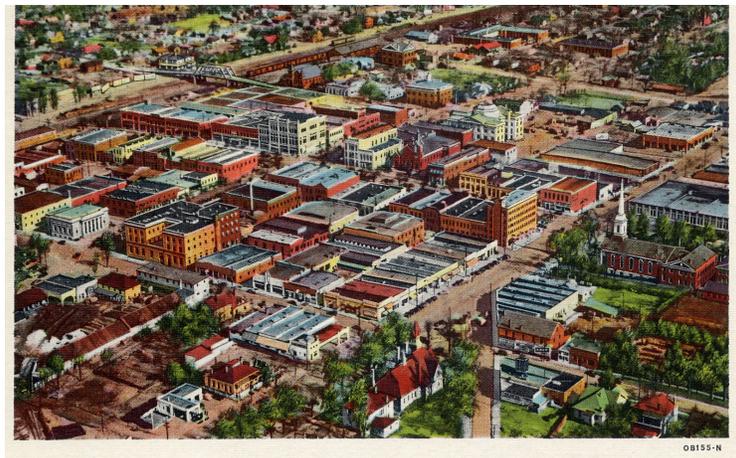


CHAPTER 7 LAND USE



LAND USE

7.1 Introduction

In many ways, the Future Land Use Plan presented in this chapter is a central component of the Comprehensive Plan. It is an extension of the general goals and policies of the community. Future land use decisions are a reflection of previous decisions and the physical capabilities of the land to support development.

Before determining future land use development patterns, an inventory of the physical conditions and development trends existing in the City was prepared. This inventory established a basis for determining the capability and feasibility of land to support development. Manmade facilities such as the local road system and the location and capacity of public water and sewer systems were also surveyed. Population, housing, and employment forecasts played a key role in the Plan's development. The goals and policies established for each planning element also assist in shaping the Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan shows proposed land use patterns for the City of Griffin. The boundaries and acreages are estimates of potential land development types. It is important to understand that the land use maps are not zoning maps. Land use maps are only one factor used in evaluating specific rezoning applications and one should therefore not assume that a particular parcel of land will be automatically rezoned based on future land use classifications.

There are many mechanisms available to implement a land use plan. An absence of regulations or inconsistent enforcement of regulations invites uncontrolled or undesirable growth. Therefore, in order to implement the plan's policies, the City should consider adopting new ordinances or amending existing ordinances that further the goals of this plan. Successful implementation also requires a commitment to impartially review land use decisions and consistently enforce the ordinances. Regulations including zoning, subdivision regulations, sign, and tree ordinances are the most common methods of implementing future land use plans. Targeting infrastructure investments where growth and economic development are desired is also an effective mechanism.

Data included in chapter will aid the City Commission in rezoning cases and guide development of the City. The plan is a vision for the City of Griffin's future based on existing land use data, natural features, infrastructure plans and growth projections, and the community's goals for the long-term pattern of growth.

One of the tools that effectively conveyed the community's goals for future land use in the City was the Community Visioning Workshop held in January 2003. During the discussions participants felt Griffin's land use strengths were its small town charm, the downtown area, and the many stable residential neighborhoods and parks. Opportunities and weaknesses cited during the workshop included the aesthetics of many commercial areas, the need for infill and redevelopment of the target areas, substandard housing, the need to protect greenspace, and

finally, the importance of land use coordination with Spalding County and the school board. The results from these group discussions are included throughout this chapter.

7.2 Inventory of Existing Conditions

The following section provides an inventory and assessment of existing land use in the City of Griffin. The existing land use data is based on the 2000 existing land use map, updated via a windshield survey and stakeholder review. In conducting preparing the Existing Land Use Map, the following categories were used to describe the current use of each parcel of land in 2003:

Vacant/Undeveloped: includes land not developed for a specific use or land that was developed for a particular use but that has been abandoned. This category includes woodlands or pastureland, undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions and industrial parks, and abandoned parcels with deteriorating or dilapidated structures.

Single Family: a residential dwelling unit designed for one family.

Duplex: any residential dwelling containing two housing units.

Multi-Family: any residential unit containing three or more dwelling units.

Commercial: includes all property where business and trade are conducted. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or retail district.

Office: includes property that accommodates business concerns that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not, as a primary activity, involve the manufacture, storage or distribution of products. This category includes small single-occupant structures for doctors and/or accountants, as well as large office parks with a variety of tenants in multi-story buildings.

Light Industry: includes property used for warehousing, distribution, trucking and manufacturing.

Heavy Industry: includes property used for manufacturing uses that convert raw materials to finished products, the storage of large quantities of bulk materials, natural resource extraction and any other process that could produce high levels of noise, dust, smoke, odors or other emissions.

Public/Institutional: includes a local government's community facilities, general government, and institutional land uses. Examples of land uses in this category include schools, general government administrative facilities (e.g., city hall, county courthouse, etc.), landfills, health facilities, churches, libraries, police and fire stations, and similar uses.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities (TCU): includes such uses as power generation plants, sewage and water treatment facilities, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities, or similar uses.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC): for those areas of a community that have been developed or are proposed to be developed for park or recreation use or are designated as open space.

Agriculture: all land used for agricultural purposes, such as cropland, livestock production, pasture and commercial timber.

The minimum standard also requires that all forestry land be inventoried as part of this existing land use map, no forestry land was found, however, in the City. The Existing Land Use Map is displayed on a 34”x 40” wall map that is available from the Griffin Planning & Development Department. A reduced 11”x 17” version of the map can be found in **Appendix B**.

Figure 7-1 compiles the existing break down of land uses within the City of Griffin. Residential properties are dispersed throughout the City of Griffin, with single-family representing the most predominant use. Single-family land accounts for 32% of the total area. Field surveys revealed large lot developments in the northwest and southeast sections of the city. The next largest land use classification is vacant/undeveloped land. This use accounted for 19% of the total area and is located along the City’s fringes. Approximately 1,712 acres of land within Griffin is undeveloped. Transportation/communication/utilities (TCU) includes land used for the roadway network, airport, water and sewer facilities, power stations and substations and radio and television stations. Land use designated as TCU also accounted for 15% of the total land area, encompassing approximately 1,337 acres. This large percentage is mainly due to the roadway network and airport. Public/institutional land in Griffin accounts for 10% of the total area, while commercial activities account for 7%. Industry, within the City, combines for a total of 6% of the total area, with light industry utilizing 5%. Parks make up 6% of the total area in Griffin. Multi-family, duplex, and office uses are the remaining classifications, each with 3% or less of the total land area.

