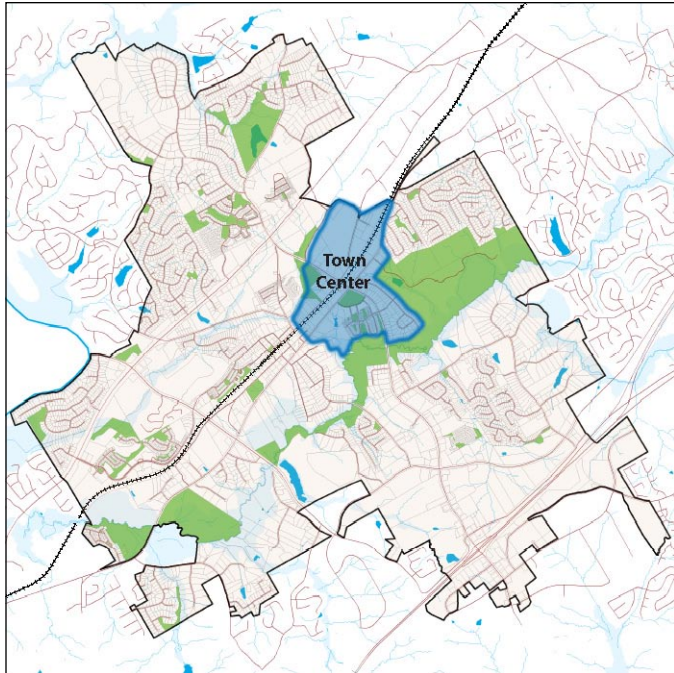


## 3.6 Town Center Character Area



Much the same way as Old Town represents Suwanee's past, Town Center has emerged as the new civic heart of the city and to some degree its public face. Town Center includes the four corners of the intersection of Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Buford Highway. It is very well-defined, incorporating the ten-acre park and its adjacent buildings; the Shadowbrook development to the south; and the municipal complex across Buford Highway. The Town Center Character Area anticipates further growth of this nucleus to include portions of the residential and commercial land uses across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to the north and northeast, and parcels along Buford Highway to the southwest.

### Vision for Town Center

Town Center will be anchored by the new Suwanee City Hall, the centerpiece of the character area (along with the park). Yet, while Town Center revolves around this civic core, it should nevertheless be completed in the future to the north and west, and expanded to the south along Buford Highway (especially by redevelopment of the lumberyard) and into the vacant land adjacent to Old Town, as envisioned in the Old Town Master Plan. New residential development adjacent to Old Town should consider its special context, and integrate into its landscape while transitioning down in density. New mixed-use development across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road should be similar in nature to that flanking the city hall site, but set back from the right-of-way to allow for a plaza that mirrors the hardscaped edge of Town Center Park. Streets in this area should be extended to link into George Pierce Park as appropriate.



View looking at the intersection of Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road from behind Town Center Park

### Typical Existing Development Character

Existing development in Town Center is for the most part new multistory mixed-use flanking the ten-acre Town Center Park, with dense small-lot single-family homes and townhouses in the adjacent Shadowbrook neighborhood. This portion of the character area has emerged as the face of the city, and has raised the bar for new high-quality design in the city. Across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, a few small commercial strip buildings and a convenience store occupy the frontage near the Buford Highway intersection; while the balance of the area consists of single-family ranch houses dating roughly from the 1950s and 60s on half acre wooded lots. The northern edge of Buford Highway contains shallow parcels that are used for city facilities west of Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road (including the current city hall); with light industrial uses and the iconic Dillard's Barbecue to the east. Finally, across the railroad to the northeast is a large area being developed as office/light industrial and warehousing; while smaller commercial and institutional uses including the new Gwinnett County Suwanee-branch library appear along Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Main Street to the southwest.

## Future Development

Town Center has provided a template for future development in the character area, especially in places that are adjacent to the new construction around the park. The mixed-use multi-level format lining Town Center Park should be replicated across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road on the existing commercial parcels and to some degree east to Suwanee Avenue, as well as along Buford Highway to the north and south of the city facilities – including provision for relocation of Dillard's Barbecue. The city's facilities will largely remain the same in form, but the function of the municipal building across Buford Highway from the will house the police department after the completion of the new city hall fronting the park. Similarly, the growing warehouse district to the north will also remain in the near future but be improved as necessary with streetscapes and bikeways. Those businesses will provide beneficial daytime customers for stores and shops



View looking at the intersection of Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

around Town Center. The ranch-style residential neighborhood, Estates at Suwanee Lakes, can be intensified over time as the market dictates, with larger lots subdivided to create smaller parcels where feasible, without replicating the density of Shadowbrook. Particular attention should be paid to expanding Town Center to the south, especially in prioritizing the redevelopment of the industrial lumberyard; continuing development down Buford Highway to support the Old Town gateway at Russell Street; connecting Old Town and Town Center street networks; and transitioning denser housing in Town Center to blend into the infill pattern in the Old Town Area.

