

City of Newnan

Urban Redevelopment Plan

Prepared by: Planning and Zoning
Department

2013

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The City of Newnan has the distinction of being referred to as the City of Homes. This accolade is fitting given the preponderance and diversity of older homes that can be found within the City's limits. Many homes date from before the Civil War, as Newnan was spared General Sherman's wrath on his march through Georgia. In addition to the City's stately mansions, there are also 1930's mill communities, 1950's suburban ranch houses, and other charming homes from every decade. Sadly, times have taken a toll on several areas within the City where a concentration of older housing exists. As a result, once thriving communities are subject to depreciated property values, low owner occupancy rates, higher crime rates, and general blight. Many owners will not or cannot afford to repair their homes, resulting in dilapidated structures being used for rental property or, in many instances, elderly homeowners watching their life's investment fall apart before their eyes. Private investment in these areas is curtailed by their condition, and when investment is made it is often incompatible with the existing character of the neighborhood. Because the future for many of Newnan's older, and often historic, neighborhoods is growing dim, the City Council is adopting an Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP).

URPs serve as valuable tools that, in conjunction with Comprehensive Plans and other State legislative redevelopment tools, can be used to revitalize areas within cities that are dilapidated or in danger of becoming so. It is the City of Newnan's hope that adopting its own URP will be the catalyst for revitalizing older neighborhoods by rehabilitating faltering structures and constructing new, affordable housing while ensuring architectural compatibility. In addition, neighborhood commercial centers and infrastructure will have a fresh opportunity to be

enhanced. Healthy neighborhoods consist of good quality housing *and* viable community businesses.

The URP is required to address many components of the City's plan for renewal. These elements include, but are not limited to:

- Designation of a redevelopment entity
- Indication of consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Definition of boundaries of the area to be redeveloped (need not be contiguous)
- Explanation of the negative conditions in the redevelopment area that cause it to meet the definition of "slum" and make redevelopment necessary
- Indication of any land acquisition, demolition, redevelopment, improvement, and rehabilitation proposed to be undertaken in the area
- Indication of any changes to planning, zoning, and building requirements
- Description of a feasible method for the relocation of families who will be displaced from the area into decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings within their means and without undue hardship
- Indication of the URP's relationship to definite local objectives
- Indication of the maximum opportunity for rehabilitation and redevelopment of the area to be undertaken by private enterprise

This URP is broadly written concerning many of these components. This is intentional for two primary reasons. The first is to allow the redevelopment agency (defined in the following section) room to retool the plan as necessary once a more specific plan of action is known, which would be done in accordance with all applicable laws

concerning amendments to URPs and allow appropriate public notification of any changes to the plan. Secondly, the URP is nonspecific for many components because some information is simply not known at this point. For example, definite tracts of land have not been targeted for specific action, individual structures have not been named for demolition, needed changes to building or planning requirements cannot be determined at this time, and an intricately detailed relocation strategy cannot be established and may not be warranted, as the City anticipates no relocation due to implementation of the URP.

Designation of Redevelopment Entity

It is the desire of the City Council to create a new and separate redevelopment agency to oversee implementation of the URP. While a jurisdiction's local legislative body has the ability to appoint themselves as the agency, the Council feels this role would be best fulfilled by experts within the housing field and by citizens who live within the redevelopment area. Consequently, the Council met with the Housing Authority of Newnan (HAN) to discuss an arrangement that guarantees the envisioned method of implementation.

The Council determined the agency's board of commissioners should have nine members. Each council person will have the opportunity to appoint one member. The Mayor will designate a chairman and appoint two additional members. In addition to serving on the agency's board of commissioners, these two members will consecutively serve on HAN's board of directors.

Each agency commissioner will serve a term of three years. These terms are to be staggered so three seats are reappointed each year. Of the nine original appointments, three seats will serve one year for their first appointment and three seats will serve two years for their first appointment. After these shortened terms are completed, reappointments will resume every three years.