**Figure 7-1
Existing Land Use
Griffin**

Land Use Category	Acres	Sq Miles	Percent
Single Family Residential	2,830	4.4	32%
Duplexes	101	0.2	1%
Multi-Family Residential	279	0.4	3%
Commercial	640	1.0	7%
Office Professional	72	0.1	1%
Public, Institutional	846	1.3	10%
Industrial, Light	439	0.7	5%
Industrial, Heavy	103	0.2	1%
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	1,360	2.1	15%
Parks, Recreation, Conservation	501	0.8	6%
Agriculture	5	0.0	0%
Vacant, Undeveloped	1,712	2.7	19%
Total	8,887	13.9	100%

Source: Jordan, Jones and Goulding

Vacant and undeveloped land accounts for 1,712 acres of the total land area in Griffin. However, a portion of this land is difficult to develop or not able to be developed due to the presence of floodplains or wetlands. Floodplains and wetlands account for 420 acres of the total area inside the City of Griffin. This type of environmental constraint is present in large tracts of vacant/undeveloped land that exist in each quadrant of the City.

Field observations revealed substandard housing throughout the north Griffin neighborhoods as well as some areas to the south and southwest of downtown. Abandoned and dilapidated homes, along with occupied homes that had serious structural problems, were found throughout each neighborhood and not confined to one certain area. The conditions were inventoried in a 2001 study; additional detail is included within the **Housing** chapter. The only neighborhood areas exempt from these conditions were the newer developments and established neighborhoods in the southeastern portion of the City.

A portion of the older housing stock within the City is being transformed into office uses. This is particularly noticeable around the hospital located on South 8th Street. Across from and south of the hospital are numerous medical offices and private practices that are using existing residential structures.

Downtown Griffin continues to change its composition of uses and encourages a 20% residential, 20% professional office use, 20% entertainment use, 20% retail use, and a 20% governmental use. Spurred on by the Downtown Development Authority's leadership, the central business district has attracted many new loft residences. The predominant use of the buildings, however, remains public/institutional and financial services. There are still a number of restaurants and

retail establishments as well. Ongoing needs within the district include older storefronts that are vacant or in need of repair, balancing parking convenience and aesthetics, and landscaping and greenery.

7.3 Existing Land Use Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to identify opportunities, problems, issues or trends that Griffin should address in developing the future land use plan. The assessment will consist of analyzing the information gathered from the existing land use inventory along with information assembled in other planning elements.

7.3.1 Historical Factors

The current development pattern of Griffin can be largely attributed to the mill industry, their associated mill houses and two major railroads that ran through the City. Early twentieth century residential development occurred mostly to the north and northwest of the Central Business District. The houses were laid out in a grid pattern and set close to the street in a pedestrian friendly manner. The larger, historic homes that remain in Griffin were built to the south and southwest of the Central Business District. The major thoroughfares in early twentieth century Griffin were Taylor, Solomon and Hill Streets. Taylor Street was transformed into the City's commercial area and today it passes through the center of the Central Business District. The **Natural and Cultural Resources** chapter of this plan provides a more detailed developmental history of Griffin.

7.3.2 Land Use Patterns and Infrastructure

Transportation has had a tremendous impact on the patterns of development in Griffin. Highway corridors such as US 19/41, along with State Routes 7, 16, and 155 have helped to establish a strip pattern of development within the City. These corridors have encouraged the development of new industry and warehousing by offering easy access to relatively inexpensive land. Most of the city's industrial developments are located along the existing rail lines, which are used for freight only. This type of development has increased the dependence on automobiles, which can harm air quality. As mentioned in the **Community Facilities** chapter, residents of Griffin have the opportunity to become proactive leaders in determining the future for their City.

In keeping with the desires of both the federal and local governments, residents of Griffin desire the development of a community that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly as a means of addressing air quality problems as well as promoting a higher quality of life. The City supports the addition of a commuter rail station and the addition of transit, pedestrian and alternate transportation modes of travel. Improvements consistent with this desire include walkable streets, minimal truck traffic, low vehicle speeds, and "neighborhood scale" designs. The City supports the development of one or more truck bypass routes to alleviate downtown truck traffic. Land use and access along these routes should be closely controlled to discourage additional strip commercial development.

Whereas transportation networks influence the location of development, the availability of sewer in determines the density of certain developments, and to some extent, the location as well. High-density developments such as apartments, manufacturing or multi-story facilities require the availability of sewer; whereas, low-density developments can be supported by septic tanks that require relatively large drainage fields. Currently, sewer serves 97% of the City's population and the remainder is served by septic tanks or private systems.

There are three wastewater treatment facilities that serve the City. They are located on Shoal Creek, Potato Creek and Cabin Creek. The 2000 *Griffin-Spalding Wastewater Master Plan* determined that all three facilities will require upgrades in the future to accommodate growth.

7.3.3 Transitional Areas

As identified earlier in this chapter, there are a number of substandard housing units throughout the north Griffin neighborhoods as well as some areas to the south and southwest of downtown. Solutions to this problem involve addressing social needs and improving and enforcing development regulations, such as the development of a property maintenance code. However, some of the solutions involve land use decisions and financial assistance coordinated with infrastructure, housing policy and economic development, particularly when growth pressures call for the redevelopment of blighted areas or the construction of infill development. Several “target areas” are identified in **Figure 7-5** and are discussed near the end of this element.

7.3.4 Market Forces and Local Development Policies

Market forces and local development policies significantly influence the pattern of development. A widely held belief by the general public is that the separation of land uses and “cul-de-sac development” are good for property values and standard of living. Land use controls have historically been used to assure that new construction is safe and of good quality. Unfortunately, the policy of segregating land uses also has negative impacts including increased car travel and traffic congestion, poorer air quality, fewer opportunities for walking or bicycling, and increased land consumption.

