

City of Mulberry Comprehensive Plan Updates

Vision Statement

The City of Mulberry envisions itself as a distinct and intentional community guided by local leadership, offering a high quality of life through preservation of its rural character, low-density residential development, open space, and natural resources. Mulberry will promote executive housing, thoughtfully scaled commercial opportunities, and Class A employment centers that support a strong local economy. Future development will align with the community's values—embracing equestrian-friendly land uses, high-quality materials, and development patterns that respect the scale, intensity, and rural aesthetic of the area.

Land Use Policy Goals and Strategies

Land Use Policy Direction

The Land Use Element promotes the creation of thoughtfully scaled communities that reflect Mulberry's values by prioritizing low-density residential growth, preserving the area's rural character, and aligning development with the community's long-term infrastructure capacity. Development patterns will be shaped to conserve scenic viewsheds, working lands, tree canopy, and environmentally sensitive areas while reinforcing the area's agrarian heritage and equestrian-friendly identity. Mulberry's adaptation of "Daily Communities" will integrate limited, well-placed Class A office and commercial space, neighborhood-serving amenities, and generous open space within a rural framework—ensuring residents can access jobs, services, and recreation without compromising the community's low-impact development pattern and distinctive rural lifestyle.

Land Use Strategy Highlights:

- Focus development within infill and redevelopment areas that match area density and services to preserve existing greenfields for lower intensity growth.
- Encourage low development mixed-use centers and Class A offices.
- Promote low-density residential development (1-acre or larger), estate housing, equestrian subdivisions that are aligned with the City of Mulberry vision.
- Support connected, low development design through zoning updates and incentives.
- Use land use policy to preserve open space, trails, and greenways.

Housing Policy Goals and Strategies

Housing Vision

The City of Mulberry will support rural estate living through the development of executive housing that reflects the community's values and character. The Housing Element envisions neighborhoods with architecturally distinctive homes situated on expansive 2-acre or larger lots, tailored to meet the needs of professionals and business leaders working in Mulberry's future Class A employment centers. These neighborhoods will reinforce the City's rural identity by incorporating equestrian-friendly features such as interconnected horse paths, on-site stables, and standardized unpaved roads as community amenities. Through strategic zoning policies, design standards, and incentives, Mulberry will guide the development of low-density, high-quality housing that preserves open space, promotes a rural aesthetic, and enhances long-term livability unique to the Mulberry area.

Housing Goals:

- Expand the availability of low-density housing on large lots (R-LL, RA-200 zoning) to maintain community character, preserve open space, and reduce infrastructure pressure.
- Support high-quality single-family developments that align with the City's slower growth vision.
- Target redevelopment or refreshing of aging subdivisions and underutilized lots for infill housing opportunities.
- Promote public-private partnerships that support equestrian and executive housing that deliver large lots and trail-connected subdivisions.
- Prioritize low density housing growth in "Daily Community" areas where transportation access is better suited.
- Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to support new districts that support these development patterns.

Economic Development Policy Goals and Strategies

Economic Development Vision

The City of Mulberry will support a focused economic development strategy that prioritizes high-quality, low-impact employers and professional office uses compatible with its rural character. Mulberry will attract Class A office campuses, corporate headquarters, medical office, and light research facilities that reduce commuting and provide high-wage jobs for

residents, without introducing high-density commercial or mixed-use sprawl, though mixed-use development may be appropriate in areas with good transportation access and appropriately scaled for the adjacent or envisioned uses. The City may use strategic public-private partnerships, targeted site planning, and zoning overlays to ensure that employment nodes are consistent with the City's infrastructure capacity, landscape character, and community expectations.

Economic Development Goals:

- Attract and retain Class A office users, corporate campuses, and low-rise employment centers that generate high-wage jobs with minimal impact on surrounding land uses.
- Encourage development of medical office, research, and light tech facilities as alternatives to retail or warehouse-driven economic growth.
- Discourage large-scale retail or commercial redevelopment and instead promote professional services and small-scale employment nodes near existing infrastructure.
- Use zoning overlays, design standards, and targeted incentives to ensure that economic development reflects Mulberry's rural and executive character.
- Locate employment centers near the Workplace Center-Light character area, separated from residential areas by buffers, road hierarchy, and landscaping.
- Consider recruiting for an Economic Development Director once the City establishes key services and processes.

Character Areas

Purpose

These character areas reflect the City of Mulberry's distinct development vision, emphasizing low-density rural preservation, executive housing, agricultural compatibility, and light employment opportunities. Each area is designed to align with the values expressed during community outreach and highlight Mulberry's future land use strategy.

