

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element for Athens-Clarke County consists of a Future Land Use Map and Narrative, as well as Land Based Classification Standards (LBCS). The Unified Government has chosen the Future Land Use Map and Narrative as its official component of the requirement due to its significance in directing land use decisions. Although not required, Athens-Clarke County is also submitting its unique version of the Land Based Classification Standards. The county's version differs slightly in its metrics, but achieves the same goal of implementing a higher degree of data management within local land use.

Each of these two documents are used when developing parcels. All zoning actions (rezone, special use, planned development) must be reviewed and considered against the Future Land Use Map, possibly resulting in a Future Land Use Map amendment in order to proceed. As permits are issued for construction projects, the LBCS Map is updated to reflect the current or proposed use of the property, including structures, in an effort to compile data for a number of potential applications by various departments or outside agencies. One specific benefit of the LBCS data, linked directly to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, will be the capability to track how land use statistics demonstrate satisfaction of associated Goals, Policies, and Needs and Opportunities outlined in this document.

As one of the (15) topics divided among the (5) common themes in this document, Land Use is essential to ensuring a high quality of life. Previous elements with the 2018 Comprehensive Plan have already highlighted Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs and Opportunities, as well as associated Community Work Program items directly related to the topic of Land Use.

While determining appropriate amendments to the Future Land Use Map, Staff invited the public to consider four basic themes when looking toward the future. At a public presentation specifically held for the topic of Land Use, the following considerations, as divided among the (4) themes that evening, were meant to initiate creative responses to present and foreseeable issues in land use directly impacting Athens-Clarke County.

Environment Theme Considerations:

- Conservation of rural areas (aka "Greenbelt")
- Protection of environmentally sensitive areas
- Management of community trees
- Water quality and stormwater

Economic Development

- Location of industrial and commercial lands
- Provision of "shovel-ready" industrial land

Housing Theme Considerations:

- Use of accessory dwelling units
- Multi-family and single-family density limits
- Examination of minimum floor area size
- Variety of available housing types

Design

- Downtown and multi-family design standards
- Complete streets and corridor enhancements (including aesthetics)
- Commercial signs
- Development design issues (architecture, parking lots, retaining walls, etc.)

Proposed Land Use Map

- Collapsed some existing categories into others to create broader classifications
- Expanded zoning compatibility with the remaining Future Development categories
- Contextual classification within new categories for many parcels whose existing zoning does not match Future Development
- Corrected incompatibility for a number of parcels between zoning and Future Development
- Changes to the “Greenbelt” include:
 - Removal of Rural Residential designation, which was only compatible with AR zone, aside from Government and Parks
 - Placement of existing, platted subdivisions in Greenbelt into designations that match underlying zoning
 - Not a reduction of actual Rural areas, but instead making non AR-zoned areas match their Future Development designation

By The Numbers

- Per GIS figures, Athens-Clarke County has a total of 42,007 parcels. Of these, 4,807 have zoning and Future Land Use designations that do not align (11% of all parcels)

Next Phase

- Eventual creation of a new Future Land Use plan based more on the built environment and desired development pattern
- Nodal development and associated zoning standards
- Possible zoning designation changes
- Ensure equal distribution of land uses across neighborhoods

Future Land Use Designations

Although the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has outlined standard Future Land Use categories, Athens-Clarke County has long established alternative designations based on the character the community wishes to enact. To that end, the following list of designations represents those found on the proposed Future Land Use Map, and each is further described by definition. For clarity, each unique designation is also identified in parenthesis by a standard category that represents the most logical grouping.

General Business (standard “Commercial” category)

These are commercial areas that serve a variety of needs for the residents of the region. It is intended for small- and large-scale retailing and service uses that are auto-oriented, such as Atlanta Highway, Lexington Road and US 29 North. Pedestrian-oriented design is particularly appropriate when these streets contain neighborhood-shopping areas or are adjacent to multifamily housing or residential neighborhoods. Pedestrian circulation in these centers is a primary concern, therefore, connectivity within and to surrounding areas should be encouraged. Internal pedestrian walkways should be provided from the public right-of-way to the principal customer entrance of all principal buildings on the site. Walkways should connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as, but not limited to, transit stops, street crossings, building, store entry points, and plaza space. Walkways shall feature adjoining landscaped areas that contribute to the establishment or enhancement of community and public spaces. The street level facade of these areas should have a scale and architectural elements that relate to pedestrians. Buildings should be oriented to the street and corridors should be lined with street-trees. Small and medium scale retail stores should frame the streets with large-scale retailers located behind with focus given to pedestrian circulation rather than automobiles. Parking lots should not be located at the street front and shared parking should be encouraged.