The future growth of Griffin is going to be influenced by numerous market forces. For instance, provisions will have to be made for the aging population in Griffin, the proposed commuter rail station and the expanding Atlanta region. The aging population in Griffin will require additional services housing options, and access to health care. The proposed commuter rail station in Griffin will require additional pedestrian amenities and ways to get to and from the station, and promote mixed-use development. And finally, the expanding Atlanta region will force Griffin to focus on regional problems such as air and water quality and transportation.

7.3.5 Environmental Issues

The following section identifies those issues discussed in the **Natural and Cultural Resources** chapter that need to be addressed when considering land use.

Water Resources

The City's supply of clean water is a limited resource, which requires strong land use controls to guarantee it for future generations. Griffin currently obtains its water from two sources within Spalding County. One is from an intake on the Flint River and the other is from the Head's Creek Reservoir. Protection of these watersheds is provided through Spalding County's Unified Zoning Ordinance through the S-2 Sensitive Lands overlay district. In general, development restrictions in this district include no sewage treatment facilities or industries, which deal with toxic products. Additionally, no new industrial and commercial uses are permitted within 1,000 feet of an existing or proposed reservoir, and all uses are governed by minimum lot requirements and setbacks near this 1,000-foot line. Griffin is constructing a new regional reservoir in the Still Branch in Pike County. The new reservoir will supply ample water to meet the City's demand for decades to come.

Wetlands

According to the Department of Natural Resource's *National Wetland Inventory*, wetlands exist in the southeastern and extreme western portions of Griffin. These wetland areas should not be subject to alteration or degradation. Protection for these areas is provided by the State of Georgia through "Criteria for Wetlands Protection," which describes for local governments minimal considerations for wetlands protection in the land use planning process with regards to wetlands identified in the Department of Natural Resources freshwater wetlands database.

Floodplains

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, floodplains are located in several locations within the City. These areas are managed by Griffin's recently adopted Floodplain Management Ordinance, which emphasizes protection of human property.

7.3.6 Evaluation of Infill Versus Expansion

With additional growth in the City there will be changes in land use. The City can either develop "greenfield" or vacant tracts of land located far away from the center of the City or can redevelop existing areas. For the public sector, "greenfield" sites are often expensive with needed utility expansions and roadway improvements. The other option is to redevelop and infill existing developed areas. This option utilizes existing buildings and infrastructure and preserves open space at the urban fringe.

To better manage land consumption while encouraging continued quality growth and development, land should be used and protected as a non-renewable, natural resource. The City of Griffin has numerous opportunities for infill and redevelopment. This Future Land Use Plan encourages mixed-use redevelopment of corridors where public services are currently available. Residential and commercial development will be limited in scale, in order to preserve environmentally sensitive areas. Activity centers and environmentally sensitive areas were used to shape the future development pattern of Griffin.

Citizens have assisted the study team in identifying "target areas" for redevelopment and infill. The target areas are mapped in **Figure B-3 in the Appendix**. All of these areas possess a

character that can be maintained and enhanced through planned growth and the enactment of appropriate land use controls. The future land use chapter provides a more detailed description of these areas and the potential land uses in and around each.

7.4 Projection of Future Land Use Needs

As growth occurs in the City of Griffin, various land use needs will be in competition for suitable land for development. The economics of land development is a motivating factor in how land is used; therefore, lower intensity uses will be sacrificed in order to utilize land to its highest and best use. Based on the existing land use inventory, population projections, input received from the public at forums held within the City and discussions with the local government, future land use needs were projected and are summarized in **Figure 7-2**. The acreage needed for various land uses was calculated using various assumptions. Because of the efforts being made within the City of Griffin to encourage new industry, the high projection method for population will be reflected in the future land use plan. For residential, commercial, industrial and public/institutional land uses, a factor based on population projections for the City was used. It is assumed, with the exception of residential, that the current acreage of each of these land uses is adequate for the existing population needs and that the per capita needs will be the same in the future.

Figure 7-2
Land Use Forecast, Acres
Griffin

Land Use	2004	2015	2025	Buildout
Residential	3,209	3,463	3,608	4,286
Industrial	542	580	618	618
Commercial, Office	713	858	1,011	1,162
Public/Institutional	846	855	864	864
Agriculture	5	0	0	0
Transportation/ Communication/Utilities	1,360	1,360	1,360	1,365
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	501	547	592	592
Undeveloped/Vacant	1,712	1,224	834	0
Total	8,887	8,887	8,887	8,887
<i>Source: Jordan, Jones and Goulding</i>				

As the City's population continues to grow and as household size declines, the number of housing units required in Griffin will increase. Adding homes in the City does not mean large amounts of open space must be consumed. The alternative used in this plan maintained the current distribution of residential density in Griffin. Using the current zoning resolution, the percentages of high, medium and low density residential developments were calculated for the City of Griffin. Projected residential acreage estimates attempted to maintain the current density distribution. This allows residential growth to continue at a slower rate than the land uses based upon a per capita rate. Additional discussion of population, housing and employment projections can be found in previous elements.

Currently, residential development consumes approximately 36% of all land within Griffin. By the year 2025, the City of Griffin will require approximately 1,189 additional housing units. Applying the current distribution of residential densities allows Griffin to accommodate these units with approximately 399 additional acres.

Parks, recreation and conservation land uses already account for a large percentage of the City of Griffin land. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines recommend that a park system should total 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 residents. Based on the 2002 population estimate for the City, there are 21.6 acres per 1,000 residents, far above the national standard. The future land use plan calls for the expansion of the parks and recreation system primarily through a network of trails and greenways.

Figure 7-2 shows the total acreage that would be required to support the high growth scenario presented in the Population chapter. Under this method, the remaining undeveloped land in 2025 would total 834 acres. In 2004, there was an estimated 1,712 acres of undeveloped land. The disadvantage to using the applied method is that land uses other than residential may also be developed at increased densities over time. This is particularly true if the City starts to experience more multi-story office or mixed-use buildings, which have a lower population/commercial acre ratio than standard office park developments.

Developing the acreage estimates for future land use in Griffin has revealed the number of acres required to accommodate growth. If the community wants to preserve land for future generations, the City must modify development regulations to encourage the preservation of open space in future developments. Densities will have to be recognized and the City may have to undertake a program of land acquisition for open space.