Redevelopment Agency Commissioners:

- *9 appointments*
- *2 consecutively serving on HAN's board*
- *3 year, staggered terms*

The Agency will annually present a report to the City Council prior to March 31. This report will be prepared in accordance with O.C.G.A. 36-61-18

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

In many areas the City of Newnan's Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the intents and purposes of the URP. The following excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan serve to support this fact by demonstrating the City's recognition of problems in its older neighborhoods, indicating current efforts to address these problems, and planning for increased efforts to alleviate deteriorating and substandard housing conditions.

"Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities

- Housing prices are not consistent with the incomes of workers who live in the City
- Some remaining pockets of substandard housing
- Greater management control for rental properties
- Not all homes have complete plumbing or kitchen facilities
- Revitalize existing residential areas on the west side of town
- Decreasing home ownership
- Higher vacancy rates than surrounding area
- Encourage development utilizing a traditional neighborhood design
- Preserve small-town charm through housing stock
- Emphasis on higher quality housing products
- Additional special needs housing for persons recovering from substance abuse, domestic violence, and the homeless

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns: Areas Requiring Special Attention

- Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources: These areas are comprised of the City's wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, flood plains, water supply watersheds, and **various historic districts**.
- Areas in Need of Redevelopment and/or Significant Improvements to Aesthetics: The City has various historic districts or older sections that are in need of significant improvements due to the effects of aging and lack of adequate maintenance.
- Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities: There are numerous residential areas surrounding downtown proper that are prime for infill development.
- Areas of Significant Disinvestment, Levels of Poverty, and/or Unemployment: The older commercial and residential areas around Temple Avenue and Greenville Street are areas indicative of this category. Efforts should be made to plan for future redevelopment.
- Traditional Neighborhood: These neighborhoods are predominately residential. The houses are located on small lots with small setbacks. Many of the homes are historic and are included in the National Register Districts.

Community Vision: Traditional Neighborhood

- Description: These neighborhoods are predominantly residential. The houses are located on small lots with small setbacks. Many of the homes are historic and are included in the National Register Districts. These areas are very pedestrian oriented

and epitomize a sense of community. Most of the houses have porches or stoops to encourage relationships with the neighbors. The streets reflect a grid pattern with limited right-of-way. On-street parking is also allowed in these neighborhoods. Trees are mature and often create a canopy over the local streets.

- **Implementation Measures:** It is important that we continue to preserve homes in these areas. Infill development should not detract from the neighborhood and should reflect the same characteristics as existing development. Additional pocket parks should be developed that complement the existing landscape.

Community Issues and Opportunities: Housing

- While Newnan is rapidly growing, it has managed to retain its small-town charm. Specifically, the downtown area and surrounding historic and older residential neighborhoods can make this claim. This feel can be preserved and increased through the management of its housing stock by utilizing a traditional neighborhood design.
- Homeownership is looked upon by society in a positive light. In fact, homeownership rates are often used as an economic indicator with higher rates representing a more stable economy. The City has recently seen decreasing homeownership rates.
- Some remaining pockets of substandard housing can be found throughout the City. Correcting this problem will benefit the residents of those homes as well as the appearance of the City as a whole.
- Similar to homeownership rates, the vacancy rate can be used to signify the stability of

local economies. The lower the vacancy rate, the better. Newnan has, in recent times, experienced higher vacancy rates than some surrounding jurisdictions. Efforts should be made to encourage home ownership including the **establishment of a housing program**.

Implementation Program: Housing Short and Long-Term Work Program

- Consider housing improvement programs to promote homeownership (especially infill areas).
- Apply for participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing. Develop a community housing team to help in the development of a housing program.
- Identify areas of substandard housing to be addressed by the City's housing maintenance inspection program.
- Continue substandard housing program, emphasizing the need to save historically significant homes.

