held within the city to attract people to the area

Ensure employment is available for all residents

Create a community-wide wellness program

Increase the number of restaurants in Downtown Sparta

Active park area for children with walking trail



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PLAN ELEMENTS

THE CITY OF SPARTA, GEORGIA



2016 - 2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is considered the engine that drives progress in Sparta. The creation of wealth through the mobilization of human, physical, natural, and capital resources to produce marketable goods and services. The ability to work with the business community to anticipate economic trends and plan for change is paramount for economic viability.

The following goals were expressed in the Sparta 2008 Partial Plan Update regarding Economic Development:

- *Encourage and support redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown Sparta*
- *Work cooperatively with Hancock County and other agencies involvement in local economic development activities*
- *Support programs for the retention, expansion, and creation of businesses that will enhance the city's economic well-being*
- *Encourage economic development and redevelopment activities*
- *Target reinvestment in declining, existing neighborhoods to further encourage private sector redevelopment*
- *Promote the establishment and maintenance of public gathering sights within the Downtown area to serve as focal points for the city*

The Economic Development section of this plan will provide information regarding income, employment, and unemployment rates. This section will also provide the Report of Accomplishments and new Five Year Work Program for the City of Sparta.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR: A review of several economic indicators provides information which is vital in understanding necessary steps to improve upon the existing economic situation within the City of Sparta and helping it reach its stated economic goals.

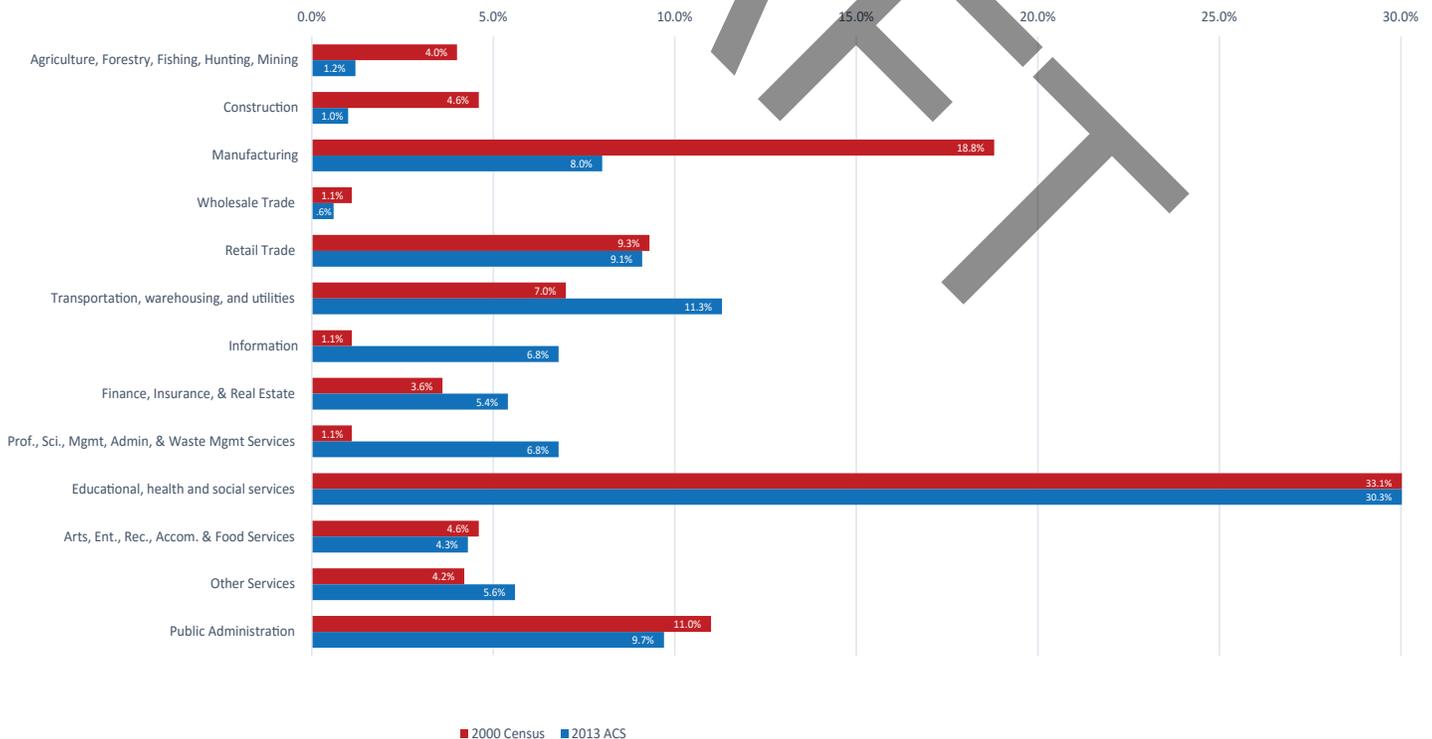
According to ESRI Business Analyst in 2015 there were a total of 119 businesses within the city of Sparta. Figure 2.1 illustrates employment by sector for Sparta from the 2000 Census and 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS). There was a total of 474 employed individuals in the city of Sparta in the year 2000 and this number increased to 515 employed residents in the 09-13 ACS.

The two industries with the highest numbers of employees within Sparta are the Educational, Health, and Social Services sector and the Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities sector. These two sectors represent a total of 41.6 percent of all employment in the city according to census data.

Employment growth has occurred in five sectors with the largest growth occurring in the Information/Professional sectors as both have grown by 5.7 percent. The Manufacturing sector represents the sector with the largest loss of employees, 10.8 percent, within the city during this time frame. Figure 2.1 illustrates that seven other sectors also loss employees at a varying percentage during this timeframe.

The remaining sectors listed in Figure 2.1 reveal that information regarding sector employment in Sparta was not completely negative. Five sectors increased its number of employees during this time frame in conjunction with Information/Professional sectors, the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate sector and Other Services sector have posted the greatest increase in employment.

FIGURE 2.1 EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR - SPARTA, GEORGIA 2000 & 2013

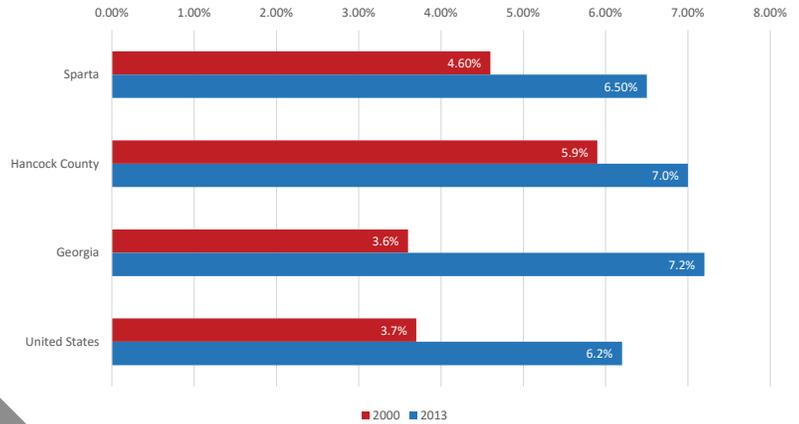


ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES: The recent economic recession has had a devastating effect on employment throughout the country. The unemployment rate for the United States peaked at 10 percent in October 2009 according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. Figure 2.9 illustrates unemployment levels for Sparta, Georgia, and the United States based on 2000 census data and 2013 labor statistics.

The City of Sparta experienced a rise in unemployment after the year 2000, however, the 2013 unemployment rate is better than both the 2013 unemployment rates for Hancock County and the State of Georgia for 2013. The unemployment rate change during this time period of 1.9 percent provides hope that employment opportunities remain strong in Sparta.

FIGURE 2.2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



INCOME: The median household income for the City of Sparta is another economic indicator which can provide useful information. Figure 2.3 illustrates that the median household income for residents within the City Sparta has increased by 22.3 percent since 2010. This is a 31 percent increase from the median household income of \$18,580 from the 2000 Census. The City of Sparta is seeing a rise in household income. Based on conversations with residents, the increase in income primarily comes from employment of residents in other jurisdictions.