Mixed-Density Residential (standard “Residential” category)

These are residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended. Limited nonresidential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated into these areas (e.g. churches, schools, daycare facilities, small businesses and offices). Buildings should be oriented towards the street and include streetscape enhancements. Their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation.

Downtown (standard “Mixed Use” category)

Retail, office and entertainment uses are encouraged, as is high-density multifamily housing. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. As parking is handled on a district level, off-street parking for individual commercial development is not intended. Parking structures with commercial uses on the street-level frontage are encouraged rather than surface parking lots. This area should have strict design requirements to protect historic integrity and to ensure that new buildings develop in a form and architectural style compatible with existing downtown character.

Employment Center (standard “Industrial” category)

These are areas of industry, office, research parks, and flex-space mixed uses. Large-scale employment areas, which include large industrial areas, manufacturing, office parks, and research centers, is incompatible with housing. Smaller-scale employment areas are appropriate to be in close proximity to a neighborhood area. Design standards regulating building placement, landscaping, and buffering should apply. Small amounts of retail may be compatible in some areas.

Government (standard “Public/Institutional” category)

These areas are in use or proposed for use by federal, state, or local government agencies, including the University of Georgia and Clarke County Board of Education. Many of these locations are intended to serve the community, and should encourage walkability, landscaping and neighborhood-oriented transportation alternatives.

Main Street Business (standard “Mixed Use” category)

These are commercial areas where development of a storefront commercial type is encouraged. The uses are generally small-scale, but larger scaled uses can be integrated within a Main Street Business classification if a small-scale storefront is developed along the street facade, with the larger-scaled use located behind. Larger scale uses should only be developed in instances where they are compatible with the adjacent uses. Retail and office uses should dominate the ground floors of the Main Street Business facades, with residential uses encouraged on second and third stories. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. Walkability and pedestrian scale are important and the development should be oriented to the street with sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian access provided.

Rural (standard “Agriculture/Forestry” category)

Rural lands are intended to have very low residential density. To maintain open space, clustering of dwellings is encouraged with common open spaces protected by conservation easements. Agricultural uses are encouraged, as well as other compatible uses, such as limited, low-impact commercial uses, equestrian and other animal boarding facilities.

Single Family Residential (standard “Residential” category)

These are residential areas with single-family detached housing. Limited non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated in these areas (e.g. churches, schools, personal care homes and daycare facilities).

Traditional Neighborhood (standard “Residential” category)