Boundary Interpretations

Given the importance of context in setting these boundaries, the edges between character areas may not always be sharply defined. Where boundary lines fall near transitional areas—often extending several parcels deep—no individual parcel is automatically entitled

Open Space	Large setbacks and internal open land expected
Street Pattern	Informal, with minimal lighting and wide setbacks
Development Pattern	Scattered homes with clustered accessory buildings

Design Considerations

- Preserve viewsheds, fence lines, tree rows, and natural vegetation.
- Conservation subdivisions, permanent easements, or rural preservation tools are encouraged to maintain land in this character area over the long term.
- Rural commercial uses (subject to design standards and context-appropriate scaling and performance standards).
- Outbuildings and barns should match residential character in style and materials or be consistent with traditional agricultural aesthetics.
- Encourage private or shared riding trails and trailhead connections, where feasible. Developments that design, construct, and dedicate trails for public or private use to support the expansion of a city-wide trail network shall receive greater consideration.
- Roads should remain narrow and rural in character

Compatible Zoning Districts

- RA-200 (Rural-Residential)
- R-LL (Large Lot Residential)
- AG (Agricultural) – to be enabled as a district

Executive Residential

General Description

- The Executive Residential character area is intended for large-lot, detached single-family homes in a rural or semi-rural setting. This area supports Mulberry's vision of low-density development that preserves open space, natural features, and the community's rural character. These neighborhoods are located away from commercial nodes and urban village centers and typically rely on private septic systems and well-managed stormwater strategies to reduce infrastructure demands.

- This area allows for a high quality of life and privacy while maintaining the scenic integrity of the landscape. The Executive Residential area also serves as a transitional zone between preserved agricultural land and more developed areas of the City.

Intent / Vision

- Preserve the rural and scenic character of Mulberry.
- Accommodate estate-style housing on lots that support on-site wastewater management.

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family detached homes (minimum 1.0 acres per unit)
- Passive open space and natural preservation areas

Development Characteristics

Feature	Description
Density	Up to 1.0 dwelling unit per acre
Lot Size	Minimum 1.0 acres per unit
Utilities	Septic systems likely; limited sewer access
Infrastructure Impact	Low; area designed to avoid urban services
Street Pattern	Informal, curvilinear streets preferred
Open Space	Encourage tree preservation and scenic views

Design Considerations

- Homes should reflect high architectural quality with styles such as estate, farmhouse, or southern traditional.
- Limited rural commercial uses (subject to design standards)
- Encourage preservation of topography, native vegetation, and tree canopy.
- Maintain visual buffers from roadways and between homes through landscaping and fencing
- Equestrian trail connectivity is encouraged, where feasible.

Compatible Zoning Districts

- R-100 (Single-Family Residential)

- RA-200 (Rural-Residential)
- R-LL (Large Lot Residential)

Suburban-Transition

General Description

- The Suburban-Transition character area serves as a transitional land use buffer between Mulberry's low-density residential or rural zones and the more suburban or urbanized areas in adjacent jurisdictions, particularly within Gwinnett County. This area accommodates limited residential growth while protecting the integrity of Mulberry's desired rural and estate character. Development is expected to reflect a suburban scale but with enhanced landscaping, larger lot sizes, and design standards that ensure compatibility with adjacent rural zones.
- The Suburban-Transition area helps reduce land use conflicts, manage infrastructure loads, and provide an intentional transition in form, scale, and intensity.

Intent / Vision

- Establish a gradual shift from suburban-scale development to rural or estate-scale housing.
- Avoid abrupt changes in density or urban design near Mulberry's rural character areas.
- Maintain architectural cohesion and preserve landscape quality along shared borders.
- Accommodate modest growth while reinforcing Mulberry's development identity.

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family detached homes on medium-to-large lots (0.5–1.0 acres)
- Buffer or conservation easements between developments
- Landscaped stormwater features and greenway corridors

Development Characteristics

Feature	Description
Density	1.0–2.0 dwelling units per acre
Lot Size	0.5 to 1.0 acres per unit

Utilities	Connected to water and sewer, with rural road standards
Development Pattern	Planned subdivisions with strong landscape buffers
Streetscape	Enhanced setbacks, sidewalk optionality, wider roads
Infrastructure Impact	Moderate; designed to prevent spillover into rural

systems

Design Considerations

- Use landscape buffers or berms between subdivisions and adjacent agricultural or estate zones.
- Emphasize tree preservation, coordinated architectural styles, and natural features.
- Cul-de-sacs, curvilinear streets, and low streetlight intensity preferred.
- Consider lot transition standards near key corridors.