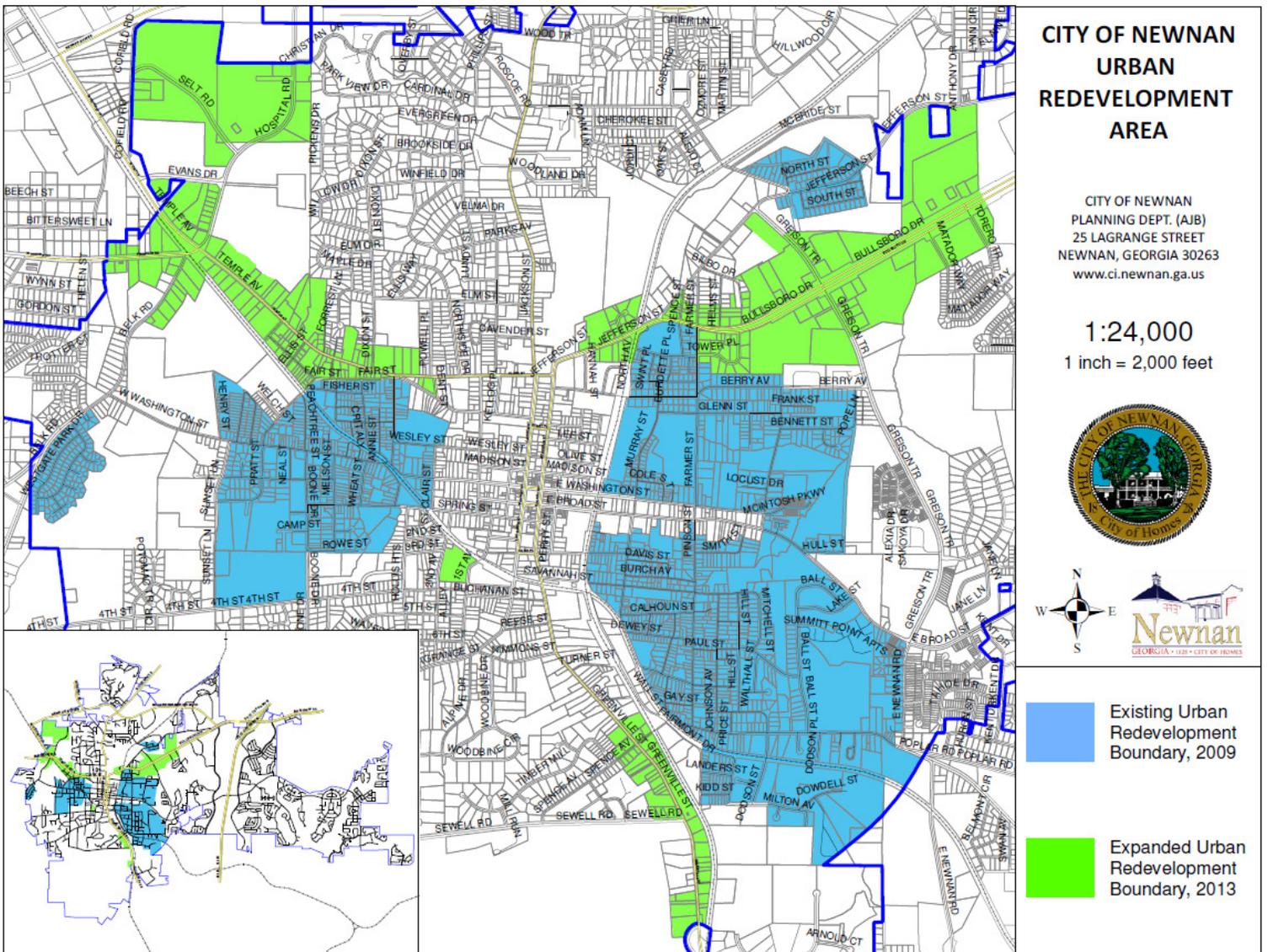
Implementation Program: Housing Policies

- We will protect, maintain, and enhance the viability, character, identity, and physical condition of established neighborhoods.
- We will encourage higher quality housing products through greater regulations and incentives.
- We will continue to support the Housing Authority in their efforts to provide affordable housing to qualified citizens.
- We will eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community by maintaining and enhancing the City's existing housing maintenance inspection program.