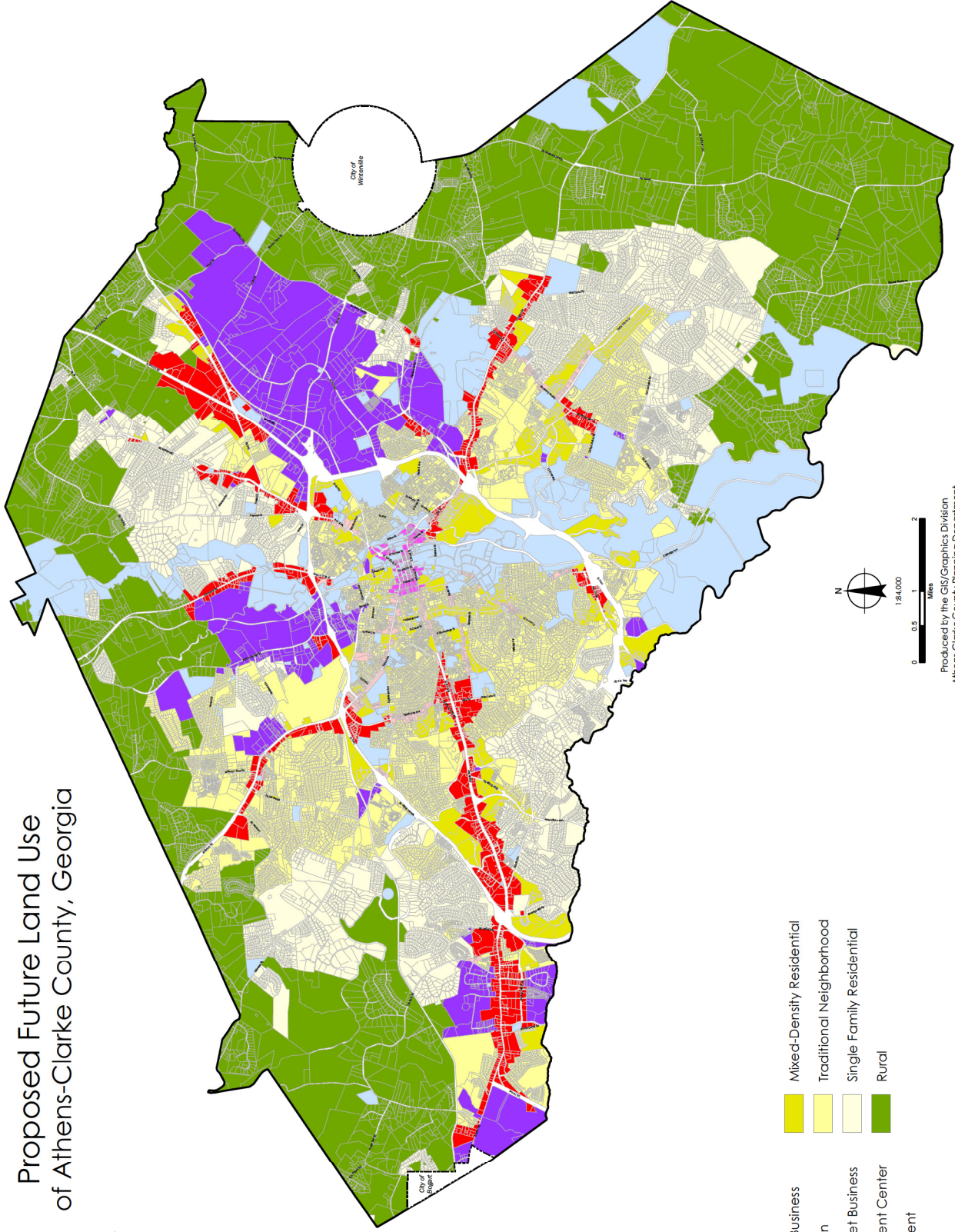
These are medium density neighborhoods with traditional quality developments. These areas should include well-connected street systems, sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of housing types. Homes are often built close to the street with front porches. Garages are set back farther than the homes and porches. Traditional Neighborhood areas support single-family residences, duplexes which resemble large homes, and townhouses. Strict design standards should be implemented to ensure appropriateness of design and to protect neighborhood character. Limited commercial and other non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale are encouraged, but only in areas close to principal and minor arterial routes that have good access to transit.

Proposed Compatibility Matrix

Future Land Use Designations	Zoning Districts																				
	AR	RS-40	RS-25	RS-15	RS-8	RS-5	RM-1	RM-2	RM-3	C-R	C-O	C-N	C-G	C-D	E-O	E-I	I	IN	G	P	
General Business									X		X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X
Downtown									X					X				X	X	X	X
Main Street Business								X			X	X			X			X	X	X	X
Employment Center															X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Government																		X	X	X	X
Mixed Density Residential						X	X	X			X	X							X	X	X
Traditional Neighborhood			X	X	X	X	X				X	X							X	X	X
Single-Family Residential		X	X	X	X														X	X	X
Rural	X																	X	X	X	X

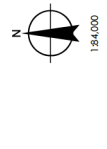


Proposed Future Land Use of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia



Legend

- General Business
- Downtown
- Main Street Business
- Employment Center
- Government
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Single Family Residential
- Rural



Produced by the GIS/Graphics Division
Athens-Clarke County Planning Department
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Introduction to LBCS Tables

Land-Based Classification Standards provide a consistent model for classifying land uses based on their characteristics. The model extends the notion of classifying land uses by refining traditional categories into multiple dimensions, such as activities, building types, site development character, and ownership constraints. Each dimension has its own set of categories and subcategories for classifying land uses allowing a more thorough understanding of the disposition of a given tract of land at a given time.