7.5 Future Land Use Plan

The future land use map provided in this chapter includes the community's vision along with an option for future development based on various environmental and zoning constraints. The map should be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the intent of the policies and goals outlined in this plan.

The City's Future Land Use Plan portrays the City's projected land use patterns anticipated to occur over the next 20 years. The Land Use Plan is a large 34"x 40" wall map. **Figure B-2 in Appendix B** displays a reduced version of the map. Each of the land use categories shown on the map are described in section **7.6 Land Use Plan Categories**.

The total acreage figures for each land use category on the City's future land use map are provided in **Figure 7-3**. These acreage estimates are based on a 2025 projected population of 27,379.

**Figure 7-3
Future Land Use
Griffin**

Land Use Category	Acres	Sq Miles	Percent
Low Density Residential	2,732	4.3	31%
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	1,365	2.1	15%
Medium Density Residential	1,175	1.8	13%
Public/Institutional	864	1.3	10%
Industrial	618	1.0	7%
Parks, Recreation, Conservation	592	0.9	7%
Regional Commercial	422	0.7	5%
High Density Residential	378	0.6	4%
Neighborhood Commercial	275	0.4	3%
Office Professional	197	0.3	2%
Downtown Hub	124	0.2	1%
Mixed Use	97	0.2	1%
Office Transitional	47	0.1	1%
Total	8,887	13.9	100%
<i>Source: Jordan, Jones and Goulding</i>			

The largest land use category projected for the future in Griffin is residential. A revised zoning map for the City of Griffin will need to be prepared in order to ensure balanced and compatible housing growth. Higher density housing should be placed near the appropriate sewer lines and could also be used as a transitional zoning to reduce incompatible land uses. Low-density residential properties should be located near less intense uses such as agriculture or environmentally constrained areas of the City.

Based on population projections, it is expected that residential land use will increase by approximately 4% by the year 2024. This increase seems small compared to the additional 3,386 housing units that will need to be added to the housing stock in Griffin. However, future residential land use should allow reduced lot sizes in exchange for the preservation of open space. The areas identified in the City as not suitable for residential land includes the properties along Arthur K. Bolton Parkway, Experiment Street and U.S. 19/41. These roadway corridors need to be preserved for other uses such as commercial, industrial and public/institutional.

Industrial developments within Griffin are located mostly in the east and southwest portions of the city. These areas were identified in the Spalding County Comprehensive Plan and are already served with the needed infrastructure. In particular, the area along SR 16 and Arthur K. Bolton Parkway was identified due to the planned widening of the roadway from two to four lanes and the access to I-75. South of the City along U.S. 19/41, industrial developments are supported with the appropriate water and sewer lines as well as with railroad access.

Commercial activity is currently concentrated within the Central Business District (CBD), and along Solomon Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, Meriwether Street and U.S. 19/41. These corridors are currently and will continue to be the most heavily traveled routes in the City. As a result, they will continue to be the most feasible locations for commercial growth in the City. As stated previously in the Target Areas section of this chapter, it is important to guard against unwanted visual impacts such as a clutter of signs and billboards, large expanses of asphalt parking lots and vacant storefronts. Regulations such as sign controls, landscaping requirements and the placement of structures closer to the roadway can provide for more sustainable and aesthetically pleasing commercial land uses.

As defined in the Existing Land Use Inventory, public/institutional land is used for a local government's community facilities, general government buildings and institutional uses. The future acreage estimates for this land use category are large due to Griffin's role as the county seat. Numerous government buildings and schools are located throughout the City along with the Spalding Regional Hospital and the large land holdings of the Georgia Station. This classification increased to maintain its per capita rate.

Agricultural land in Griffin will face increased development pressures from residential land as growth occurs in the City. As shown on **Figure 7-3**, agricultural land is expected to decrease in the City over the next 20 years. Transportation/Communication/Utility land use will increase at a slower rate than other land uses due to the fact that existing facilities can service increased densities.

The parks/recreation/conservation land use category is projected to increase in order to maintain the City's core system of park lands. The study team, with the help of citizens, has identified a specific stream corridor that would serve as the spine of a future greenway. Additionally the group identified a potential linear park connecting Fairmont Park to Dundee Mill Park. This park could help to improve property values and become the centerpiece for a mixture of old and new houses facing the park. Since the park would be near the edge of the city limits, some participants mentioned the possibility of annexing adjacent property to control the zoning and make sure that the city captured the value added to the property surrounding the park. Future greenways and trails are identified in the **Transportation** chapter

7.6 Future Land Use Categories

7.6.1 Single-Family Residential

This land use category includes single-family residences developed on separate lots, often in subdivisions, primarily owner occupied. This land use category is the predominant residential category in Griffin and includes various densities of single-family residences between one to three units per acre. New development in these areas will primarily be infill development, consisting of housing, churches, and parks. Infill development in these areas should preserve the character of the existing neighborhood by requiring appropriate architectural and landscape guidelines. Also, infill development should be consistent with the character of the community and surrounding

densities. The city should discourage encroachment into these areas from incompatible land uses that detract from the neighborhood environment.

7.6.2 Medium-Density Residential

This land use category includes single-family, renter occupied and owner occupied, churches and parks. The density used for this category is no more than eight (8) units per acre. Appropriate open space, buffering, landscaping, pedestrian access and recreation facilities should be provided as suitable.

7.6.3 High-Density Residential

This land use category is characterized by the presence of apartments, condominiums, townhouses other attached multi-family units, either renter occupied or owner occupied. Often, this category includes multi-story structures. The density used for this category is greater than eight units per acre. Like the medium density residential category, these units are usually located near employment or commercial nodes. It is essential that these developments include proper buffering between adjacent land uses. Additionally, open space, landscaping, pedestrian access and recreation facilities should be provided for high density residential units. High density residential developments tend to serve as transitional areas between medium to low density residential uses and commercial, office, or downtown areas.