FIGURE 2.3 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR SPARTA, GEORGIA 2010 - 2014



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<i>Project</i>	<i>Status</i>				<i>Comments</i>
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Postponed</i>	<i>Not Accomplished</i>	
Reestablish Downtown Development Authority (DDA)					Sparta will create a development organization as an umbrella to house the DDA.
Continue working with Hancock County regarding economic development issues and programs				x	
Continue seeking grants for downtown improvements		x			This is a project that will continue to occur, does not need to be listed as an individual project, and will be removed from the work program

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WORK PROGRAM

Projects	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Create a walking guide to the city that promotes the agricultural / historical sites within the city		x				City of Sparta / Local Business Owners	Staff Time	Local Funds
Research the economic, social, and regional benefit of the Pine Tree Festival and provide suggestions to improve this event			x			City of Sparta / Local Business Owners	Staff Time	Local Funds
Create a tourism guide to include the Scenic By Way Route and Native American Historical Sites		x				City of Sparta / Local Business Owners	Staff Time	Local Funds
Work with Hancock County Schools to create a youth business program				x		City of Sparta / Hancock County School Board	Staff Time	Local Funds
Create a promotional package detailing the unique agricultural programs located within the city			x			City of Sparta / Local Business Owners	Staff Time	Local Funds
Initiate the Duckweed removal and processing business at city water treatment plant		x				City of Sparta	Staff Time	Local Funds



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HOUSING

*R*esidential developments and individual housing units located on larger lots reflect a significant portion of land use within the City of Sparta. The subject of housing being addressed within the comprehensive plan is important as the city considers its future, it must consider its ability to provide appropriate housing for residents and consider the possibility of removing housing units that may be considered unsafe. The consideration of housing may include creating provisions within the city's subdivision regulations that allows the city input in how future residential developments are designed including pedestrian facilities and greenspaces.

The following goals were expressed in the Sparta 2008 Partial Plan Update regarding Housing:

- Actively seek appropriate state and federal grants for housing improvements
- Strive to eliminate substantial substandard and dilapidated housing within Sparta
- Encourage infill housing in existing viable neighborhoods
- Promote walkable, safe neighborhoods

The Housing section of this plan will provide information regarding housing stock, age of housing, and vacant units. This section will also provide the Report of Accomplishments and new Five Year Work Program for the City of Sparta.

HOUSING

AGING HOUSING STOCK: Figure 2.4 depicts the percentage of housing units constructed in Sparta, Hancock County, and the State of Georgia at distinct time periods.

The 2009-2013 American Community Survey indicates nearly 50 percent of all housing units were constructed prior to 1960 making these residential units more than 50 years old. In comparison, approximately a quarter of residential units in Hancock County, and 14 percent of residential units in the State of Georgia were constructed prior to 1960.

Nearly 40 percent of all homes in Sparta were constructed between 1960 and 1989. This is approximately 2 percent less than the same amount of homes constructed during this time period for Hancock County and the State of Georgia.

As stated earlier in this section nearly half of all housing units in Sparta were constructed prior to 1960. Nearly 13.7 percent of housing was constructed after 1990 which is 23.2 percent less than Hancock County and 30.9 percent less than Georgia.

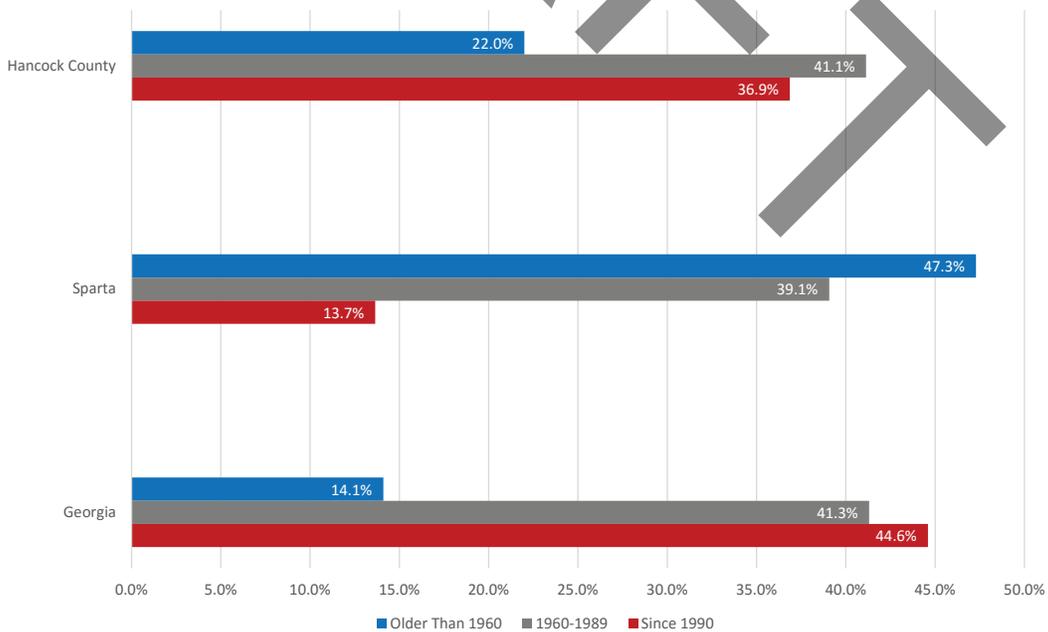
Sparta is known for historic homes and the statistics indicate that a majority of homes in the city may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. There is a lack of newer housing units within the city.

HOUSING MIX: Figure 2.5 on page ?? depicts the types of housing units which can be found in the City of Sparta. Sparta lacks housing diversity as nearly 83 percent of all housing in the city is either classified as single-family detached or mobile home/trailer.

There has been an increase in the number of single family detached housing units as 57 new units have been added. There has been a reduction of 28 mobile homes and trailers during this same time period.

The number of buildings housing 20 or more units and 3-9 housing units have seen growth during this time period as 33 units have been built.

FIGURE 2.4 HOUSING UNITS BY AGE FOR SPARTA, HANCOCK COUNTY, AND GEORGIA



HOUSING

FIGURE 2.5 HOUSING BY TYPE - CITY OF SPARTA

Type	2000		2009 - 2013 American Community Survey - Census				
	Number	% of Total	Number	Margin Err.	% of Total	Change	% Change
Single Units (Detached)	492	66.8%	549	+/-100	69.4%	57	11.6%
Single Units (Attached)	10	1.4%	4	+/-8	0.5%	-6	-60.0%
Double Units	27	3.7%	16	+/-13	2.0%	-11	-40.7%
3 to 9 Units	24	3.3%	39	*	4.9%	15	62.5%
10 to 19 Units	6	0.8%	15	+/-15	1.9%	9	150.0%
20 or More	60	8.1%	78	+/-36	9.9%	18	30.0%
Mobile Homes or Trailers	118	16.0%	90	+/-46	11.4%	-28	-23.7%
Total	737	100.0%	791	+/-116	100.0%	54	7.3%

VACANT HOUSING: There is a substantial number of unoccupied housing units located in the city of Sparta between the time period of 2000 and the 2009-2013 ACS. The 2000 Census reported 14.9 percent of all housing in Sparta was vacant. This increased 26.3 percent or more than a quarter of all housing within the city.

increase during this time period suggesting that although median values for owner occupied homes have increased during this time period, the median value of homes in Sparta have not kept pace with the state home values.

HOME VALUES: Figure 2.6 indicates the median value of owner occupied homes for the city of Sparta from the 2000 Census and the 2009-2013 ACS. The cost of housing has increased from the year 2000 through the 2009-2013 ACS by approximately 26 percent.