### **LAND USE AREAS AND DEVELOPABLE QUANTITIES IN 2030:**

Land Use	Existing Acres	Acres in 2030
Single Family	94	60
MU Village	0	49
MU Center	0	89
Mixed-Use	2	0
Comm/Retail	26	0
Office-Industrial	0	55
Industrial	87	28
Institutional	27	28
Parks/Recreation	33	34
Agriculture	5	0
Vacant	68	0

Development	New Growth	Total Quantities
Residential	409 units	979 units
Comm/Retail		245,333 sf
Office	442,222 sf	450,000sf
Office-Industrial	1,197,900 sf	1,197,900 sf
Industrial		609,840 sf
Institutional	1 acre	28 acres
Parks/Recreation		34 acres

Table 3.6-a<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Calculation of developable quantities:

- Residential: Medium density = 8 units per acre
- Commercial/Retail: Stand alone = 0.25 FAR  
Within mixed-use developments: Medium density = 8,000 sf per acre
- Office: Medium density = 10,000 sf per acre
- Industrial and Office-Industrial = 0.5 FAR
- Mixed-Use Village: 2/3 of total area = residential and 1/3 of total area = commercial/retail
- Mixed-Use Centers: 1/3 of total area = residential and 2/3 of total area = office and commercial/retail

## Implementation Measures

Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the findings and recommendations of the earlier planning study done for the area across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, and revise or re-plan as needed to take into account new issues and directions</li> <li>• Include in any future Town Center expansion studies the parcels north of Buford Highway and east of Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road</li> <li>• Include the western portion of Town Center in further discussions of the Old Town Overlay District</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunities to provide affordable housing in Town Center and its expansion areas</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities to provide senior housing in Town Center and its expansion areas</li> </ul>
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the possibility of providing additional park facilities on the forested land behind the library</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a parking study to determine ways to handle demand during Town Center events</li> <li>• Consider the feasibility of a circulator shuttle to link Town Center park to more remote neighborhoods and other city activity centers</li> <li>• Investigate ways to link Town Center to George Pierce Park by extending or enhancing adjacent roads and trails</li> <li>• Link Town Center and the library area to the potential new greenway / multiuse path paralleling Peachtree Industrial Boulevard</li> </ul>
Natural and Historic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider ways to integrate Dillard's Barbecue (a local institution) and the adjacent mature tree into future new development</li> <li>• Continue expanding Suwanee Creek greenway to the east and west, with a possible arm extending to Buford Highway</li> </ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue marketing Town Center as a regional mixed-use destination</li> </ul>

## Target Area Plan

The target area plan for Town Center illustrates the expansion to the north across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and along Buford Highway. Future development is similar in scale and design to the buildings flanking the new city hall, as shown in the views below; and incorporates a linear plaza running along the north side of Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road that visually extends the park and functionally provides a greenway connection to Suwanee Creek to the south. Town Center Avenue and Suwanee Avenue are both extended into George Pierce Park; while Suwanee Avenue is extended southwest to connect to King Street. Mixed-use development continues along Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road across the railroad tracks, as does the greenway along the road right-of-way.

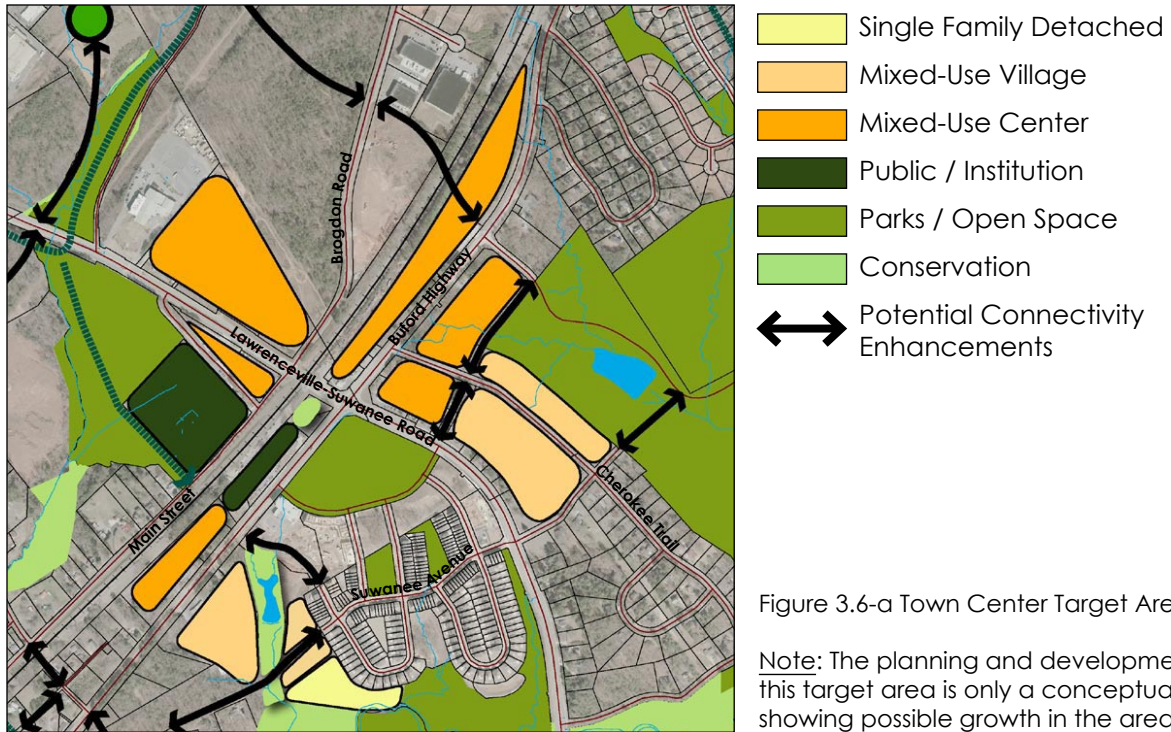


Figure 3.6-a Town Center Target Area Plan

Note: The planning and development shown for this target area is only a conceptual approach showing possible growth in the area.



View looking south towards Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and at Town Center Park