7.6.4 Downtown Hub

The Downtown Hub land use category includes 20% residential, 20% commercial, 20% entertainment, 20% government, and 20% professional office. Specifically, the types of uses that are desirable in this area would be restaurants, specialty retail, hotels, apartments, governmental offices, low-intensity offices (e.g. accountant or real estate office) and appropriate parking. One of the important features of the Downtown Hub is transportation. This mixed-use activity center should be complemented with walking, biking and transit opportunities to provide alternative modes of transportation. These different options will complement the proposed commuter rail station in Griffin. Also, any roadway improvements that are considered for the Downtown Hub should carefully consider the scale of this area. For example, widening a roadway from two to four lanes would very negatively impact the pedestrian scale of the Downtown Hub. Another important component of this area is residential development. Developing loft apartments above commercial uses provides for a more vibrant 24-hour district.

7.6.5 Mixed Use

This category allows a combination of residential, office, retail, and parks and open space. Vertically mixed use buildings are encouraged such as housing or offices above ground-floor retail space. Pedestrian circulation within the development should be promoted including sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian amenities. In exchange for the higher densities allowed by the mixed use areas, developments must meet high design, architectural, and amenity standards.

7.6.6 Neighborhood Business

This category includes a limited range of retail and service activities. Limitations should apply to both size and character of individual establishments. The basic character of this category is one that encourages and assures a compatible mixture of residential, office and specialty retail types of land uses. The physical character and design of proposed new structures should be compatible with existing establishments. Businesses in this land use category should be designed to encourage the development of neighborhood scale shopping that offers both goods and products at retail and the furnishing of selected services.

7.6.7 Regional Commercial

This category includes all retail and commercial service activities that serve a regional market such as shopping centers, car dealerships, entertainment facilities, hotels and restaurants. These establishments should be located on appropriate transportation corridors to easily serve a regional market. Visual impacts of these type developments should be minimized by requiring buffers, landscaping, fencing and architectural controls. Many of these regional facilities are currently and will continue to be located along the US 19/41 corridor. The recommendations previously discussed for the US 19/41 target area should apply to all developments included in the Regional Commercial category.

7.6.8 Office Professional

The Office Professional category includes businesses that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not, as a primary activity, involve the manufacture, storage, or distribution of products. This category includes small single occupant structures for doctors and accountants, as well as larger offices with multiple tenants. These areas should provide employment opportunities in close proximity to commercial areas while providing a transition between the more intense commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.

7.6.9 Office Transition

This land use category can be found along West Solomon and West Poplar Streets. Two goals for this category are to: 1) allow greater flexibility of use for older existing structures and 2) encourage infill development whose design is compatible within the district. Compatibility standards should be considered for this area. Special procedures for the review of building design and uses should be established in order to maintain the character of the area. As discussed in the West Solomon Street and West Poplar Street target area section, the homes in this area should be adaptively reused and new buildings should be built close to the street. The City should promote the stability of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Commercial uses should have shared parking, shared driveways, appropriate landscaping, sidewalks and sign controls.

7.6.10 Public /Institutional

These are areas housing local government's community facilities, general government, and institutional land uses. Examples include schools, city halls, county courthouses, landfills, health facilities, churches, libraries and police and fire stations.

7.6.11 Industrial

The purpose of this category is to provide for areas where industry and warehouse uses can be located. Primary uses in this category include manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale/distribution and assembly. Uses in this category may cause land use conflicts with neighboring uses due to noise, fumes, vibration, and other forms of pollution.

7.7 Target Areas

During the public involvement efforts for this plan, citizens identified target areas for redevelopment, infill and mixed-use opportunities. These target areas are illustrated in **Figure B-3 in Appendix B** and include:

- **North Hill Street Area:** The mostly residential district north of the central business district bisected by North Hill Street.
- **Commuter Rail Station Area:** The area north of the commuter rail station that will experience changes in land use with the development of the rail station.
- **Alternative Commuter Rail Station Area/Thomaston Mill Area:** The area west of the proposed commuter rail station that is slated for redevelopment and also is being considered as a site for the commuter rail station.
- **Central Business District (CBD):** The historic downtown commercial center and its immediate environs.
- **Medical Center:** A transitioning area with Griffin Regional Hospital at its center.
- **Commercial Redevelopment Areas:** Two abandoned strip malls with redevelopment potential.
- **Meriwether Street Redevelopment Area:** A residential area in need of housing assistance.
- **Airport:** A City asset whose future is uncertain, but whose future affects surrounding land uses.
- **Corridors:** Four critical corridors within the City in need of individual study and policy action.

The following sections provide a discussion on each of these areas, their issues and potential land use changes and policies that could be targeted in each area.

7.7.1 North Hill Street Area

Immediately north of the City's CBD is a large, predominantly residential, area bisected by North Hill Street. This area could serve as a logical northern extension of the downtown area.

Citizens expressed a concern that the railroad tracks that enter the City from the northwest and parallel Broad Street, serve as a barrier between downtown and this older residential area of Griffin. Citizens felt like this neighborhood should be “brought in” or “connected” to the CBD. The concept discussed for this area would be the installation of greenways along some of the neighborhood’s grid patterned streets and the construction of pocket parks. Also, infill housing should be encouraged here due its proximity to downtown and existing infrastructure. This residential infill could also serve people who will want to live near the proposed commuter rail station.

Several non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, and local churches can be enlisted to provide the resources to help improve homes and even construct new homes in this area. Another concept that could begin changing the image of the North Hill Street area is to have a local church or community group sponsor a neighborhood clean up to remove trash and clean vacant lots. Also, local businesses could sponsor a “Yard of the Month” contest with prizes to foster pride in the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

The City needs to devote considerable attention to the appropriate means of revitalizing the North Hill Street community. The neighborhood contains a mixture of strengths that are assets for revitalization and weaknesses that threaten it. Strengths and assets include:

- Churches and other community institutions,
- Historic landmarks,
- Grid pattern of streets that provides connectivity,
- Mature trees and landscaping, and
- Sense of history in many of the older homes.

These elements are missing in many contemporary residential developments, and should be restored and preserved in future redevelopment activities. Weaknesses and threats within the area include:

- Unsound and unsafe structures, including those with fire code violations and structural failure of foundation, roof, floors, or load-bearing walls,
- Chronic flooding and drainage problems that undermine public and private property values,
- Intersections and driveways that are safety problems because of their location or design, and
- Uses that chronically support criminal activity by their location and design.

Strong measures are justified to remove these weak elements and threats in order to preserve the health and safety of the neighborhood as a whole.