Classifying land uses across multiple dimensions means adding new fields to the land-use database. The total number of land-use fields in the database should equal the number of dimensions. That is, every record in the database is classified in not just one land-use field, but several—one for each dimension. And the number of dimensions, in turn, will depend on the purpose of the data. When the purpose of the data changes, dimensions may be added or dropped as needed. For local planning purposes, LBCS calls for classifying land uses in the following dimensions: activity, structure type, site development character, and ownership.

Activity: An observable characteristic of land based on actual use.

Activity refers to the actual use of land based on its observable characteristics. It describes what actually takes place in physical or observable terms (e.g., farming, shopping, manufacturing, vehicular movement, etc.). An office activity, for example, refers only to the physical activity on the premises, which could apply equally to a law firm, a nonprofit institution, a court house, a corporate office, or any other office use. Similarly, residential uses in single-family dwellings, multifamily structures, manufactured houses, or any other type of building, would all be classified as residential activity.

Structure: Type of structure or building type on the land.

Structure refers to the type of structure or building on the land. Land-use terms embody a structural or building characteristic, which indicates the utility of the space (in a building) or land (when there is no building). Land-use terms, such as single-family house, office building, warehouse, hospital building, or highway, also describe structural characteristic. Although many activities and Activities are closely associated with certain structures, it is not always so. Many buildings are often adapted for uses other than its original use. For instance, a single-family residential structure may be used as an office.

Site: The overall physical site development character of the land.

Site development character refers to the overall physical development character of the land. It describes "what is on the land" in general physical terms. For most land uses, it is simply expressed in terms of whether the site is developed or not. But not all sites without observable development can be treated as undeveloped. Land uses, such as parks and open spaces, which often have a complex mix of activities, and structures on them, need categories independent of other dimensions. This dimension uses categories that describe the overall site development characteristics.

Ownership: Legal and quasi-legal ownership constraints of the land.

Ownership refers to the relationship between the use and its land rights. Since the Activity of most land uses is either public or private and not both, distinguishing ownership characteristics seems obvious. However, relying solely on the observable Activity may obscure such uses as private parks, public theaters, private stadiums, private prisons, and mixed public and private ownership. Moreover, easements and similar legal devices also limit or constrain land-use activities and ownership forms. This dimension allows classifying such ownership characteristics more accurately.

The underlying principle of the LBCS model is its flexibility. Flexibility in adapting the model to a variety of planning applications, data collection methods, data sharing and integrating methods, color coding land uses, adding new land uses, measuring new characteristics for existing uses, or customizing for local needs without losing the ability to share data. Each of these aspects of LBCS call for applying either a standard or adopting an existing convention.

LBCS Activity Dimension

Activity Code	Activity Description
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Activity 0000	Mixed uses
Activity 0100	Agricultural Mixed Use
Activity 0200	Residential Mixed Use
Activity 0300	Neighborhood Mixed Use
Activity 0400	Employment Center Mixed Use
Activity 0500	Commercial Corridor Mixed Use
Activity 0600	Downtown Mixed Use
Activity 0700	reserved
Activity 0800	reserved
Activity 0900	reserved
Activity 1000	Residential uses and other living accommodations
Activity 1100	Single-family living
Activity 1200	Multi-family living
Activity 1200	Independent retirement housing
Activity 1300	Congregate living (shelters, halfway houses, group lodging)
Activity 1400	Assisted-living services
Activity 1500	Long-term, skilled-nursing housing
Activity 1600	Hotels, motels, or other travelers' accommodations
Activity 1700	Fraternity, Sorority
Activity 1800	Parking
Activity 1800	Open space, landscaping, and recreational activities (if separate parcel from residential structure)
Activity 2000	Retail sales or personal services
Activity 2100	Automobile sales or service establishment
Activity 2200	Non-food or pharmacy retail sales or service
Activity 2300	Grocery, food, pharmacy, beverage retail sales
Activity 2400	Finance and Insurance (Bank, credit union, or savings institution)
Activity 2500	Restaurant, Bar, or similar food services
Activity 2600	Personal services (Hair salon, Laundry-related services, private gym, spa services)
Activity 2700	Personal storage, commercial mini-warehousing
Activity 2800	Kennels and other animal and pet services
Activity 2900	Multi-Tenant Commercial on Single Lot (Regional Mall, Strip Mall, Shopping Center)
Activity 3000	Professional Services and Office
Activity 3100	General business office
Activity 3200	Professional services (Accounting, legal, design, surveying or other licensed professions)
Activity 3300	Outpatient medical clinics and services (incl. patient lab services)
Activity 3400	Veterinary services (not incl. kennel facilities)
Activity 4000	Transportation, communication, information, and utilities
Activity 4100	Air transportation
Activity 4200	Rail transportation
Activity 4300	Road, ground passenger, and transit transportation
Activity 4310	Taxi and limousine service
Activity 4320	Towing and other road and ground services
Activity 4330	Parking lot
Activity 4340	Truck and freight transportation services
Activity 4350	Postal, Courier and messenger services
Activity 4400	Communications and information (Publishing, recording, telecommunications, broadcasting)
Activity 4500	Utilities and utility services