Compatible Zoning Districts

- R-60 (Single-Family Residential District)
- R-75 (Single-Family Residential District)
- R-100 (Single-Family Residential District)

Traditional + Neighborhood

General Description

- The Traditional+ Neighborhood character area includes existing single-family subdivisions and adjacent areas that are suited for carefully-scaled infill housing. These neighborhoods may accommodate modest increases in density through compatible housing types such as cottage courts, courtyard clusters, or senior-oriented small-lot homes. The “+” denotes Mulberry’s intent to support modest-density options that reinforce community character without introducing urban-scale development or mixed-use intensity.
- This area acts as a stable residential core, preserving community character while allowing for small-scale improvements in walkability, connectivity, and aesthetics.

Intent / Vision

- Maintain the scale and stability of existing neighborhoods.
- Transition between low-density/rural zones and potential village-scale residential or civic areas.
- Prevent speculative redevelopment or upzoning that would undermine neighborhood character.
- Support aging-in-place, senior housing, and intergenerational options through thoughtful design.
- Provide gradual upgrades to streetscapes, signage, and public space without altering land use patterns.

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family detached homes on small lots (existing and new)
- Cottage courts or courtyard housing
- Townhomes or low rise residential multifamily housing (no large complexes)
- Age-restricted or senior small-lot housing (with shared green space)
- Neighborhood-scaled civic or amenity uses (e.g., community garden, trailhead)

Development Characteristics

Feature	Description
Density	2.0–4.0 units per acre
Lot Size	0.25 to 0.5 acres
Utilities	Connected to public services
Development Pattern	Established subdivisions,
Infill / Redevelopment	Minimal; must match scale and setbacks of neighbors
Connectivity	Pedestrian paths, sidewalk connections
Open Space	Common green space and tree preservation required

Design Considerations

- Infill development should mirror the scale, roof pitch, and materials of surrounding homes or developments.
- Building forms and site plans must reflect residential character; townhomes and low-rise multifamily limited to 1–3 stories with architectural standards.
- Add sidewalks, signage, and lighting where gaps exist, using low-intensity treatments.

- Cottage courts and small-lot homes must front shared greens or private lanes.
- Architectural consistency, front porches, and setbacks help reinforce neighborhood form.

Compatible Zoning Districts

- R-60 (Single-Family Residential District)
- R-TH (Single-Family Residence Townhouse District)
- R-IF (Residential In-Fill District)
- R-SR (Senior Oriented Residence District)
- LRR (Low-Rise Residential Multifamily District)
- TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development District)

Workplace Center-Light

General Description

- The Workplace Center-Light character area is intended to attract high-quality employers, professional offices, and Class A development in a setting that is compatible with Mulberry's rural and residential identity. Unlike traditional mixed-use or urban employment centers, this area focuses on lower intensity, well-landscaped office parks, medical campuses, or light research uses that mitigate commercial sprawl, noise, or heavy infrastructure demands.
- These centers offer employment opportunities for local residents, reduce commuting pressure, and create an economic base that aligns with Mulberry's strategic land use approach.

Intent / Vision

- Attract and retain clean, professional, and low-impact employers.
- Provide office-based jobs for local residents while preserving the city's rural character.
- Promote quality over quantity in site planning, landscaping, and architectural design.
- Discourage intensive commercial or industrial development inappropriate for Mulberry.

Primary Land Uses

- Class A office parks and corporate campuses

- Medical or wellness offices and specialty outpatient centers
- Light research and innovation centers
- Shared co-working or professional service space
- Training or education centers (non-institutional scale)

Development Characteristics

Feature	Description
Intensity	Low to moderate (low-rise buildings with buffers)
Traffic Impact	Peak-hour limited; no high-volume generators
Infrastructure	Public utilities required; road access prioritized
Design Quality	High architectural and landscape standards
Setbacks	Deep setbacks from roads and adjacent neighborhoods
Noise/Light	Minimal impacts; no 24-hour operations

Design Considerations

- Buildings should be well-buffered from adjacent residential areas.
- Materials and design should reflect traditional or modern-rural aesthetics.
- Prohibit drive-thru uses, auto-centric circulation patterns, and 24-hour operations.
- Require internal landscaping.
- Consider shared access, connected driveways, and internal sidewalks or trails

Compatible Zoning Districts

- O-I (Office-Institutional)
- C-1(Neighborhood Business District)
- MU-N (Neighborhood Mixed-Use District)
- Custom overlay zone or development agreement to maintain form and use controls.

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