Two important recent activities have taken place within the district. In 2001, a complete housing inventory was completed, which documented housing conditions. The inventory will assist the City in obtaining outside financial assistance for housing-related initiative within the area.

The revitalization process should begin with a participatory process of meetings involving

property owners and residents, businesses, realtors and community institutions. The City's role should be to initiate the public dialogue to establish a vision for the revitalization that capitalizes on the assets in the neighborhood. In addition to the completed inventory of the housing conditions, the City should undertake a street-by street inventory of infrastructure. This inventory should include a review of city records of traffic accidents, drainage complaints, code enforcement calls, tax foreclosures and police crime reports. The information should be presented to the neighborhood residents and property owners.

Actions by the City should follow a multi-faceted approach to these problems in a phased redevelopment plan that:

- Includes a full inventory of housing conditions and carrying out a triage of buildings to preserve, rehabilitate, and condemn,
- Builds on the neighborhood's assets,
- Creates a community-based organization to facilitate the on-going revitalization process,
- Identifies a community center that will provide needed services and a sense of neighborhood pride,
- Plans street, drainage and streetscape improvements using city funds supplemented by Community Development Block Grants and private funds where possible,
- Arranges for revolving loans and grants to rehabilitate structurally sound residences,
- Identifies City services that need to be improved for the safety and benefit of current and future residents, and
- Creates design standards and changes to city codes that will facilitate revitalization that is sensitive to the unique characteristics of the neighborhood.

The physical design of this plan should encourage residential infill development on vacant lots that is sympathetic to the historic character of the existing homes. When one or more houses are condemned and demolished, the city should advertise the availability of the lots and provide incentives so that the vacant lots are redeveloped. Sometimes it may be appropriate to re-plat or combine lots to provide a market-based mixture of lot sizes, house size, densities and incomes. However, redeveloped lots must be governed by design standards that ensure compatibility with the historic architecture and scale of the neighborhood.

7.7.2 Commuter Rail Station Area

The commuter rail station will be a key driver of land use change within the CBD and in the commuter rail station area. Leveraging this major public investment to revitalize the neighborhood immediately to the north is critical. The City should work now to get appropriate zoning, aesthetic, and design standards in place to ensure and promote high quality development in this area.

The new station will create a demand for housing and services within walking distance. Redeveloping the area around the station into a viable mixed-use community will provide housing, neighborhood commercial services, retail and restaurants for commuters using the trains. Improving sidewalks, street trees, and streetlights in the area will help spur redevelopment, especially along North Hill Street. The old Northside Elementary School could

also be redeveloped into a private mixed-use development including neighborhood retail and professional office space.

7.7.3 Alternative Commuter Rail Station Area/Thomaston Mill Area

The Thomaston Mill area is located to the northwest of Griffin's CBD and just to the west of the proposed site for the commuter rail station. This area is also being considered as an alternative site for the commuter rail station. Regardless of the location of the commuter rail station, Thomaston Mill has been identified as a good site for redevelopment. There has been interest in converting the site into loft apartments with amenities such as a pool and tennis courts. Much like the proposed location for the commuter rail station, the City should work now to get appropriate zoning, aesthetic, and design standards in place to ensure and promote high quality development in this area.

The future land use plan calls for the site to be mixed use development generally surrounded by medium density residential development to the north and office development to the south. If this area does become home to the commuter rail station then the future land use plan should be re-evaluated to allow for additional mixed use development surrounding the station. Retail and restaurants for commuters and residents should be located at street level with residences and offices located above. Higher density development should also be allowed around the station, with an average density of approximately 18 residential units per acre. Improving sidewalks, street trees, and streetlights in the area will also be necessary to help spur redevelopment. Planning for the Thomaston Mill project should also consider, where feasible, adding additional locations for at grade pedestrian railroad crossings as well as above or below grade vehicular railroad crossings. Additionally, developers should look to reconnect the street system's grid pattern where it is disrupted by the mill. This will improve connectivity for pedestrians as well as vehicles and help weave the development into the environment.

7.7.4 Central Business District

The Downtown Hub is the "heart" of Griffin. This area is generally considered to be bordered by Broad Street to the north, College Street to the south, 11th Street to the west and 2nd Street to the east. The Downtown Hub is the historical center for commerce and government for both the City and Spalding County. With the recent reuse of several of the downtown buildings as retail stores, restaurants and new loft apartments above these commercial uses, downtown Griffin is being re-energized. In addition, with the construction of the proposed commuter rail station in Griffin, the Downtown Hub will likely see unprecedented changes in the near future. Citizens have expressed an interest to reuse some of the existing downtown buildings in a manner that would promote downtown economic development. One of the keys to promoting economic development downtown is providing places for people to live in the Downtown Hub. The emerging downtown residential market is a sign that Griffin's Central Business District is revitalizing.

One of the issues citizens discussed in relation to the Downtown Hub included the implementation of design standards. These can both protect and promote the assets of the downtown area. Another important issue that has been raised is the need for improved

circulation throughout the Downtown Hub. One of the concepts citizens favored was the establishment of greenways in the City that would provide an alternative mode of transportation and be an aesthetic amenity. Additionally, these greenways could be further enhanced with the creation of pocket parks in and around the downtown area.

The Downtown Hub in Griffin will continue to support a diverse array of land uses. Recent changes are evident throughout downtown, and with the growing downtown residential market and the proposed commuter rail station, more far reaching changes are inevitable. Citizens have expressed a desire for a truly mixed-use activity center that is designed on a pedestrian scale. Walking, biking and transit uses should be encouraged near this activity center and future transit station. Residential growth and infill in and around the CBD would be a positive asset for the entire city.

7.7.5 Medical Center Area

Spalding Regional Hospital is located south of the Griffin CBD. This regional facility is adjacent to City Park and is near some of the older neighborhoods in the city. Medical support businesses such as doctor's offices and medical suppliers surround the hospital. The neighborhoods to the north and south of the hospital include a mixture of offices, residences, and vacant lots. Some of the houses are dilapidated.

The area has a wide range of potential options for its future land use composition. One trend is clear: residences are being converted to offices. As the hospital grows this trend will likely continue. Other options, though, exist. The area provides convenient access to the amenities at the park, including an 18-hole golf course, combined with proximity to the hospital, make it ideal for retirees. This concept would ensure the area would continue to have residents living there, and could also make neighborhood commercial and services viable along South 8th Street.