Activity 4510	Electric power (Hydroelectric, Fossil, Nuclear, Alternative energy sources)
Activity 4520	Natural gas, petroleum, fuels, etc.
Activity 4530	Water, Stormwater
Activity 4540	Sanitary Sewer, Septic tank and related services
Activity 4600	Solid waste, landfill and related services
Activity 5000	Arts, entertainment, and recreation
Activity 5100	Live performing arts or supporting establishment
Activity 5200	Museums, zoos, gardens and other special purpose recreational institutions
Activity 5300	Indoor Amusement, movie theaters, sports or recreation establishment
Activity 5400	Outdoor Organized Sports Complex
Activity 5500	Camps, camping, and related establishments
Activity 5600	Natural and other recreational parks
Activity 5700	Public Assembly
Activity 6000	Education, public admin., health care, and other inst.
Activity 6100	Educational services (public and private)
Activity 6110	Nursery and preschool
Activity 6120	Grade schools
Activity 6130	Colleges and Universities
Activity 6140	Technical, trade, and other specialty schools
Activity 6200	Public administration (Governmental legislative, executive, judicial, & correctional)
Activity 6300	Other government uses
Activity 6400	Public Safety (Fire and rescue, Police, Emergency response)
Activity 6500	Health care services (hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices, treatment facilities)
Activity 6600	Religious institutions
Activity 6700	Death care services
Activity 6800	Semi-public associations, nonprofit organizations, etc.
Activity 6900	Human and Social Services
Activity 7000	Light manufacturing (Assembly of processed materials)
Activity 7100	Research and Development
Activity 7200	Warehousing (Distribution and Storage)
Activity 7300	Food and Beverage production
Activity 8000	Heavy Manufacturing (Processing of raw materials)
Activity 8100	Mining, quarrying and extraction establishments
Activity 8200	Outdoor storage of large materials, including rock, soil, and recycled materials
Activity 9000	Agriculture, forestry
Activity 9100	Crop production
Activity 9200	Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture
Activity 9300	Support Activities for agriculture
Activity 9400	Animal raising, production
Activity 9500	Forestry and Logging
Activity 9600	<i>Conservation</i>
Activity 9900	Unclassifiable Activity

LBCS Structure Dimension

Structure Code	Structure Description
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Structure 1000 Residential Buildings

- Structure 1010 *Non-habitable residential structure (Detached garage/ carport, Pool House, Shed)*
- Structure 1100 Single-family detached units
- Structure 1200 Single-family attached units (townhomes)
- Structure 1300 Accessory residential units
- Structure 1400 Duplex structures
- Structure 1500 Manufactured housing
- Structure 1600 Multifamily structures
 - Structure 1610 3 - 10 units
 - Structure 1620 11 – 50 units
 - Structure 1630 More than 50 units
- Structure 1700 Fraternities, Sororities
- Structure 1800 Group Lodging
- Structure 1900 Other specialized residential structures

Structure 2000 Commercial buildings and other specialized structures

- Structure 2100 Office building
 - Structure 2110 Office building with drive-through facility
- Structure 2200 Single-tenant retail or commercial building
 - Structure 2210 Shop or store building with drive-through facility
 - Structure 2220 Restaurant or other food service with drive-through facility
 - Structure 2230 Gasoline station (incl. convenience stores with gasoline sales)
 - Structure 2240 Automobile repair and service structures (incl. car wash)
- Structure 2300 Office or Retail building with residential above
- Structure 2400 Retail with Office above
- Structure 2500 Malls, shopping centers, or multi-tenant commercial
- Structure 2700 Hotels, Motels, Bed & Breakfast, Hostel
- Structure 2800 Industrial buildings and structures
- Structure 2900 Warehouse or storage facility