- We will stimulate infill housing development of existing neighborhoods.
- We will create affordable housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable choice or option to live in the community.
- We will encourage home-ownership.
- We will encourage housing policies, choices, and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence.
- We will increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.”

Boundaries of Redevelopment Area

The City's redevelopment area is not contiguous. For this reason, it is best to define these boundaries with a map.



Explanation of Negative Conditions

Though the redevelopment area is widespread and disjointed, the following negative conditions are

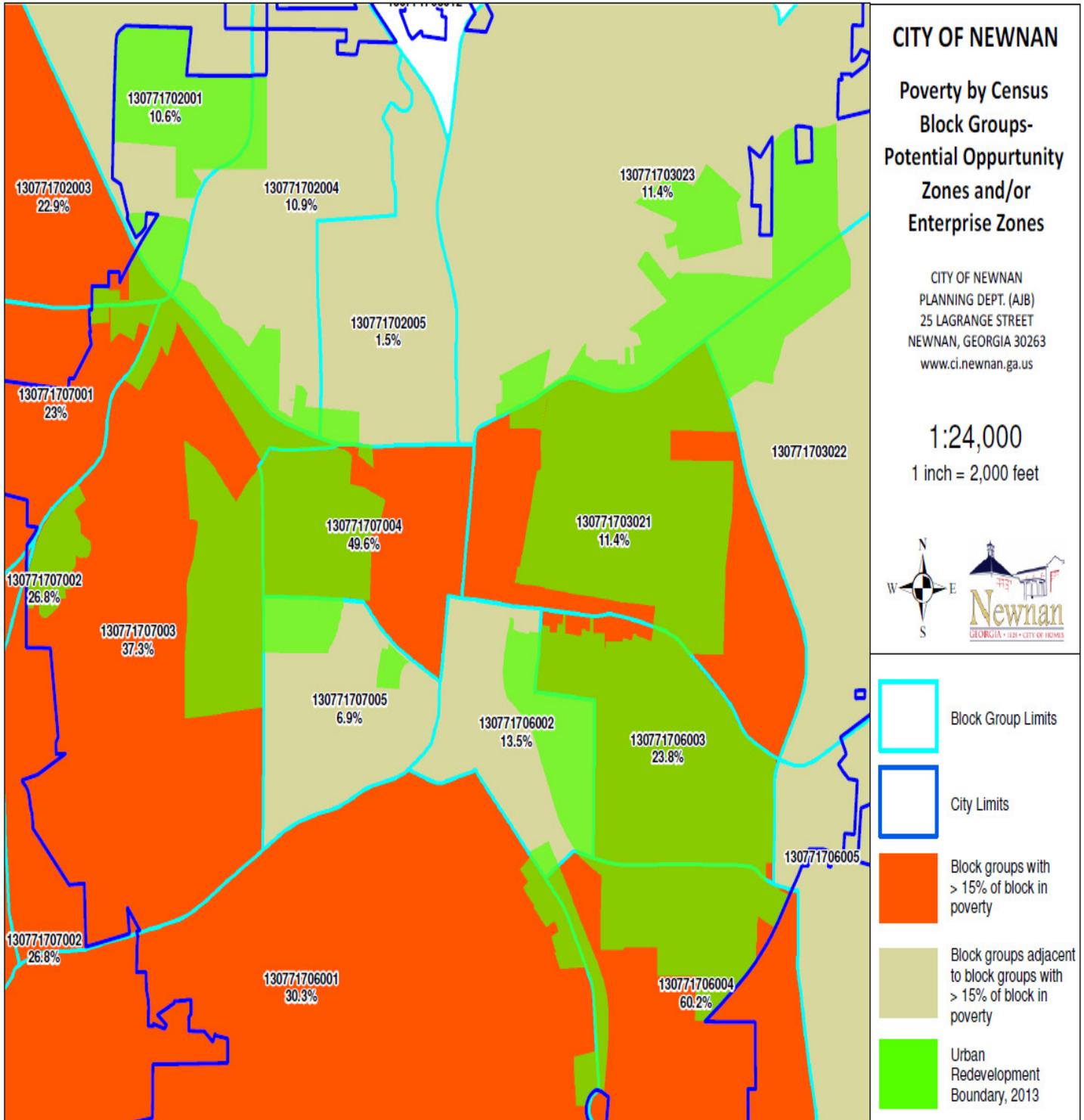


characteristic of several or all neighborhoods found within its boundaries. These conditions cause the redevelopment area to meet the statutory definition of “slum” as

defined in §36-61-2 of the Urban Redevelopment Act.

- Broken and uneven sidewalks
- Building interiors and exteriors in need of repair
- Unkempt yards
- Abundance of trash or junk items stored on properties
- Low rates of home ownership
- Higher occurrences of vacant structures, which are often left unsecured
- Instances of faulty or nonconforming lot layout
- An existence of criminal activity
- Higher rates of condemnation
- Yards experiencing soil erosion issues
- Neighborhood commercial centers with limited parking and low-grade signage
- Disinterest of private residential and commercial investment
- General property distress
- Contiguous poverty block groups (see succeeding map, Poverty by Census Block Groups)





Land Acquisition, Demolition, Rehabilitation, and Construction

Through reasons of condemnation and failure to pay taxes, the City frequently comes into possession of properties within its limits; some of these also fall within the borders of the redevelopment area. The City envisions using the redevelopment agency and URP as a mechanism by which to relieve it of these properties while bringing them into a safe condition and/or place them back on the tax roster. In order to accomplish this, the City would grant the appropriate properties to the redevelopment agency. The agency would then bid these properties to private builders/contractors, who would “win” greatly reduced or free property in exchange for construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing that is architecturally compatible with the