7.7.6 Ellis Crossing and Oxford Village Commercial Redevelopment Areas

This target area includes two mostly abandoned strip malls: Ellis Crossing, former home of Wal-Mart, and Oxford Village just south of Oakhill Cemetery on Highway 16. The Future Land Use Plan categorizes both of these areas for mixed-use redevelopment. There is a growing national trend for redeveloping abandoned malls similar to these into mixed-use villages. The redevelopment typically includes a mixture of retail, office space, and government facilities.

Griffin can facilitate the redevelopment of these sites in several ways. Creating the zoning and development ordinances necessary to allow this type of development is a critical first step. The City can also offer short-term property tax incentives. Both of the sites can be tied to the prospective greenway system and developing the system in conjunction or in advance of the redevelopment will help promote the projects. As an alternative option, the City could acquire either of the sites and solicit bids for the site's redevelopment in exchange for below-market land.

7.7.7 Meriwether Street Redevelopment Area

This target area includes two adjacent neighborhoods divided by Meriwether Street southwest of downtown. Both neighborhoods are in need of housing assistance and could benefit from a City program to boost homeownership. Rental rates within both of these neighborhoods approach 100%. Both areas are residential at this time and reflected as such in the Future Land Use Plan, but the City should target housing and social assistance within the community.

7.7.8 Airport

The Griffin-Spalding County Airport has presented one of the City's most contentious issues in recent years. The debate centers over whether to upgrade the airport to both make it safer and accommodate corporate jets, which demand lengthening the runway. Economic development entities believe accommodating corporate jets is essential to attracting major employers. Several options exist: keep the airport as is, improve the airport and extend the runway or join forces with Butts County to develop a new regional airport.

Each option presents a unique set of land use impacts for the site and surrounding community. If the airport is kept in its present location or improved, the City should seek to protect existing and future residents from noise pollution. If the airport is relocated outside of the city limits, the City can solicit redevelopment bids for the site or use it as a new industrial park.

7.7.9 West Poplar and West Solomon Street Corridors

Citizens and officials have expressed concern about West Poplar and West Solomon Streets. These streets are gradually transitioning from residential to commercial and office uses. Commercial zoning on Poplar Street is facilitating the transition. The public feels that strip commercial development is not a desirable land use for either street. The City could encourage adaptive reuse of homes and require new buildings to adhere to build-to lines to keep buildings close to the street. Commercial uses should have shared driveways, interconnected rear parking lots and landscaped front yards with sidewalks, sign controls, streetlights and landscaping. Griffin should adopt design standards for the area to ensure compatibility of new development and redevelopment along these two streets.

7.7.10 West Taylor Street

West Taylor Street is one of the principle commercial corridors within Griffin. The development that has occurred there in recent years is, according to public comments solicited for this plan, unattractive and not pedestrian friendly. The City should develop aesthetic, design, and access management standards for the street. Griffin should also improve pedestrian access along the street.

7.7.11 Experiment Street

Experiment Street is an important access point to the central business district and will become a vital corridor for users of commuter rail. Improvements are needed in this corridor in order to serve the commuter rail station, but the location and design of these improvements needs to be done in a manner that is sensitive to the community context. Its design should respect nearby residences and incorporate appropriate landscaping and pedestrian amenities so as to improve the connection of the North Hill Street community with the rest of the city.

7.7.12 US 19/41 Corridor

The final target area that was identified and discussed by citizens was the US 19/41 corridor. Citizens at the workshop would like to address the effects of strip commercial development. Residents are disappointed by the aesthetics and design of signage and billboards, large expanses of asphalt parking lots and vacant or abandoned strip malls. Some of the strategies for treating this area include sign controls, landscaping requirements for parking lots, sidewalks, street trees, and redevelopment of vacant shopping centers into mixed-use activity centers. Future development should place the storefronts closer to the street, and provide grass and landscaping in the front yards with landscaped sidewalks and pedestrian entries along the frontage. Place as much of the parking as possible in the back of the store, and provide attractive rear entries for patrons who park in the back.

Traffic congestion and safety is another concern in the US 19/41 corridor. The highway needs access management standards, and incentives for rear access and interparcel connectivity. Continuous connections behind and between each row of stores would allow motorists to move between parking lots without having to drive out into US 19/41 traffic. Intersections should be designed with crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, and pedestrian refuge areas in the medians.

7.8 Coordination with Spalding County's Comprehensive Plan

In keeping with Spalding County's vision for the future, guiding principles were derived subsequent to identifying land use objectives set forth by the County in their *2004-2024 Comprehensive Plan*. Spalding County's objectives included the following:

- Preserve Spalding County's rural character.
- Maintain Spalding County's small town feel.
- Preserve the natural environment.
- Manage growth.
- Ensure proper infrastructure is in place to accommodate new growth

Each of these planning objectives contained action items that would help ensure that specified goals were achieved for the future of Spalding County. In the preparation of the City of Griffin's Comprehensive Plan, these objectives were identified and adhered to where applicable.

Several of these goals for Spalding County include actions that would coordinate work sessions for planning staff and elected officials on land use and development issues and to provide the opportunity for citizen participation. Ongoing identification of coordination and communication mechanisms is essential.

When dealing with zoning priorities and issues, Spalding County identified the need to create consistency among jurisdictions. Consideration was given to the Future Land Use Plan in Spalding County and the current zoning map for the City of Griffin before distributing any land use classifications. This process will minimize the issue of incompatible land uses. Spalding County also desired to improve the residential development patterns within the county. This objective has been met by the City through the process of determining future growth and identifying the most suitable areas for residential development. After the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the City of Griffin will need to create a zoning map based on the guiding principles established in this chapter. Residential densities can be established for specific areas using this document as a guideline.

The remaining objectives presented by the County involved identifying sensitive land areas in the County and noticing areas that needed to be improved. The Georgia Minimum Local Planning Standards require that specific community elements be identified in a Comprehensive Plan and from the identification of these required elements, land use policies can be prepared that protect natural and historic resources and to promote economic development within a community. Protection of these valuable resources as well as the identification of areas that should be improved has been discussed in previous sections of this chapter.

