

## **Introduction**

This plan update has been completed in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

### Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The City of Zebulon Comprehensive Plan shall provide guidance and policy standards for future growth and development. The plan also identifies needs and opportunities which currently exist within the community. Goals, policies, and specific implementation measures are also listed to set policy for particular segments and specific areas of the city.

#### **City Council Members**

Bobby Blalock, Mayor  
William Thomas  
Joe Walter  
David Woods  
Dewey Yarbrough

### Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Public Participation

The City of Zebulon Council appointed a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to assist and guide the update of the comprehensive plan. A series of consecutive meetings took place to address the components of the plan update. The Steering Committee included members of the city council, city government and other community stakeholders.

#### **Steering Committee Members**

Larry Mitcham, City Manager  
Joe Walter, Council Member  
Bill Booth, Citizen  
Christine Curry, DDA/Business Owner  
Holly Autry, Business Owner

As part of the public participation component, a county-wide community visioning meeting was held on April 18, 2017 to gather input from the citizens. Two public hearings were held in regards to the

comprehensive plan update process in which citizens could obtain information about the planning process, review, and comment on the plan. The public hearings were held October 25, 2016 and August 22, 2017.

## Needs and Opportunities

The Needs and Opportunities section addresses what the City of Zebulon needs to make it what it wants to become and what it currently lacks to achieve its vision. This section also identifies existing opportunities available within the community that should be utilized and supported to implement the vision.

To help gain a more accurate and balanced list of needs and opportunities, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted.

### SWOT Analysis

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly and welcoming community</li> <li>• Strategic location and close proximity to airport</li> <li>• Rich with history and culture</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Affordable tax rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to natural resources</li> <li>• Available infrastructure</li> <li>• Highway accessibility</li> <li>• Attractive to young families</li> <li>• Property available for development</li> <li>• Community spirit</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population decreasing and cannot support needs</li> <li>• Lack of rail service</li> <li>• Lack of business diversity</li> <li>• No website or media presence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of housing choice</li> <li>• Lack of overall retail</li> <li>• Amount of blighted properties</li> <li>• Disproportionate tax base</li> <li>• Limited industry</li> <li>• Excess sewer capacity</li> </ul>
Opportunities	

- Sewer access  
Land for available for both industrial and residential development

**Threats**

- Brain drain and lack of population growth  
Lack of diverse tax base

## **List of Needs and Opportunities:**

The Plan Steering Committee identified needs and opportunities, which exist within the City of Zebulon. This list should help guide future planning efforts and prioritize projects undertaken by the City.

### **Economic Development**

#### Needs:

- Need to diversify the tax base.
- Promote the continued revitalization of downtown.
- Revitalize key areas within the city such as the commercial entry corridors and residential neighborhoods.
- Need increased workforce development training.
- Establish a business development and marketing strategy.
- Appoint a city representative on the local industrial development authority.

#### Opportunities:

- Ample space and available infrastructure for new and expanded business.
- Increased tourism opportunities with local film industry.
- Industrial expansion.
- Build upon local tourism opportunities.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

#### Needs:

- Need to seek additional funding for trail connectivity.
- Need to update landscape ordinance.
- The acquisition of easements for trails.
- Need to complete old Zebulon School restoration.
- Need to continue downtown revitalization.
- Revitalize north/south sides of downtown entry corridors.
- Need to update historic resource survey.
- Need to increase protection of natural resources.
- Preserve our rural scenery and character.
- Protect the tree canopy throughout the community.

### Opportunities:

- Park expansion creates opportunities for increased connectivity to the high school.
- Potential for the designation of a local historic district(s).

### **Community Facilities and Services**

#### Needs:

- Need to establish plan review protocol.
- Need for additional codes enforcement personnel.
- Community development personnel needed.
- Need for a community gathering space for events and the arts.
- Need to re-evaluate all city services and policies including waste management and recycling.
- Need to restore and make productive use of the old school for community events and the arts.
- Need to re-paint city water tower(s).

### **Housing**

#### Needs:

- Need to update land development ordinance.
- Need to address blighted property throughout the city.
- Seek housing revitalization programs such as GICH and CDBG.

### Opportunities:

- Residential land available for development.

### **Land Use**

#### Needs:

- Seek to adopt a unified development ordinance.
- Update zoning ordinance and streamline application process.
- Establish clear guidelines for development process.
- Need to establish a downtown and commercial corridor overlay district to aid in appropriate uses and design.
- Need to promote the development and redevelopment of vacant sites throughout the community.