This is similar to the increase experienced by Hancock County. However, the state of Georgia experienced a 36 percent

FIGURE 2.6 MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER OCCUPIED HOMES FOR SPARTA, HANCOCK COUNTY, AND GEORGIA

Type	2000		2009 - 2013 American Community Survey - Census		
	Median Value	Median Value	Margin Err.	Change in Value	% Change in Value
Sparta	\$53,000	\$67,800	+/-4,129	\$14,800	27.9%
Hancock County	\$54,700	\$69,000	+/-10,499	\$14,300	26.1%
Georgia	\$111,200	151,300	+/-477	\$40,100	36.1%



HOUSING

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<i>Project</i>	<i>Status</i>				<i>Comments</i>
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Postponed</i>	<i>Not Accomplished</i>	

No Housing Projects were listed in the adopted March 16, 2011 Short Term Work Program

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HOUSING

WORK PROGRAM

Projects	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Begin the planning process of the rehabilitation of the old Hancock Central School into residential units		x				City of Sparta / Hancock County School Board	Staff Time	Local Funds
Develop a strategy to utilize Air BnB to provide a greater number of short stay options in historic residential homes.			x			City of Sparta / Local Volunteers	Staff Time	Local Funds
Develop ordinance language to ensure loft apartments are allowed in downtown Sparta		x				City of Sparta / CSRA Regional Commission	Staff Time	Local Funds
Create a housing inventory including historic homes			x			City of Sparta / CSRA Regional Commission	Staff Time	Local Funds



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NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

*N*atural and Cultural Resources found within a jurisdiction can provide potential tourist attractions and opportunities for economic development. It is important to recognize that natural resources including, water, air, and land should be protected in order to provide residents with basic necessities.

Cultural resources found throughout the city of Sparta include a vast collection of historic homes many of which may be potentially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Restored historic homes can potentially create a foundation for historic tourism within the city.

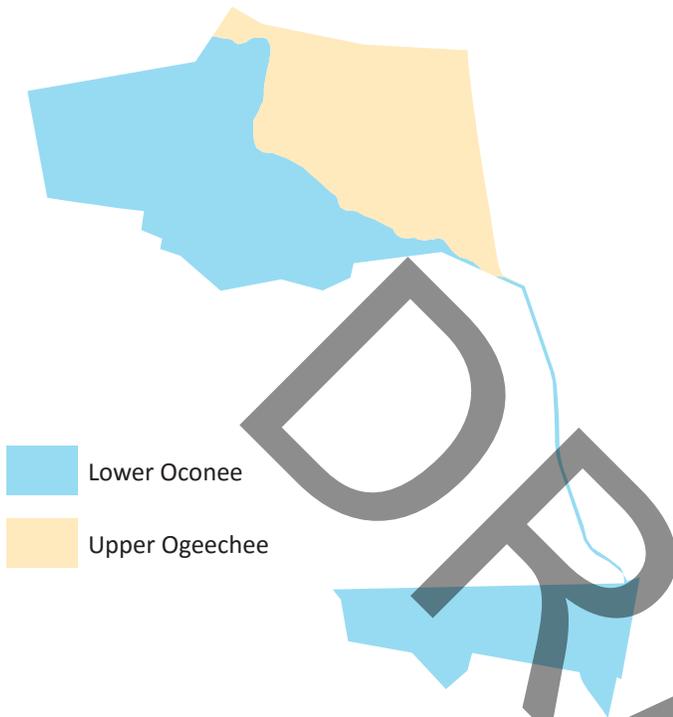
The following goals were expressed in the Sparta 2008 Partial Plan Update regarding Natural and Cultural Resources:

- *Encourage and support redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown Sparta*
- *Protect and conserve Sparta's Natural and Cultural Resources*
- *Encourage new development in suitable locations in order to protect natural and cultural resources, and environmentally - sensitive areas*

The Natural & Cultural Resources section of this plan will provide information regarding Watersheds, Wetlands, and Flood Plains. This section will also provide the Report of Accomplishments and new Five Year Work Program for the City of Sparta.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

MAP 2.1 WATERSHEDS LOCATED WITHIN SPARTA



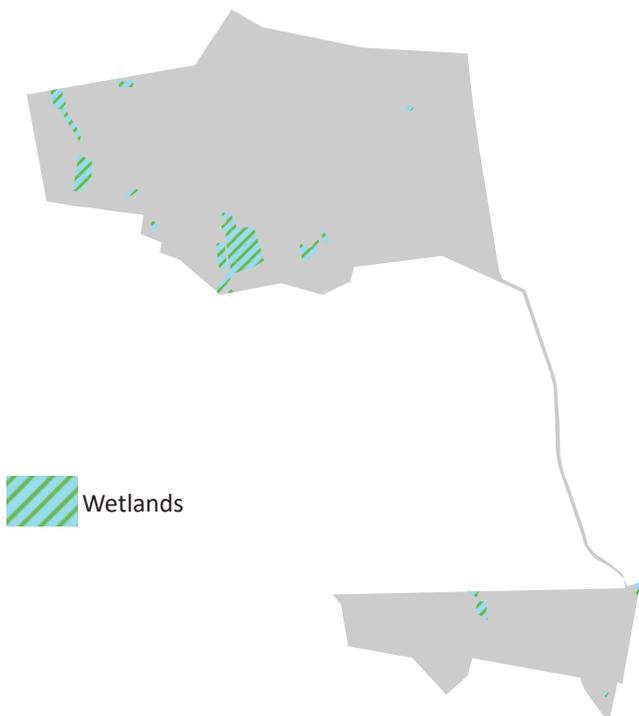
WATERSHEDS: Naturally occurring water sources are important in providing potable water to residents of the city of Sparta and for county residents for which is supplied. In combination with extraction and filtration, these naturally occurring water sources are key in allowing residents to have potable water. These naturally occurring water sources have multiple components which allows these naturally occurring water sources to occur. These components include:

- **Watersheds:** Land formations which direct water (primarily rain water) flows in a certain direction and feeds smaller flows and water bodies.
- **Groundwater Recharge Areas:** Specific surface areas where water passes through the ground to replenish under ground water sources.
- **Aquifer:** Underground water source consisting of permeable or unconsolidated material from which water can be extracted.

Map 2.1 illustrates the location of the two watersheds that are partially located in Sparta. These watersheds are:

- ◆ Lower Oconee ◆ Upper Ogeechee

MAP 2.2 WETLANDS LOCATED WITHIN SPARTA



The city of Sparta extracts drinking water from a water intake at Lake Sinclair which qualifies as a large water supply watershed as it exceeds the 100 square mile threshold. Sparta does not lie within seven miles of either an intake point.

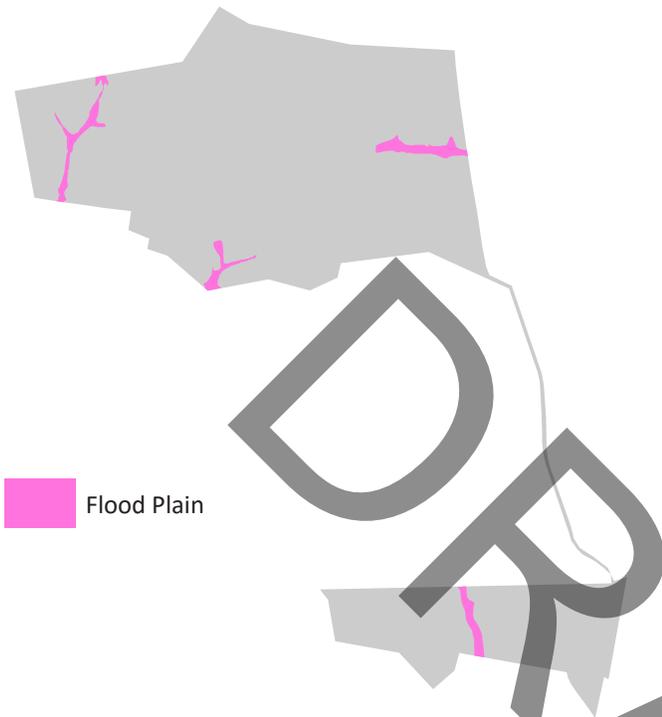
WETLANDS: Wetlands can be defined as lands which are saturated, either permanently or seasonally, that creates an ecosystem in which contains characteristic vegetation which has adapted to the unique soil conditions. Wetlands serve as a unique habitat for fish and wildlife, breeding ground, and home for unique plant and animal species which have adapted to these special conditions.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has identified five categories of wetlands which require special protection through ordinances. These include:

- Open Water Wetlands
- Non-Forested Emergent Wetlands
- Scrub/Shrub Wetlands
- Forested Wetlands
- Altered Wetlands

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

MAP 2.3 FLOODPLAINS LOCATED WITHIN SPARTA



Wetlands located in Sparta are illustrated in Map 2.2. Land uses in wetland areas should be limited to low to no impact uses which include the harvesting of lumber and timber and wildlife and fishery management.