neighborhood in question. Once the property was sold, the builder/contractor would receive the cost to rehabilitate or construct the home plus some portion to be determined. All parties involved would conceivably benefit from this arrangement. The City gets properties returned to the tax rolls, the agency is facilitated in accomplishing the purposes of the URP, and private builders/contractors benefit financially. Of course, many details of this process will have to be better established by the redevelopment agency, but this general description is included to define one known goal the City has for property it intends to give the agency. It should be noted that the City may give property to the agency through a land bank authority; this is one of the

many details that must be worked out by the agency.

In order to accomplish the purposes of the URP, property may need to be acquired by other means than previously described. While there are currently no plans for acquiring specific pieces of property, future acquisition is not outside the realm of possibility. Consequently, the City Council is bestowing the agency with all powers legally viable under the Urban Redevelopment Act that will enable the agency to acquire, receive, or otherwise obtain property. These powers include eminent domain. However, any use of eminent domain must be approved by the City Council prior to execution.

Other activities, such as demolition and rehabilitation, will also be carried out by the agency and have been approved for agency use by the City Council. No specific plans in the redevelopment area concerning these activities is yet known, but all of these procedures remain subject to the City’s normally applicable rules, regulations, and ordinances.

Planning, Zoning, and Building Regulations

A benefit of using an URP for redevelopment is the ability to alter some existing zoning and development requirements, in accordance with §36-61-8 of the Urban Redevelopment Act, for the purpose of achieving the optimum economic and aesthetic results in the redevelopment area. At this time, any alteration or alleviation of existing requirements that may be necessary to effectively

implement the URP is unknown. Nonetheless, it is likely that some change or mitigation will be essential and/or beneficial. As such, the City Council is allowing the agency the option to pursue all legal changes to existing zoning and development regulations as they are reasonable and necessary.