Structure 3000 Public assembly structures

- Structure 3010 Semi public hall, club, lodge, fraternal organizations
- Structure 3100 Theater
- Structure 3200 Indoor games facility
- Structure 3300 Sports stadium or arena
- Structure 3400 Exhibition, convention, or conference structure
- Structure 3500 Churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, etc.
- Structure 3600 Governmental buildings
- Structure 3700 Covered or partially covered atriums and public enclosures
- Structure 3800 Other community structures

Structure 4000 Institutional or community facilities

- Structure 4100 Medical facility
- Structure 4200 Educational (classrooms or specialized instruction structures)
- Structure 4300 Public safety-related facility (Fire/emergency; police)
- Structure 4400 Jails, penitentiaries, detention centers, and other correctional facilities
- Structure 4500 Cemetery, monument, tombstone, or mausoleum

Structure 5000 Transportation-related facilities

- Structure 5100 Linear or network transportation feature (roadways, trails)
- Structure 5200 Automobile parking facilities (surface parking lots, parking structures)
- Structure 5300 Bus stop shelter or other transit-related structure
- Structure 5400 Air travel facility (airport-related, heliport, glideport)
- Structure 5500 Railroad facility

Structure 6000 Utility and other nonbuilding structures (towers, pumping stations, substations, monitoring facilities, etc.)

- Structure 6100 Dam, reservoir, impoundment
- Structure 6200 Water tank (elevated, at grade, underground)
- Structure 6300 Water treatment and purification (WTP) facility
- Structure 6400 Landfill facility, incinerator, composting, or similar facility
- Structure 6500 Power generation facility (gas, electric, solar, geothermal, wind)
- Structure 6600 Communication towers

Structure 7000 Reserved

Structure 8000 Sheds, barns, farm buildings, or agricultural facilities (greenhouses, silos), and kennels

Structure 9000 No structure or ruins (foundation-only, demolition by neglect, etc.)