- Need to address and discourage visual clutter along roadways and improve the curb appeal of commercial corridors.

#### Opportunities:

- Streamlining development guidelines and process will create new and expanded development opportunities.

### **Transportation**

#### Needs:

- Need to address areas of poor drainage along key roadways.
- Resurface selected streets throughout the city.
- Need to repair, connect, and expand sidewalks along important travel corridors for increased connectivity.
- Seek to establish bike paths to connect community destinations and activity centers.
- Need to evaluate traffic patterns and provide for increased pedestrian safety close to entrances to schools.
- Some streets with the city may need to be widened and resurfaced.

#### Opportunities:

- SPLOST funds could be made available to address transportation issues.
- Enhanced pedestrian paths and sidewalks would increase pedestrian safety and offer higher quality of life.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

#### Needs:

- Need to address areas of additional coordination of services from collected taxes.
- Work with Pike County and the Georgia Department of Transportation to design and develop improvements to address traffic patterns.

#### Opportunities:

- Build upon cooperative relationships between the City and County.

## Goals and Policies

The purpose of the Community Goals and Policies section is to guide and direct the City of Zebulon's decision-making process for the future of the community. Following the established goals and policies ensures the plan is implemented by the citizens and local leaders.

### Vision Statement

A broad vision statement that was developed by the community stakeholders is below and depicts what the community is and what it desires to become in the future.

*The City of Zebulon, with its sense of place, historic resources, sustainable businesses, and strong community pride, will support diverse economic development, employment options and housing opportunities along with community, cultural and recreational services for its citizens. The City will achieve this through sound business recruitment planned growth and utilization of its*

### List of Community Goals and Policies

#### Economic Development

##### **Goal:**

Encourage sustainable development and expansion of diverse business, specialty retail, tourism resources and industrial growth that is best suitable for the City of Zebulon.

##### **Policies:**

- The City of Zebulon will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our community's economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.

- The City of Zebulon will target reinvestment into declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference to new economic development projects in greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of our community.
- The city will seek to make the City of Zebulon a place where citizens can find local employment and make use of local amenities and attractions.
- The City of Zebulon will take into account access to housing and impacts on transportation when considering economic development projects.
- The City will seek to strengthen the reach and influence of the Downtown Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce within community development.
- The City will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision-making process regarding economic development projects.
- The City will consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- The City will support the expansion of existing and seek new small businesses with diverse offerings.
- The City will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- The City of Zebulon will seek to attract and fill the industrial park with appropriate, diverse, and specialty business and industry.

### Natural and Cultural Resources

#### **Goal:**

Protect and promote the efficient use of the City of Zebulon's natural and cultural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, and historic assets.

#### **Policies:**

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process regarding future growth and development.
- The City of Zebulon will minimize inefficient land consumption and encourage more compact urban development in order to preserve green open space and natural resources.

- The City will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- The City of Zebulon will factor potential impacts on air and water quality in making decisions on new developments and transportation improvements.
- The City will seek to establish National Register districts for the recognition, promotion, and support of historic resources.
- Infrastructure networks will be developed to steer new development away from sensitive natural resource areas.
- The City of Zebulon will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and greenspace in all new development.
- The City of Zebulon will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through the protection of ground and surface water sources.
- The City will promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling programs.

### Community Facilities and Services

#### **Goal:**

Provide adequate services and amenities to meet the needs of the citizens of Zebulon and use efficiently its resources and existing infrastructure.

#### **Policies:**

- The City of Zebulon will invest in parks, especially neighborhood pocket parks, and open space to enhance the quality of life for its citizens.
- The City will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new or expanded facilities and services.
- The City will seek ways to relocate the existing bus barn and repair facility.
- The City of Zebulon will protect existing infrastructure investments by encouraging infill redevelopment and compact development patterns.
- The City of Zebulon will encourage development within the community to locate in areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure.
- The City will encourage development within the city limits and urban growth boundary.

- The City will ensure that capital improvements needed to accommodate future development will be provided concurrent with new development.
- The City of Zebulon will coordinate provision of public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact and efficient urban development.
- The City will seek to utilize sequential, phased extension of utilities and services to encourage rational expansion of development to areas immediately contiguous to already developed areas of the community.
- The City of Zebulon will use planned infrastructure expansion to support development in areas identified in the comprehensive plan as suitable for such development.
- The City of Zebulon will work with the local school board to encourage school location decisions that support the community's overall growth and development plans.
- The City will seek to relocate City Hall.
- The City will implement a public educational and awareness program.
- The City will seek the provision of higher education services.