Displacement and Relocation

The City has no need for a relocation strategy at this time. Redevelopment efforts are currently focused on unimproved lots, City-owned property, and vacant structures. Rehabilitation on occupied buildings is also a possibility. However, the manner of rehabilitation is not presently anticipated to displace occupants. In the event displacement of residents becomes necessary, the URP will be amended to incorporate a plan for relocation.

Through its existing building remediation and condemnation program, the City has caused residents to become displaced. When warranted, the City has worked with the HAN to seek priority housing arrangements.

Relationship to Local Objectives

No current land use objectives are known to be inconsistent with the purposes of the URP.

Although, the redevelopment area contains a mixture of land uses and zoning districts, existing land use is primarily residential. The most dominant zoning districts in the area are RU-7 and RU-1. Of non-residential zoning districts, CUN is the most prevalent. Each zoning district found within the redevelopment area is listed below and is accompanied by a description of the district taken from the City's Zoning Ordinance.

“Residential

RU-7: Urban Residential Single-Family Dwelling District, High Density

This district provides for higher density residential development designed to allow more walkable neighborhoods. The principal uses of land in this district are single-family dwellings and related recreational, religious, and educational facilities normally required to provide the basic elements of a balanced, orderly, convenient, and attractive residential area.

RU-1: Urban Residential Dwelling District, Historical and Infill

This district provides for higher density residential development in the historical, residential areas of the City of Newnan. The principal uses of land in this district are single-family dwellings and related recreational, religious, and educational facilities normally required to provide the basic elements of a

balanced, orderly, convenient, and attractive residential area.

RU-2: Townhouse Residential Dwelling District

This district shall no longer allow new designation through rezoning.

The intent of this district is to provide standards for townhouse dwellings which will encourage the provision of functional open space and recreation areas where feasible; be located primarily in areas near or adjacent to other residential districts and uses; be situated so as to provide a transition in density between single-family and two-family districts and higher density residential districts and uses; provide a neighborhood orientation to include such features as sidewalks, alleys, rear and/or street parking, street trees, and shallow setbacks that facilitate said orientation; be located near such services as neighborhood retail uses and transportation facilities such as arterial and collector streets; and encourage home ownership and owner-occupancy.

RML: Residential Multiple Family Dwelling District, Lower Density

This district is intended to provide for medium density multiple-family dwellings which may have a relatively intense concentration of dwelling units served by large open spaces consisting of common areas and recreation facilities, thereby resulting in medium gross densities. The principal use of land may be one or several dwelling types, ranging from manufactured homes to low-rise, multiple-family dwellings, and including two-family dwellings, garden apartments, apartment buildings, condominiums and townhouses. Recreational, religious, and educational uses normally located to service adjacent residential areas are also permitted

to meet the basic needs of a balanced, orderly, convenient, economical, and attractive residential area.

Commercial and Industrial

CUN: Urban Neighborhood Commercial District

This district is intended for unified grouping, in one or more buildings, of several, typically between two and ten, retail and service shops or stores that provide for the regular needs and are for the convenience of the people residing in adjacent urban residential neighborhoods. Gross commercial floor area in a neighborhood center typically ranges from 4,000 to 30,000 square feet, and the land area consists of one to five acres in size. It is intended that the neighborhood commercial center is developed as one or several compatible units with on-street parking predominant. The desired character includes areas which are predominantly built-up, with buildings close to and oriented towards the sidewalk, especially at corners. Development is pedestrian-oriented and buildings with a storefront character are required.

CGN: General Commercial District

This district is intended for the conduct of community-wide personal and business services, specialty shops, and general highway commercial development. Minimum lot width, depth, area, and yard requirements, buffer strips, and landscaping have been established to reduce the negative impact with typical commercial development.

OI-1: Low Density Office and Institutional District

This district is intended to encourage and permit low density general professional and business offices of high development quality and appearance in attractive landscaped surroundings on small sites.

The design of OI-1 development should be compatible with and complementary to adjacent residential development.