LBCS Site Dimension

Site Code	Site Description
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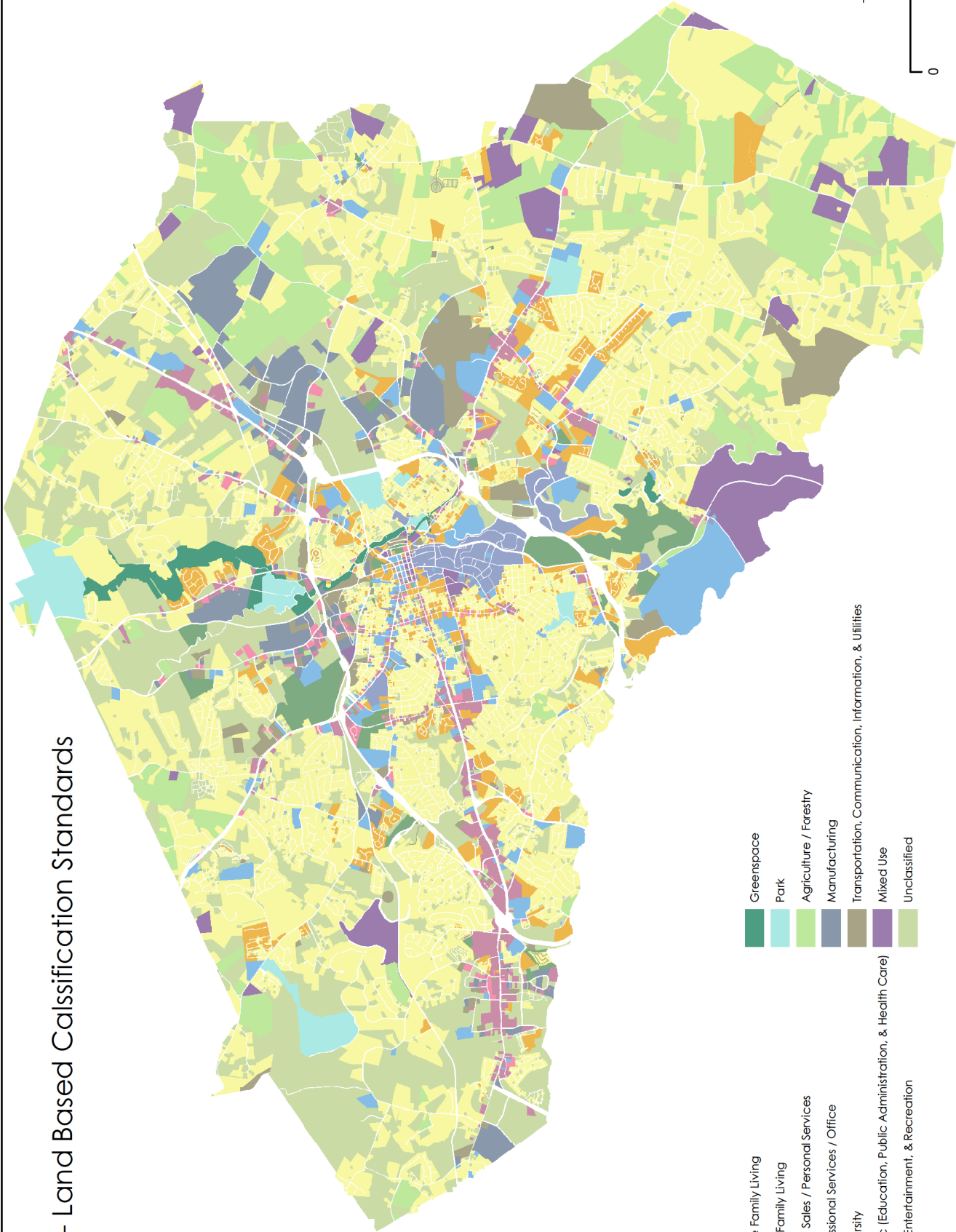
Site 1000	Site in natural state; undeveloped
<i>Site 1100</i>	<i>Greenspace/Land in Conservation</i>
Site 2000	Developed site - Active agriculture use: crops, grazing, forestry, etc.
Site 3000	Developed site – Low Coverage
Site 3100	Developed site – up to 10% impervious coverage
Site 3200	Developed site – >10-15% impervious coverage
Site 3300	Developed site – >15-20% impervious coverage
Site 3400	Developed site – >20-25% impervious coverage
Site 3500	Developed site – >25-30% impervious coverage
Site 3600	Developed site – >30-35% impervious coverage
Site 4000	Developed site – Medium Coverage
Site 4100	Developed site – >35-40% impervious coverage
Site 4200	Developed site – >40-45% impervious coverage
Site 4300	Developed site – >45-50% impervious coverage
Site 4400	Developed site – >50-55% impervious coverage
Site 4500	Developed site – >55-60% impervious coverage
Site 4600	Developed site – >60-65% impervious coverage
Site 5000	Developed site – High Coverage
Site 5100	Developed site – >65-70% impervious coverage
Site 5200	Developed site – >70-75% impervious coverage
Site 5300	Developed site – >75-80% impervious coverage
Site 5400	Developed site – >80-85% impervious coverage
Site 5500	Developed site – >85-90% impervious coverage
Site 5600	Developed site – >90-95% impervious coverage
Site 5700	Developed site – >95-100% impervious coverage
Site 6000	Unclassifiable site development character

LBCS Ownership Dimension

Owner Code	Owner Description
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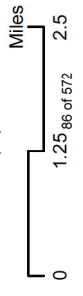
Owner 1000	Private ownership
Owner 2000	Public - Local government
Owner 3000	Public - State government (Other)
Owner 3100	Public - State-Chartered Authority (Hospital Authority of Clarke County; Industrial Development Authority)
Owner 3200	Public - Board of Regents
Owner 4000	Public - Federal government
Owner 5000	Nonprofit ownership restrictions (Semi-Public and Private)
Owner 6000	Railroad
Owner 7000	Public or Private Utility
Owner 8000	Unclassifiable ownership or restriction on the use