FLOOD PLAINS: Flooding can be defined as a situation in which an overflow of water submerges land which usually is not inundated with water. A floodplain is an area designated to store natural water and conveyance, maintain water quality, and provide groundwater recharge.

There are a limited number of flood plains located in Sparta. Map 2.3 shows the designated flood areas as determined by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Map.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The city of Sparta has a number of historical sites, structures, and buildings which have national or local cultural significance. The following six historic sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- *The Glen Mary House*
- *The Hutt-River Plantation*
- *The Pearson-Boyer Plantation*
- *The Rockby School*
- *Sparta Cemetery*
- *Sparta Historic District*

In addition to those resources on the National Register of Historical Place there are ten (10) additional residential structures in the county which are eligible to be listed on the National Register, based on the age of these sites and the significance of the architectural style and age of structures. The following is a list of historically significant sites:

- *The Sayre-Shivers-Alford House*
- *The Baxter-Wiley House*
- *The Baxter-Hudson House*
- *The DuBose-Peck-Hitchcock House*
- *The Britt-Roundtree-Hollis House*
- *The Brightside House*
- *The home of Nancy Stephens*
- *The Graves Barn*
- *The Drummer's Home*
- *The Hancock County Courthouse*
- *The Camilla-Zack Community Center*
- *Horeb Baptist Church*
- *Hickory Grove Baptist Church*



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<i>Project</i>	<i>Status</i>				<i>Comments</i>
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Postponed</i>	<i>Not Accomplished</i>	
Prepare and adopt DNR "Part V" environmental ordinances					

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NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

WORK PROGRAM

<i>Projects</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>					<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Cost Estimate</i>	<i>Fund Source</i>
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Create a tree farm educational site on city owned property as an educational opportunity				x		City of Sparta / Fort Valley State University Extension Office	Staff Time	Local Funds
Initiate historical tours and educational program using historic architectural structures			x			City of Sparta / UGA	Staff Time	Local Funds
Initiate a Keep America Beautiful program in Sparta		x				City of Sparta	Staff Time	Local Funds
Create a program to recognize the importance of Native American culture in Sparta				x		City of Sparta / Local Volunteers	Staff Time	Local Funds



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COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities provide the basic services residents need and expects their local government to provide through the local government (ex. public safety, roads) or through a contract with a private sector entity.

The following goals were expressed in the Sparta 2008 Partial Plan Update regarding Community Development:

- *Encourage and support redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown Sparta*
- *Work cooperatively with Hancock County and other agencies involvement in local economic development activities*
- *Support programs for the retention, expansion, and creation of businesses that will enhance the city's economic well-being*
- *Encourage economic development and redevelopment activities*
- *Target reinvestment in declining, existing neighborhoods to further encourage private sector redevelopment*
- *Promote the establishment and maintenance of public gathering sights within the Downtown area to serve as focal points for the city*

The Community Facilities section of this plan will provide information regarding potable water, wastewater treatment, public safety, fire protection, and emergency services, roads and railroads, and educational facilities.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POTABLE WATER: The City of Sparta operates a municipal water system for its residents and provides some service for residents of unincorporated Hancock County. Sparta operates a 1.0 million gallon per day (mgd) capacity treatment facility located at the end of James Way Drive in Hancock County. Water from the lake is drawn and pumped through two 8 inch lines to the waterworks. Maximum capacity of this facility is 1,250 gal/min. Ford Creek is used as a secondary source for water allowing a total capacity of 500,000 gpd. The water distribution system primarily consists of 8 inch lines throughout central Sparta and 6 inch lines and smaller in other areas. The City of Sparta operates three elevated treated water storage facilities with a storage capacity of 575,000 gallons.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT: The City of Sparta operates a sanitary sewerage system in which wastewater is treated at a city operated George F. Green Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) which can treat up to 200,000 gpd. This facility is located on city owned property south of Sparta adjacent to the Hancock Correctional Institution. The facility was built in 1988 and serves residents of both Sparta and unincorporated Hancock County. The wastewater treatment center was upgraded to meet the needs of the correctional facility.

PUBLIC SAFETY, FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES: The City of Sparta operates a police department with seven sworn officers. The national rate of sworn officers per residents is 2.4 according to the Police Employee Data website provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The 2010 population of Sparta was 1,400 residents. The current ratio is 3.36 sworn officers per 1,000 residents. The City of Sparta operates a joint facility with Hancock County for its jail. The City of Sparta operates a volunteer fire station within the city limits that covers the entire city. Emergency medical services are provided by Grady health systems through a contract.

ROADS AND RAILROADS: There are a total of 21.22 miles of roadway within the city of Sparta, Georgia. A total of 9.61 miles of roads within the city are classified as city streets. A total of 5.54 miles of roads located within the city are classified as county roads and a total of 3.57 miles of road are classified as state highways. Sparta has 1.81 miles of railroad in its jurisdiction which is owned and operated by CSX Transportation. CSX is defined by the Federal Surface Transportation Board as a Class 1 railroad with an average operating revenue at or above \$255.9 million. The current loads traveling through Sparta are freight loads, however, there is interest in passenger rail returning to Sparta and Hancock County.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: Schools serving the residential population of Sparta are located in Hancock County. The following is from the Hancock County 2016 Comprehensive Plan:

The Hancock County school district consists of three (3) schools: Lewis Elementary, Hancock Central Middle, and Hancock Central High, providing classes for students in Pre-K through 12th grade. Total enrollment in the school system has decreased between 2000 and 2015, down to 970 students from 1,732. Examination of population data confirms that the largest population declines were in family households with children under 18 and married couples with children under 18.

Education is an important factor to look at in a community, as it plays a major role in resident ability to receive certain types jobs. Forty-four (44) percent of Hancock County residents age 25+ have a high school diploma or equivalent. This is up from 34 percent in 2000. There has been little changes in educational attainment with regard to higher education over the same time period. Organizations like Family Connection and Communities in Schools have made dropout prevention a priority.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<i>Project</i>	<i>Status</i>				<i>Comments</i>
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Plan, design, and construct downtown streetscape improvements Phase 1	x				
Continue seeking grants for water and wastewater system improvements		x			The is an ongoing activity and will be removed from the work program.
Work with Georgia DOT to address intersection issues		x			The city is in the process of working with GDOT to address issues at the intersection of Broad St., East Broad Street, and Augusta Hwy.
Prepare updated Solid Waste Management Plan	x				
Seek CDBG funds for various needed community improvements		x			The is an ongoing activity and will be removed from the work program.
Infiltration/Inflow Corrections	x				
Abandon old wastewater lagoon and replace lift station	x				
Complete water audit and leak study				x	
Replace defective water meters		x			This project is still in progress and will continue until all defective water meters are replaced.
Upgrade land application system at wastewater	x				
Water distribution system upgrade		x			The project continues as funding becomes available



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

WORK PROGRAM

Projects	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Work with GDOT to address intersections within the City of note Broad St., East Broad Street, and Augusta Hwy				x		City of Sparta / GDOT		
Identify public properties within the city that can be used for parkspace and community garden		x				City of Sparta	Staff Time	Local Funds
Integrate duckweed removal with the water treatment plant	x	x				City of Sparta / Duckweed USA	Staff Time	Local Funds
Water distribution system upgrade		x		x		City of Sparta / CSRARC	Staff Time	Local Funds / Grants
Replace defective water meters		x		x		City of Sparta	Staff Time	Local Funds
Plan, design, and construct downtown streetscape improvements Phase 2		x				City of Sparta	\$75,000 est.	TSPLOST
Gettis Street Improvements				x		City of Sparta / GDOT	\$792,000	TIA
SR 15 Sparta Bypass					x	City of Sparta / GDOT	\$11,585,960	TSPLOT



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LAND USE

*L*and Use designation and regulation allows communities to integrate demographic trends, the current economic circumstances, and social awareness encourages communities to meet development needs through the designation of land for particular uses. Designation of areas for certain land uses can ensure that land within a jurisdiction can be distributed to meet the needs of the City of Sparta.