CHV: Heavy Commercial District

This district is designated for intensive commercial uses such as heavy automobile repair, contractor's storage, and truck rental and sales, and those selected manufacturing uses that are compatible with such commercial development. The permitted manufacturing uses are either free of objectionable influences in their operations and appearance or can eliminate or control objectionable characteristics by landscaping, screening, and other abatement devices.

IHV: Heavy Industrial District

This district is intended to provide for heavy industrial uses and other uses not otherwise provided for in the other districts. The intensity of uses permitted in this district makes it necessary to separate it from all residential districts and most commercial districts whenever possible.

Mixed Use

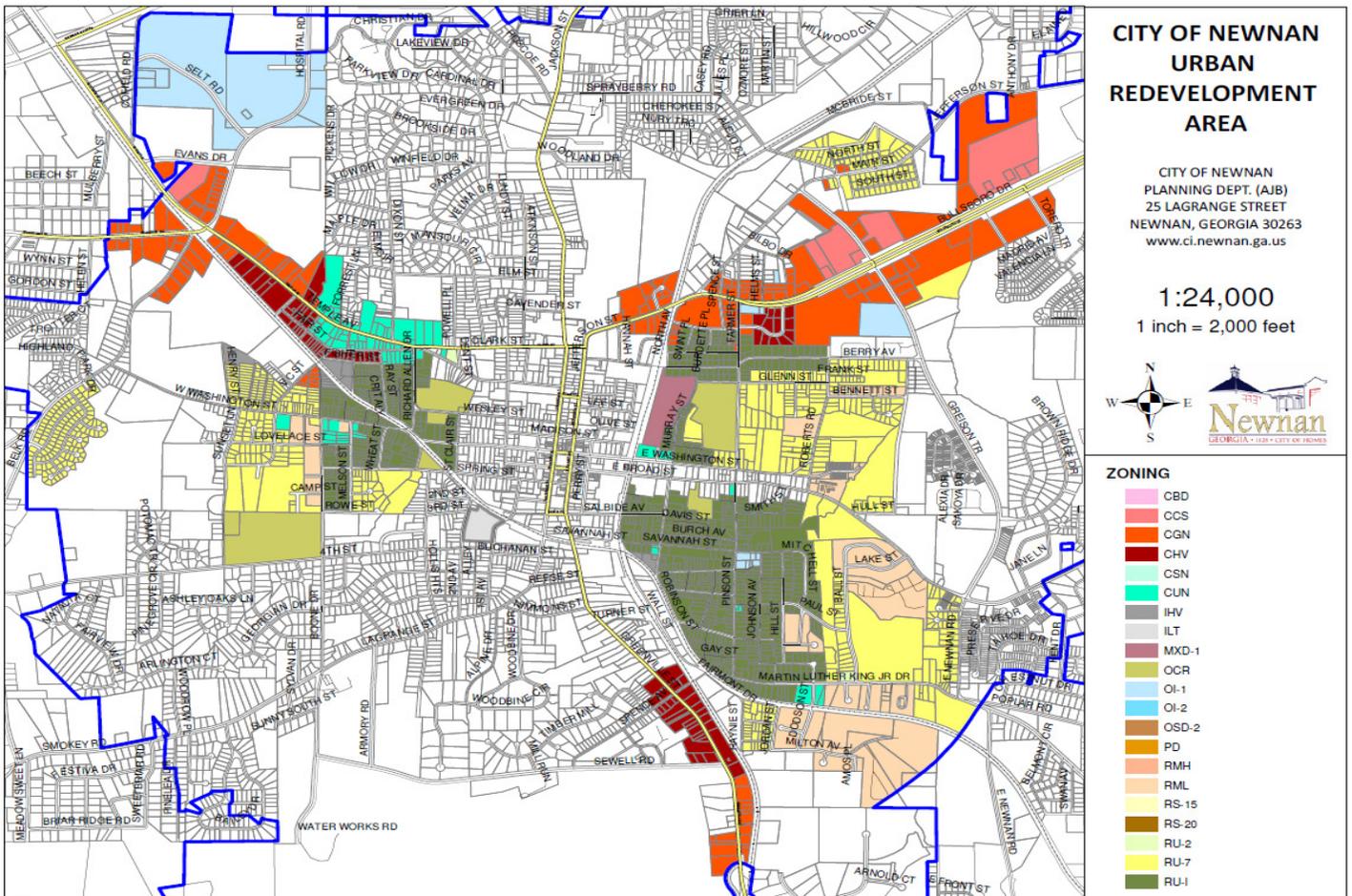
MXD-1: Urban Mixed Use Development District