## Housing

### **Goal:**

Provide the citizens of the City of Zebulon with adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing includes a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities.

### **Policies:**

- The City of Zebulon will seek to increase "aging in place" housing for its senior citizens.
- The City of Zebulon will address substandard and dilapidated housing in the community when feasible.
- The City of Zebulon will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.

- The City will seek to accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in each neighborhood.
- The City will encourage mixed use housing options such as encouraging residential units downtown and above retail.
- The City will offer incentives and explore options to address blight.

## Land Use

### **Goal:**

Promote the best use of land within the City of Zebulon that focuses quality development, increased connectivity, revitalization and maintaining the rural sense of place.

### **Policies:**

- The City of Zebulon's decisions on new development will contribute to the community's character and sense of place.
- The City of Zebulon will encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.
- The City of Zebulon encourage development whose design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- The City will address blighted structures and encourage appropriate infill.
- The City will update and re-write the overlay ordinance.
- The City will develop design standards to be used for commercial corridors.
- The City of Zebulon will preserve the rural character of the community and provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the community.
- The City of Zebulon's gateways and corridors will create a sense of place for the community.
- The City of Zebulon will encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- The City is committed to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community where there is ease of access to schools, parks, and other necessary services.
- The City will seek to increase the amount of recreational facilities and greenspace.

- The City of Zebulon is committed to provide pleasant, accessible public gathering places within the community such as an amphitheater.
- The City of Zebulon is committed to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas.
- The City of Zebulon supports appropriate residential and commercial in-fill development and redevelopment.
- The City will encourage mixed-use development that will offer proper pedestrian access and less car oriented.
- The City of Zebulon supports increases in residential density in areas where community design standards, environmental constraints, and available infrastructure capacities can accommodate the increased density.
- The City will support new land uses that contribute to the protection of the environment and preserving open space.
- The City supports enhanced housing options.
- The City of Zebulon will encourage development of commercial nodes (villages, or activity centers) to meet the service needs of citizens while avoiding unattractive and inefficient strip development along major roadways.
- The City will consider the utilization of form based codes for new development
- The City of Zebulon is open to land planning and development concepts that may be new to the community that have been proven successful in other cities.

## Transportation

### **Goal:**

Provide for the transportation needs of all users by fostering safe and well maintained roads, increased connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, while coordinating transportation and land use decision making.

### **Policies:**

- The City of Zebulon will make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.
- The City of Zebulon will encourage, where appropriate, the accommodation of multiple modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle and automobiles.

- The City will promote increased connectivity of the road network such as fostering a grid system of streets and connections between residential subdivisions and commercial nodes.
- The City will support the creation of a community wide pedestrian and bike path network.
- The City of Zebulon will ensure that excessive vehicular traffic will not harm the safe and peaceful nature of our residential neighborhoods through traffic calming and other design considerations.
- The City will address the need for increased parking downtown and improve pedestrian access.
- The City will support the implementation of wayfinding signage.
- The City of Zebulon will continue to promote increased connectivity to schools.

### Intergovernmental and Regional Cooperation

#### **Goal:**

Cooperate and collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to address mutual needs and joint projects.

#### **Policies:**

- The City of Zebulon will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- The City of Zebulon will seek to consult other public entities within the area when making decisions that are likely to affect them.
- The City will provide input to other public entities in the area when future development may have an impact.
- Increase communication and cooperation between the City and County government.

## Character Areas and Land Use

Character areas are geographic sub-areas of a community that contain unique characteristics and physical form. According to the Department of Community Affairs, Character areas have unique or special characteristics, have potential to evolve into a unique area when provided specific and intentional guidance, or require special attention due to unique development issues. Character areas may be identified by the types of development found there which vary from historic downtowns, commercial/industrial areas, or residential neighborhoods. Other character areas may lack development and include natural features such as greenspace or parkland.

The following list identifies character areas found within the City of Zebulon. Each character area listed contains a description and desired development patterns, recommended land uses, and a list of implementation measures. Current photos are also included, which give an actual snap shot into each distinct character area.