The following goals were expressed in the Sparta 2008 Partial Plan Update regarding Community Development:

- *Provide for the balanced and orderly development of Sparta (and Hancock County) in accordance with the Land Use Plan and existing policies*
- *Encourage orderly development of areas outside of Sparta*
- *Maintain the natural and scenic beauty of Sparta through conservation and land use controls*
- *Allocate natural and recreational areas for recreational and conservation purposes*
- *Protect the integrity of important water resources through land use controls*
- *Protect recreational, cultural and natural areas for the development of tourism*
- *Protect the aesthetic and environmental value of land in scenic areas through careful regulation of housing and other land development*

The Land Use section of this plan will provide information regarding income, employment, and unemployment rates. This section will also provide the Report of Accomplishments and new Five Year Work Program for the City of Sparta.

LAND USE

CURRENT AND FUTURE LAND USES: The understanding of established and potential future uses of land within the city of Sparta should be prioritized in order to address changing community desire and economic situations. A comparison of Sparta’s current and future land use maps has established that the city expects growth. Significant amounts of land is added to areas designated as Commercial (26 percent) and Residential (15 percent).

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS: The following is a list and description of land use categories used in the City of Sparta.

Agriculture/Forestry: This classification includes land used for crop and livestock raising, commercial timber and pulpwood production, and fallow pasture, farm residences, and accessory use.

Commercial: Commercial land uses includes land used for retail and service uses. Retail commercial uses include structures and land utilized for the purpose of selling goods. Service commercial uses include structures and land employed for the purpose of selling services to the community.

Industrial: This land use includes all land used for mining and extracting raw materials, and land which contains structures and uses to convert raw materials into finished products.

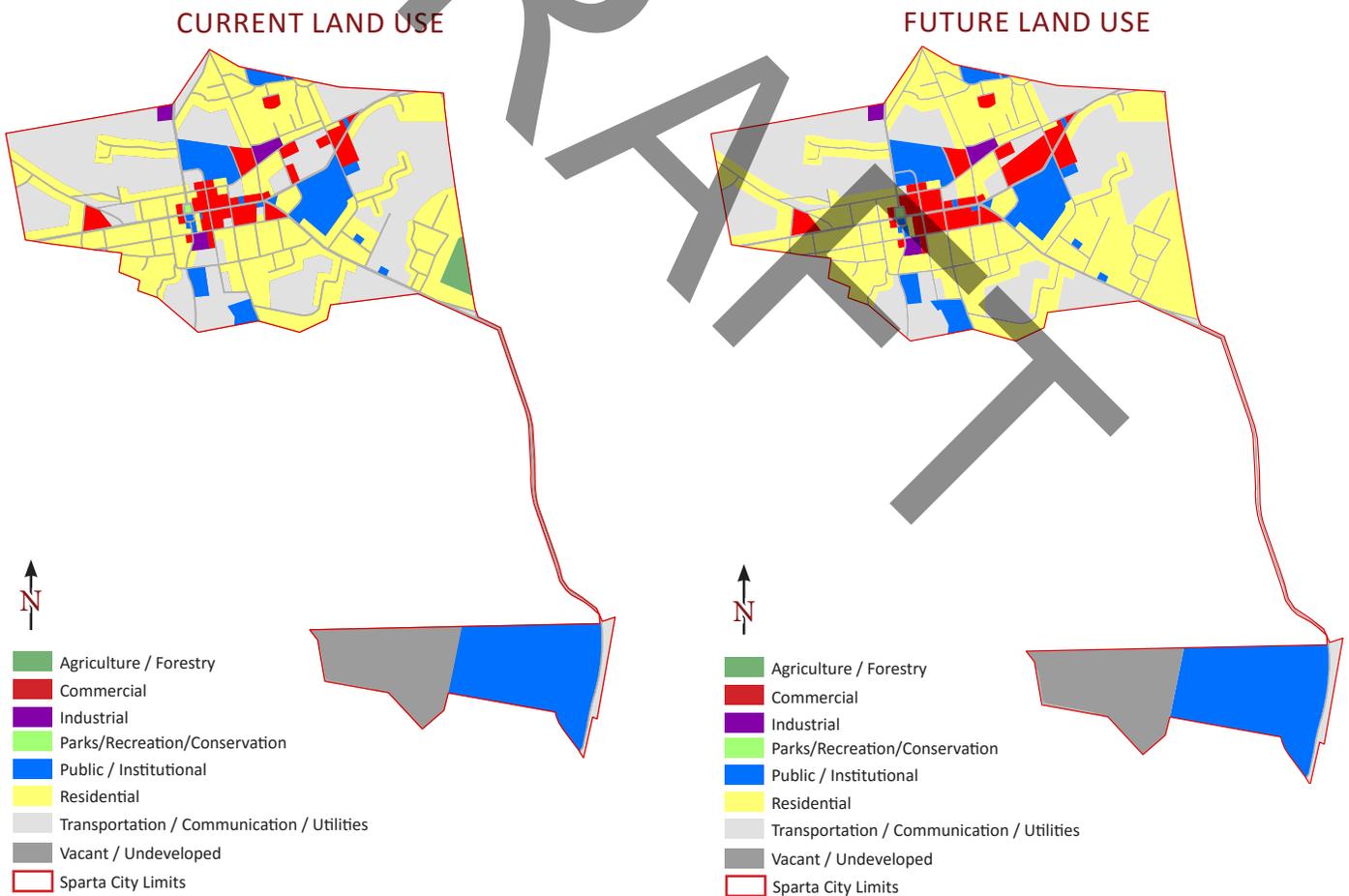
Parks/Recreation/Conservation: This category includes all land dedicated for active or passive recreation.

Public/Institutional: This land use includes land used for public and semi-public uses. Public uses include government and educational activities and structures. Semi-public uses include churches, synagogues, as well as and clubs and fraternal organizations.

Residential: This land use includes land utilized for single family detached homes, duplexes and multi-family structures, as well as manufactured housing.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities: This land use includes land used for transportation, communications, or utility purposes or structures.

Vacant/Undeveloped: This category includes land that is presently not in use, or land which is not being used for a particular use.



CHARACTER AREAS

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan incorporates a Character Area Map as its principal means by which the long-term land use goals and policies of the City of Sparta are represented. The Character Area Map presented herein, is an update to (and supersedes,) the prior future land use map that was included in the participating jurisdictions' last comprehensive plan document.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan Character Area Map includes a total of five (5) character areas which addresses the entire jurisdiction. The five character areas include:

- DOWNTOWN SPARTA
- INNOVATION - HISTORIC
- INSTITUTION - DEVELOPMENT
- PERIMETER - HISTORIC
- RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Character areas developed that account for land within the municipality, remains purposely broad. With limited near-term growth prospects, Sparta stakeholders determined that more specific land use policies for areas of existing population concentrations is best addressed through corridor, district, or neighborhood-specific special area planning processes as the need arises.