The overall purpose of the MXD district is to allow and encourage flexibility and creativity in the design and development of comprehensively planned, mixed-use centers that would not be possible under conventional zoning districts. The specific purposes of this district are to encourage residential uses in conjunction with commercial and other compatible activities in order to create an active street life, enhance the vitality of businesses, and reduce vehicular traffic.

Open Space

OCR: Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation District

This district is intended to preserve public and private open space and natural areas as identified on the future land use map of the Comprehensive Plan and/or on the Official Zoning Map of the City of Newnan. These areas serve a number of functions including providing opportunities for outdoor recreation; providing contrasts to the built environment; preserving scenic qualities; protecting sensitive or fragile environmental areas; preserving the capacity and water quality of the stormwater drainage system; and ensuring that critical water supply reservoirs and watersheds are protected.”



Opportunity for Private Enterprise

While no particular method to encourage private enterprise has yet been delineated, many opportunities exist for such investment. The City Council is encouraging and allowing the agency to utilize whatever tools and powers are legally possible and will be most beneficial for this cause. Therefore, the agency will have the ability to implement or cause implementation of opportunity zones, enterprise zones, job tax credits, tax allocation districts, and/or a bond allocation program. Additionally, waiver or reduction of local regulatory fees, such as occupation taxes, license fees, and building inspection and/or permitting fees, may also be an option.

The City Council has expressed their desire to see the agency dispose of residential property it may acquire by bidding said property to private builders. A contractual agreement would exist, whereby the builder would be held to certain conditions to ensure affordable, architecturally compatible housing. To the largest extent possible, the City Council wants redevelopment to occur by private investment. In order to maximize redevelopment, discussion has been held regarding the creation of a land bank authority. This would potentially allow the bidding of larger groupings of land and/or structures to be rehabilitated, which may be more attractive to private builders.

Opportunity Zones:

These are a combination of 3 programs: Enterprise Zones, Urban Redevelopment Areas/Plans, & Job Tax Credits. Alone, each of these programs provides strong incentive for local economic development. Together, the blend is a powerful draw for local economic development that is good for business and good for the neighborhood.

See previous map, Poverty by Census Block Groups-Potential Opportunity and/or Enterprise Zones

Job Tax Credits:

These credits provide a tax credit on Georgia income taxes for eligible businesses that create new jobs in less-developed areas. Benefits are increased with inclusion within an Opportunity Zone.

Enterprise Zones:

Ad valorem property tax abatement is possible for both commercial and residential properties (minus taxes imposed by school districts and for general obligation debt). Local government may abate or exempt local taxes and fees (minus sales and use taxes) and may waive ordinances.

Any tool that the agency wishes to use to promote private enterprise will require City Council approval.

Bond Allocation Program:

For businesses and individuals seeking long-term, low-interest rate financing for the construction or improvements of single and multi-family housing projects, tax exempt financing is available both at the state and local level. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs is responsible for implementing a system that allocates the use of private-activity bonds, in order to further the provision of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing. This program is applicable to some commercial endeavors as well.

Tax Allocation Districts (TAD):

TADs help local governments in constructing certain public facilities and infrastructure improvements in association with business development projects in deteriorating areas of a community. It allows the costs of these improvements to be charged directly to the businesses that use them, rather than to the public at large. In return, the businesses benefit from the construction of facilities that otherwise might not otherwise be available to them.

Appendices

- A. Finding of Necessity
- B. Adoption Resolution
- C. Agency Creation Ordinance