7.9 Land Use Goals

1. Improve community aesthetics within Griffin's corridors, districts, and neighborhoods.
2. Encourage infill and redevelopment within the City's target areas.
3. Continue to promote development and redevelopment of the central business district into a thriving mixed-use district.
4. Leverage the proposed commuter rail station for redevelopment around the station.
5. Preserve Griffin's small town feel and enhance community pride.
6. Develop a recreational network of greenways, trails, and parks.
7. Preserve the natural environment as land uses change and the community develops.
8. Allow greater flexibility within applicable design standards for creative site developments and infrastructure improvements.

7.10 Implementation Program

Goal #1: Improve community aesthetics within Griffin’s corridors, districts and neighborhoods.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
<p>Design Standards – Prepare draft architectural and design standards for historic preservation areas throughout Griffin and present to the City Commission for adoption consideration. The new standards should require development that will be in keeping with or enhance the character of the district. The new standards should require provisions for both motorized and non-motorized transportation.</p>	Griffin Planning & Development Dept.	2005-2007
<p>Sign Ordinance – Recommend measures to the City Commission that would strengthen the existing sign ordinance by increasing the attractiveness of legal signs.</p>	Griffin Planning & Development Dept.	2004-2005
<p>Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance – Prepare a draft buffer, landscape and tree ordinance, and present to the City Commission for adoption consideration.</p>	Griffin Planning & Development Dept.	2004-2005

Goal #2: Encourage infill and redevelopment within the City’s target areas.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
<p>Overlay zoning districts - Prepare special area studies with specific zoning plan and design standards for each target area. The studies should include specific changes to existing regulations, a market assessment, detailed incentives for spurring economic development within each area, especially in regard to promoting infill and redevelopment.</p>	Griffin Planning & Development Dept.	2005-2007
<p>Commuter Rail - Support the extension of commuter rail to Griffin.</p>	City Commission	On-going
<p>Revitalization Study - Initiate a revitalization study for the North Hill Street and Meriwether Street target areas. In the study consider the possibility of initiating a homesteading program.</p>	Griffin Planning & Development Dept	2006-2007

<p>Downtown redevelopment - Continue to rehabilitate downtown historic buildings for commercial, institutional and residential uses.</p> <p>Adaptive reuse - Allow and encourage the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of abandoned buildings and vacant sites.</p> <p>Property Maintenance Codes - Continued evaluation of housing and property maintenance codes and stringent enforcement</p> <p>Community Improvement Districts - Encourage and support the establishment of Community Improvement Districts. Identify existing commercial areas that need special improvements to stimulate renewal, and identify local business leaders to champion the establishment of a CID, which would allow them to raise their own taxes to pay for improvements.</p>	Downtown Development Authority, Main Street Program	On-going
	Griffin Planning & Development Dept.	On-going
	Griffin Planning and Development Department	2004
	City Commission, DDA, Griffin Planning and Development Dept., Griffin-Spalding Chamber of Commerce	On going

Goal #3: Continue to promote development and redevelopment of the central business district into a thriving mixed-use district.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Mixed-use development - Encourage mixed-uses in the Central Business District	DDA, Historic Preservation Commission, Griffin Planning and Development Department	On going
Rehabilitate downtown - Continue to rehabilitate downtown historic buildings for commercial, institutional and residential uses.	Downtown Development Authority, Main Street Program	On-going

Goal #4: Leverage the proposed commuter rail station for redevelopment around the station.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
<p>Commuter Rail Station Area Study - Prepare a special area study for the area around the proposed commuter rail station with specific zoning plan and design standards. The study should include specific changes to existing regulations, a market assessment, detailed incentives for spurring economic development within the area, especially in regard to promoting infill redevelopment, and mixed-use.</p>	<p align="center">Griffin Planning & Development Dept, and DDA</p>	<p align="center">2006-2008</p>

Goal #5: Preserve Griffin’s small town feel and enhance community pride.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
<p>Design Standards – Prepare draft architectural and design standards for each target area and historic preservation areas throughout Griffin and present to the City Commission for adoption consideration. The new standards should require development that will be in keeping with or enhance the character of the district. The new standards should require provisions for both motorized and non-motorized transportation.</p>	<p align="center">Griffin Planning & Development Dept.</p>	<p align="center">2005-2007</p>
<p>Historic Preservation - Promote and support historic preservation, downtown revitalization, performing and cultural arts, and the tourism economy.</p>	<p align="center">DDA, Historic Preservation Commission, Main Street Program</p>	<p align="center">On-going</p>
<p>Infill Development - Allow and encourage compatible infill development in established neighborhoods</p>	<p align="center">Griffin Planning & Development Dept</p>	<p align="center">On-going</p>

Goal #6: Develop a recreational network of greenways, trails, and parks.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Greenway Master Plan - Create a Greenway Master Plan as part of a new Recreation Master Plan. The Greenway Master Plan should include recommendations on linking the open space in conservation subdivisions together. It should also look at ways to permanently preserve wetlands and floodplains.	Griffin Public Works Dept and Spalding County Parks & Recreation Dept.	2006-2007
Open space conservation - Amend zoning and land development regulations to provide incentives and guidelines for conserving open space in the subdivision process and to widen minimum stream buffer widths.	City Planning & Development Dept	2005-2006
Streetscape requirements - Establish streetscape and sidewalk requirements for new developments.	Planning & Development Dept	2005-2006

Goal #7: Preserve the natural environment as land uses change and the community develops.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Tree Preservation Ordinance – Draft a tree preservation ordinance, and present to the City Commission for adoption consideration.	Griffin City Council	2004
Protect water resources - Continue to enforce existing regulations protecting the City’s water resources.	City Planning & Development Dept	On-going
Open space conservation - Amend zoning and land development regulations to provide incentives and guidelines for conserving open space in the subdivision process and to widen minimum stream buffer widths.	City Planning & Development Dept	2005-2006

Goal #8: Allow greater flexibility within applicable design standards for creative site developments and infrastructure improvements.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
<p>Target area overlay districts - In developing overlay districts for the target areas, consider adopting performance-based design and zoning standards as an option and as an incentive for encouraging redevelopment.</p>	<p>Griffin Planning & Development Dept.</p>	<p>2005-2007</p>