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan Character Area Map is located on page ?? Supporting character area narratives are located on pages ?? through ?? . When interpreting how best to use the 2016 Comprehensive Plan's Character Area Map and supporting narratives, the reader should be mindful of the following three (3) parameters:

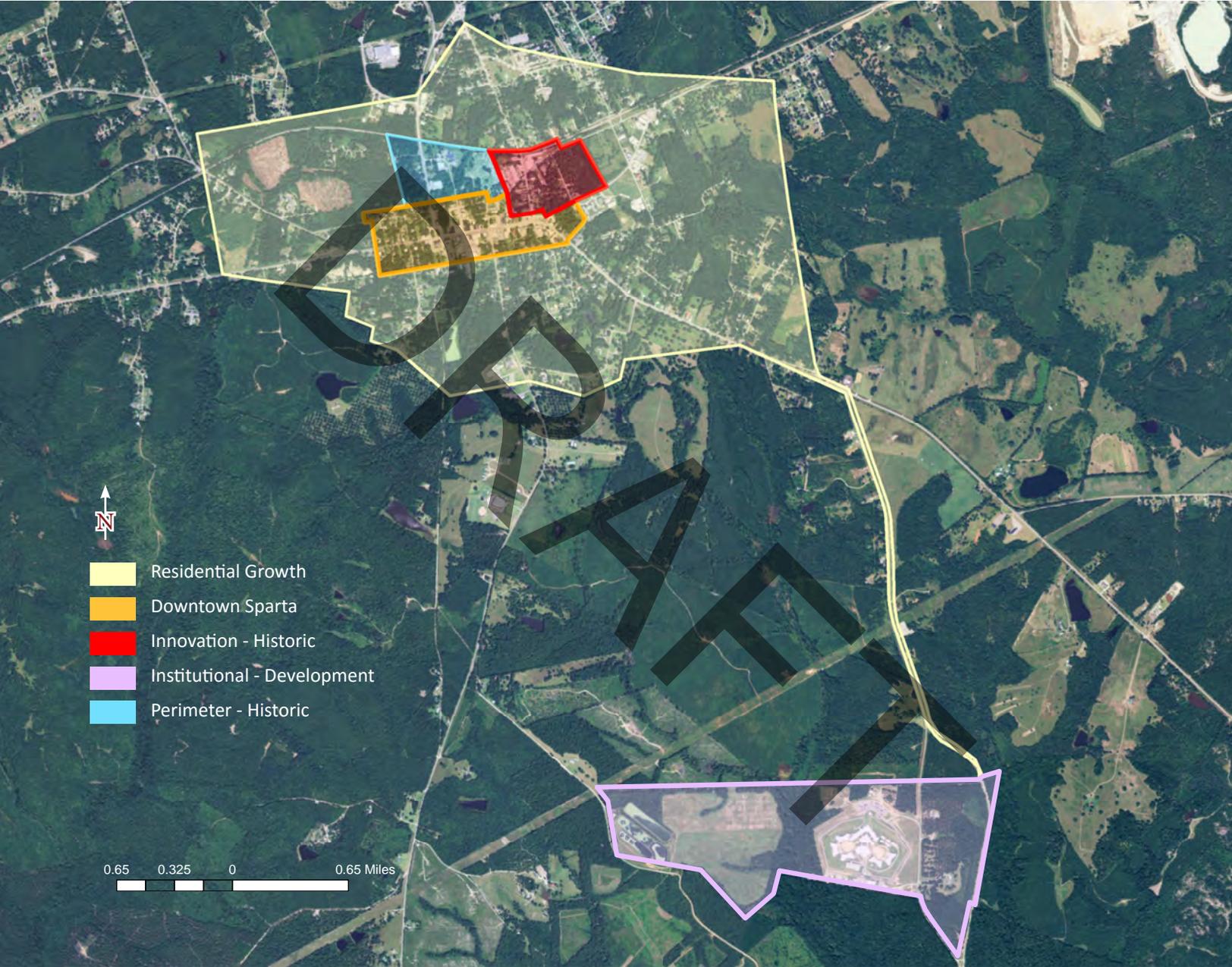
Character Area Boundaries. Unlike a parcel-specific future land use map, character area boundaries are conceptual and may cross parcel lines. The character area boundaries in this document represent "approximate" character area location. This flexibility allows the city government to make decisions based on changing conditions while reducing the need to continually amend the comprehensive plan. As a result, it is possible to assume that small parcels located directly adjacent to one (1) or more character areas may be permitted by the local government to develop according to the parameters of the adjacent area rather than the area in which it is located. Such an action should be taken sparingly and the decision should only be made if the local government can show that it is consistent with the recommendations provided in other sections of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan or other local policy document. For the most part however, tracts should develop according to the parameters established in the specific character area in which it is located.

Character Area Narratives. The narratives located on pages ? through ? which correspond to the Character Area Map should be viewed as general policy statements - as statements of intent. Their use and applicability is similar to those other goals and policy statements found in the Community Goals component of the Community Agenda. They should inform future development decisions and perhaps form the basis for more detailed topic-specific studies in the future.

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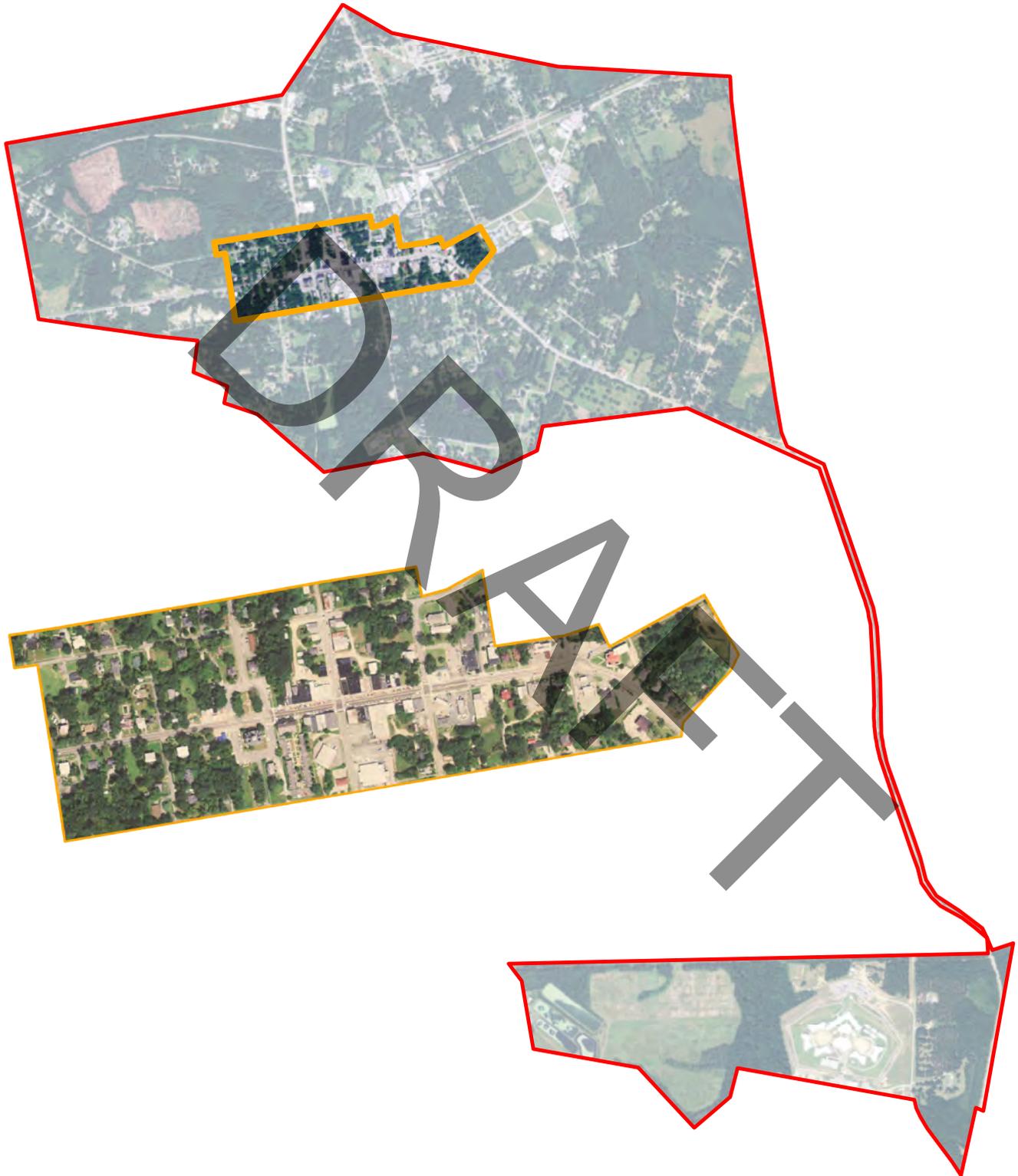
LAND USE

CHARACTER AREAS



LAND USE

DOWNTOWN SPARTA - CHARACTER AREA



LAND USE

DOWNTOWN SPARTA - CHARACTER AREA



General Description

The Downtown Sparta character area primarily located along Broad Street contains multiple land uses including commercial and small and medium lot residential. There is a focus on making this area a true community center where residents are able to gather and enjoy amenities in conjunction with local shopping and eating options

Land Uses and Zoning Categories

- Commercial
- Residential
- Historic Residential
- Greenspace / Parks

Relationship to Prior Comprehensive Plan

This character area was not part of the City of Sparta 2008-2011: Partial Update. This character area evolved from the need to identify uses of incorporated areas within the city.