Character areas within the City of Zebulon include:

- Developing Residential
- Traditional Residential
- Gateway Development
- Historic Town Center
- Industrial
- Institutional

### Developing Residential



## Description

The largest land use area within the City of Zebulon is designated as developing residential. This area extends out from the existing traditional neighborhoods and towards the outer boundaries of the city limits. Typical subdivision style development has occurred to a limited extent.

## Desired Development Patterns

Quality residential development will be encouraged within the character area and will be supported by updated ordinances. Traditional neighborhood design (TND) and the use of conservation subdivisions will be promoted. It is possible and feasible to connect new development to existing streets to improve and increase connectivity within the City of Zebulon.

## Land Use

Land uses appropriate for this character area include single-family residential, neighborhood commercial and public/institutional.

## Implementation Measures

- Promote traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles.
- Promote the use of conservation subdivisions.
- Connect new development to existing streets and to each other.
- Connect to existing sidewalk networks.
- Encourage bike and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.
- Preserve greenspace and create neighborhood parks when feasible.

## **Traditional Residential**



### Description

The traditional residential character area in the City of Zebulon is located close to the core of the community and contains well-maintained housing, similar lot sizes, common street orientation and many homes are historic and display distinct architectural style. The east and west corridors entering the downtown area contain the majority of traditional neighborhood feel.

### Desired Development Patterns

Maintaining the character of the traditional neighborhood will be promoted. Infill housing will need to be of similar size and scale of surrounding homes. Linking existing streets to new development will be encouraged to increase and maintain connectivity. Individual homes or districts should be identified for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Land Use

Land uses within this character area will include single-family residential and park space.

## Implementation Measures

- Encourage appropriate infill design and scale.
- Promote the listing of properties on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Encourage connectivity to adjacent new development.
- Strict enforcement of codes.

## **Gateway Development**



## Description

The north and south corridors along US Highway 19 act as commercial gateways into the City of Zebulon. Commercial activity of various

scale exists along the corridor with parcels available for development as well. Existing commercial sites are in need of revitalization.

### Desired Development Patterns

Commercial redevelopment and increased landscape enhancements will be strongly encouraged within this character area. The corridors lead into the heart of the City of Zebulon and should be welcoming both aesthetically and functionally. Connectivity from parcel to parcel and increased bicycle and pedestrian access should be promoted. Signage of appropriate types and scale should be encouraged. Much of this can be accomplished through the planned quality corridor development ordinance.

### Land Use

Land uses allowed within this character area include: commercial, public/institutional, and residential.

### Implementation Measures

- Update and enforce existing sign ordinance.
- Adopt and implement quality development ordinance.
- Encourage landscaping and beautification.
- Incorporate welcome and directional signage along the corridor.
- Retrofit or mask unsightly commercial structures.
- Provide bike and pedestrian linkages to adjacent residential and commercial development.

## Historic Town Center



### Description

The heart of the City of Zebulon is centered on the historic town square. The square is the focal point for the entire historic town center character area. Surrounding the refurbished Pike County Courthouse are historic storefronts, which contain small scale and locally owned businesses. Additional revitalization and adaptive re-use opportunities exist especially regarding the Old Zebulon School.

### Desired Development Patterns

The continuation of revitalization efforts such as streetscapes should be encouraged. Local and small-scale retail should continue to be promoted and expanded. Building setbacks should occur at a minimum and rear parking should be encouraged. Encourage increased mixed-use such as downtown residential, especially above storefronts. Wayfinding and directional signage should be implemented. The area should also be

considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A historic overlay ordinance would also be beneficial.

### Land Use

Land uses within the historic town center include: commercial, residential, public/institutional.

### Implementation Measures

- Encourage mixed-use development
- Continue revitalization efforts.
- Promote the expansion of local and small scale retail infrastructure.
- Adopt historic overlay ordinance if feasible.
- Increase bike and pedestrian connectivity and safety.
- Implement wayfinding and informational signage.



## **Industrial**

### Description

The City of Zebulon contains areas appropriate and well suited for the expansion of its industrial base. The existing industrial park serves existing industry and contains infrastructure for additional



industrial needs. The industrial park is strategically located along US Highway 19.

### Desired Development Patterns

Industrial development will be encouraged to locate in the designated industrial park and appropriately zoned areas with adequate infrastructure. Landscaping, buffers, and proper site design will be encouraged.

### Land Use

Land uses permitted in these areas will include light industrial and commercial.

### Implementation Measures

- Encourage landscaping, buffers, and proper site design.
- Encourage connectivity to adjacent commercial nodes.
- Encourage mix of uses around industrial sites such as retail.