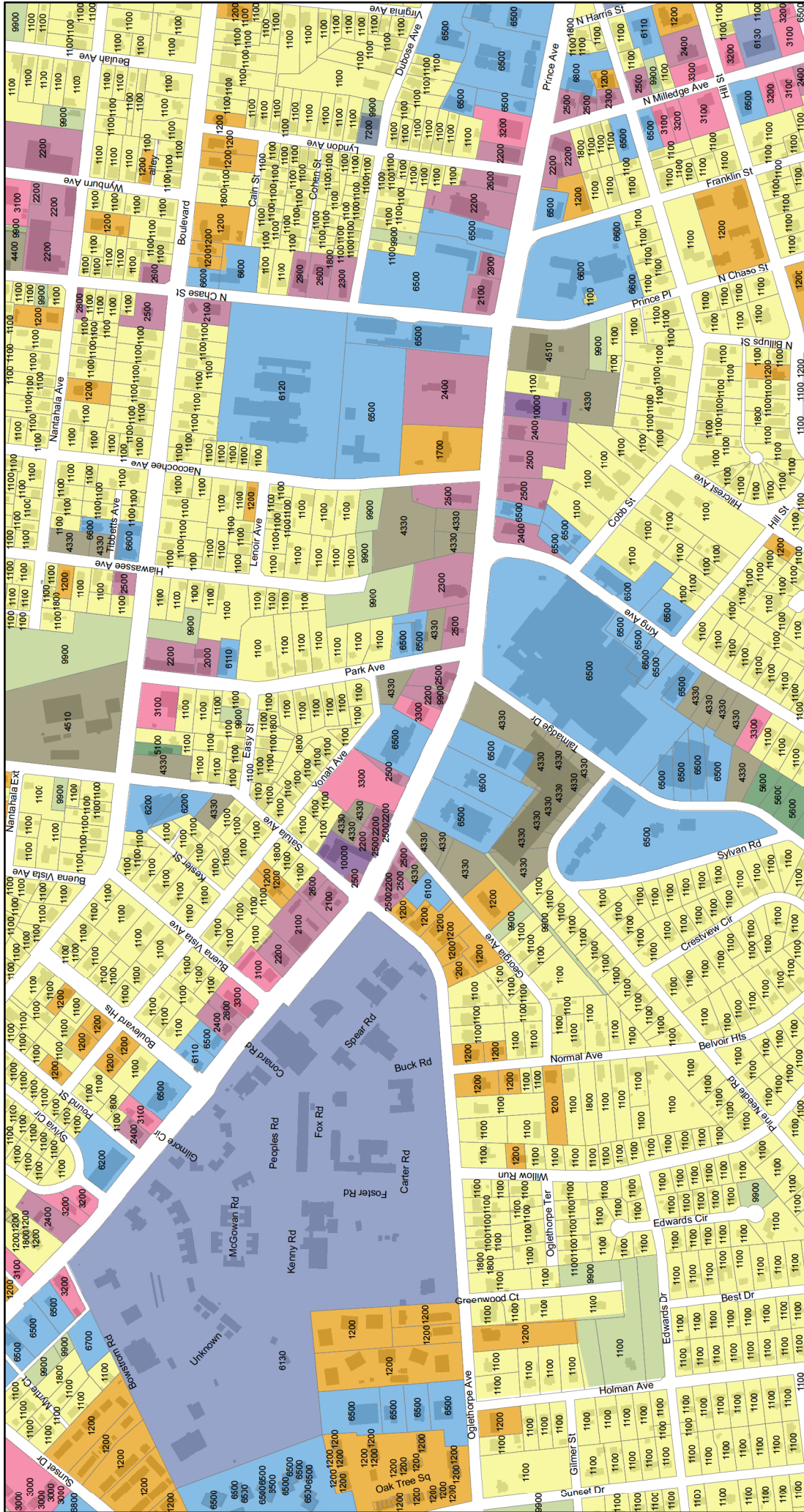
LBCS - Land Based Classification Standards



- Activity**
- Single Family Living
 - Multi-Family Living
 - Retail Sales / Personal Services
 - Professional Services / Office
 - University
 - Public (Education, Public Administration, & Health Care)
 - Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation

- Greenspace
- Park
- Agriculture / Forestry
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Communication, Information, & Utilities
- Mixed Use
- Unclassified





LBCS - Land Based Classification Standards

Activity

- Single Family Living
- Multi-Family Living
- Retail Sales / Personal Services
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- University
- Public (Education, Public Administration, & Health Care)
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