Implementation Measures

- Provide incentives for certain commercial activities
- Improvements to commercial area pedestrian facilities
- Increase advertisement of commercial area and incentives outside of area
- Provide an area in which residents are able to congregate and enjoy events

LAND USE

INNOVATION HISTORIC - CHARACTER AREA



LAND USE

INNOVATION HISTORICAL - CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses and Zoning Categories

The Innovation-Historical character area is an area in which historical homes exist in conjunction with small-lot commercial hydroponic farming facilities. This unique combination of uses in proximity to one another is a model for rural communities and is promoted as such.

- Small-scale Innovative/Educational Agricultural
- Residential (Historic)
- Residential
- Public gardens

Relationship to Prior Comprehensive Plan

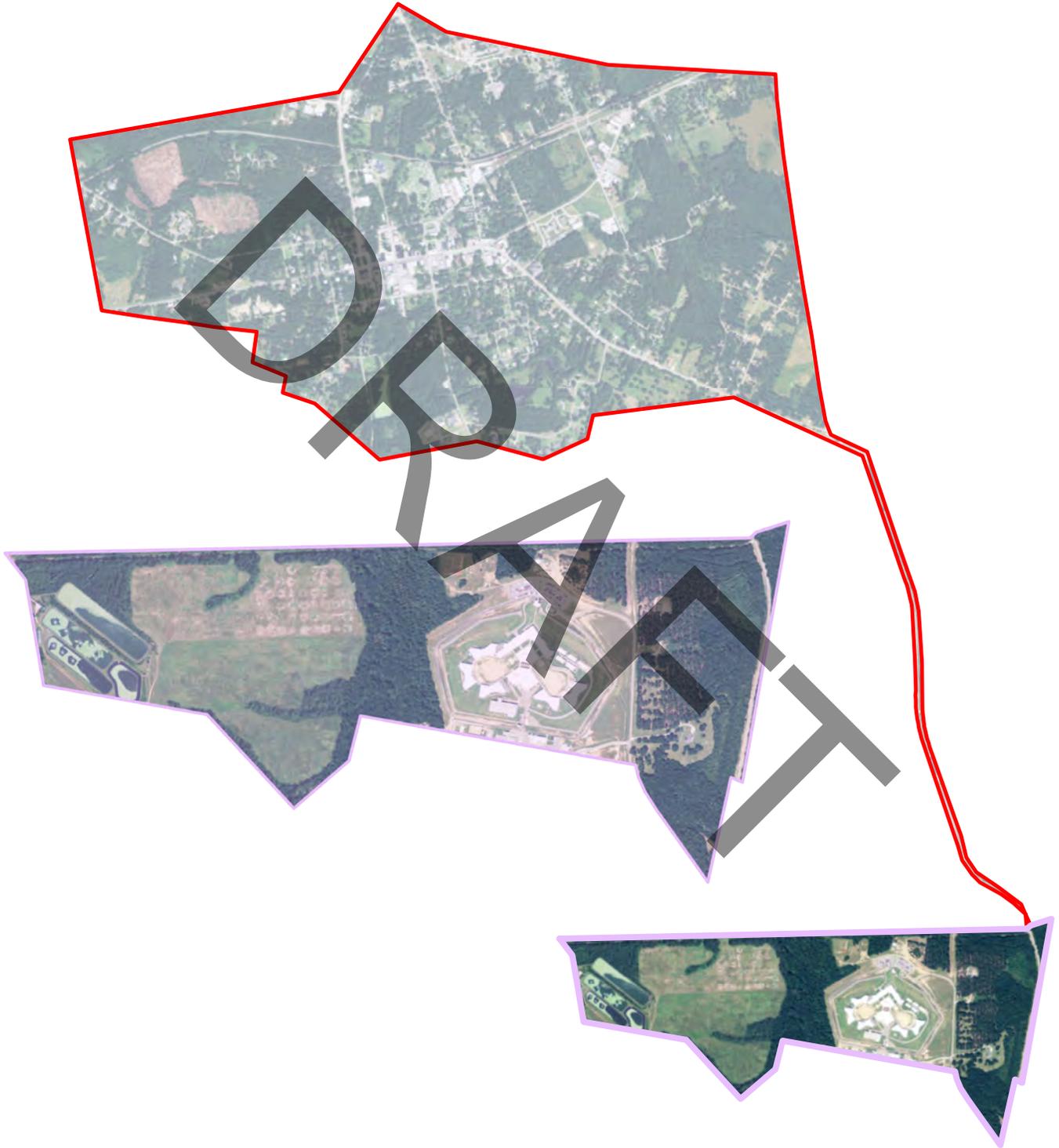
Implementation Measures

This character area was not part of the City of Sparta 2008-2011: Partial Update. This character area evolved from the need to identify uses of incorporated areas within the city.

- Assist with incentives and funding through the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University Agriculture Extension Offices
- Increase advertisement of area to attract visitors to unique marriage of agriculture within city residential area.

LAND USE

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT - CHARACTER AREA



LAND USE

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT - CHARACTER AREA



General Description

The Institutional Development Character Area currently contains the city's sewerage treatment plant's spray field and a state prison which comprise the majority of the land in this character area.