## **Institutional**



## Description

Large parcels of land are dedicated for institutional uses for the Pike County School system. This area is located adjacent to gateway corridors and residential neighborhoods.

## Desired Development Patterns

Increased accessibility and safety will be addressed within this character area. Sidewalk expansions and multi-use paths to connect to adjacent residential areas should be encouraged. Pike County, the City of Zebulon and the Georgia Department of Transportation will need to continue partnerships for increased access and safety to the area.

## Land Use

Land uses located within the character area will include: public/institutional.

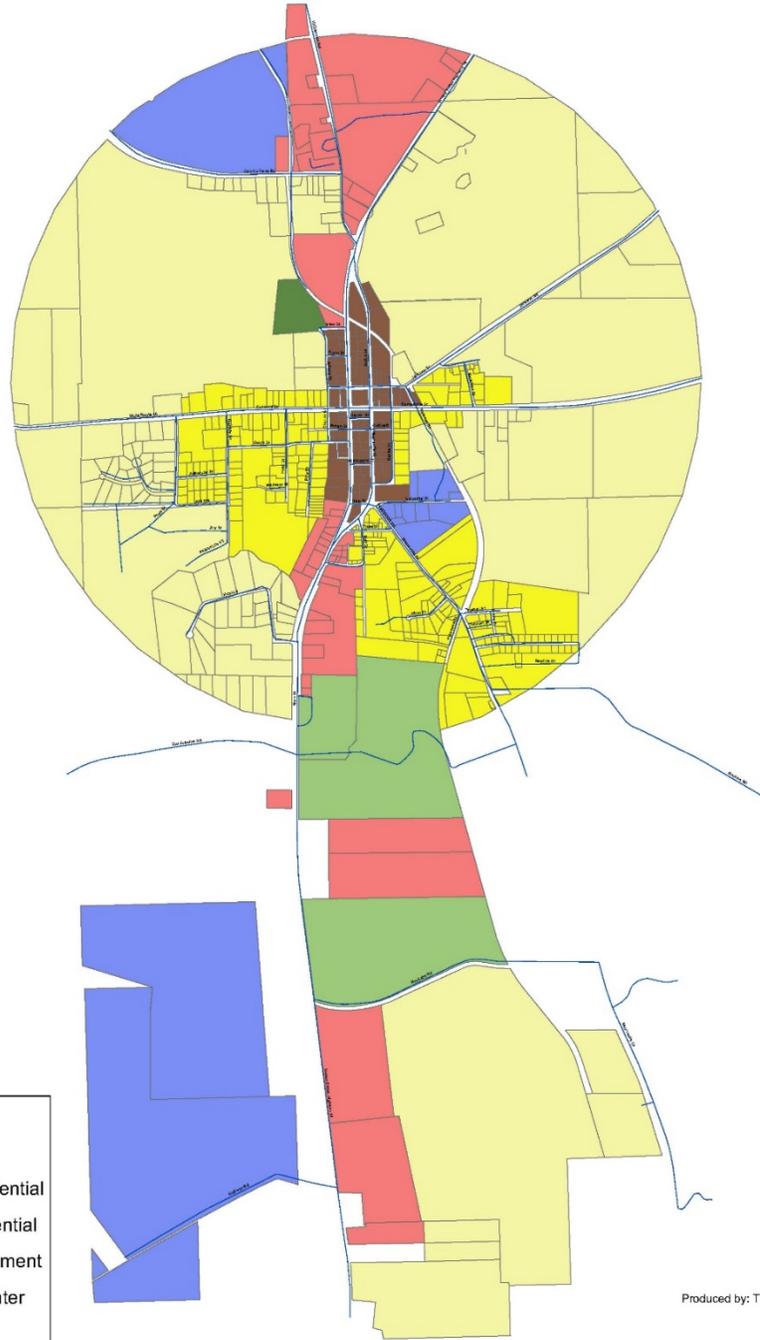
## Implementation Measures

- Promote and construct multi-use paths connecting the area adjacent community facilities along with commercial and residential developments.
- Preserve greenspace in and around the area.
- Promote increased safety and accessibility.

# City of Zebulon Character Area Map

## Character Area Map

City of Zebulon, Georgia



- Roads
- Cemetery
- Developing Residential
- Traditional Residential
- Gateway Development
- Historic Town Center
- Industrial
- Institutional



Produced by: Three Rivers Regional Commission  
May 2, 2017