Land Uses and Zoning Categories

- Expansion of existing uses

Relationship to Prior Comprehensive Plan

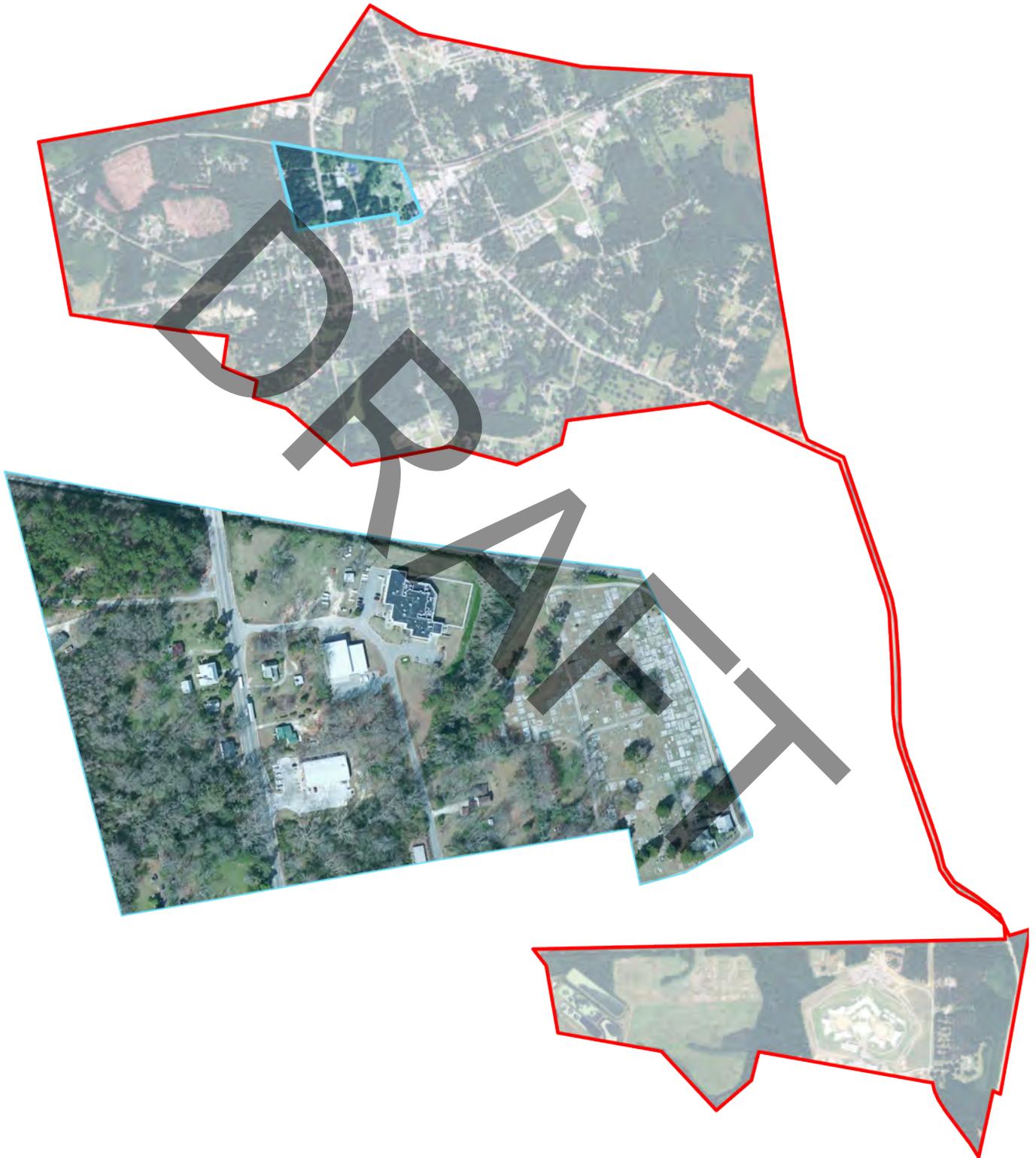
This character area was not part of the City of Sparta 2008-2011: Partial Update. This character area evolved from the need to identify uses of incorporated areas within the city.

Implementation Measures

- The uses currently in this area should only be expanded.

LAND USE

PERIMETER-HISTORIC - CHARACTER AREA



LAND USE

PERIMETER-HISTORIC - CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses and Zoning Categories

The Perimeter-Historic is characterized by historic homes and sites (including a cemetery located on the National Register of Historic Places). This area is a current tourist attraction and should be maintained and beautified to continue to attract visitors to the area.

- Residential (Historic)
- Residential
- Public gardens / parks
- Bed and Breakfast Inns
- Public Institutional

Relationship to Prior Comprehensive Plan

Implementation Measures

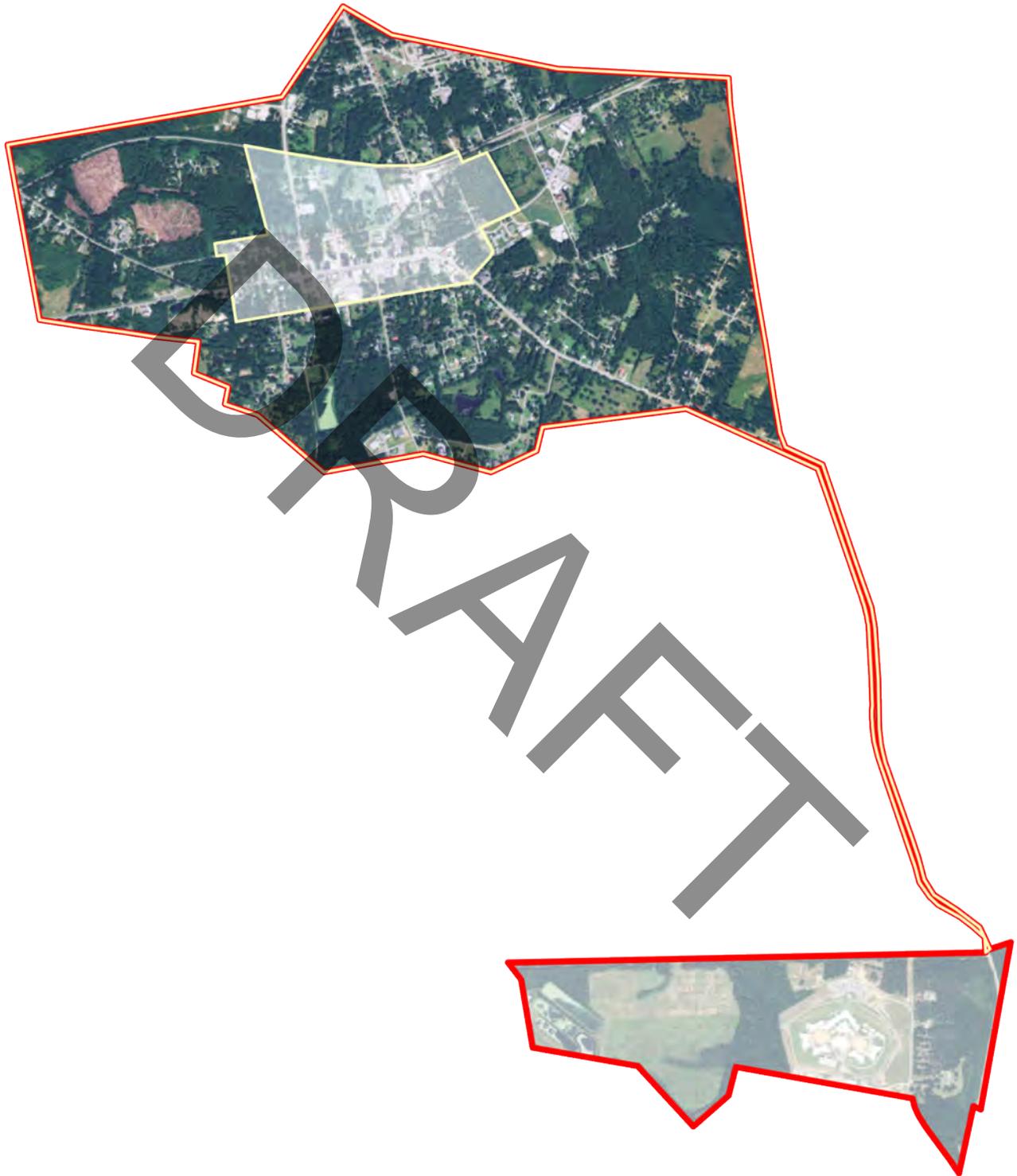
This character area was not part of the City of Sparta 2008-2011: Partial Update. This character area evolved from the need to identify uses of incorporated areas within the city.

- Provide ordinance language to ensure the operation of Bed & Breakfast / Inns to ensure visitors have a place to stay on a visit to the city
- Improvements to pedestrian facilities
- Increase the number of greenspaces and passive parks for visitors to enjoy



LAND USE

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH - CHARACTER AREA



LAND USE

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH - CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses and Zoning Categories

The Residential Growth Character area contains primarily residential and commercial land uses. Commercial land uses are typically located along major thoroughfares. There is potential for residential development throughout this character area.

- Residential
- Greenspaces / Active Parks
- Limited commercial along main highways

Relationship to Prior Comprehensive Plan

Implementation Measures

This character area was not part of the City of Sparta 2008-2011: Partial Update. This character area evolved from the need to identify uses of incorporated areas within the city.

- Improvements pedestrian facilities
- Provide an area in which residents are able to congregate and enjoy events

LAND USE

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Project	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Review zoning ordinance and other development regulations	X				
Complete "Full Comprehensive Plan Update"		X			

WORK PROGRAM

Projects	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Identify the historic district boundaries		x				CSRA Regional Commission	\$500	Local Funds
Create a overlay zone to encourage downtown development			x			City of Sparta / CSRA RC	\$10,000	Grants / Local Funds
Complete "Full Comprehensive Plan Update"	X					City of Sparta / CSRA RC	\$8,000	Grant



LAND USE

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