

## **10. Land Use Element**

### **10.1. Character Areas**

The Land Use Element of this comprehensive plan describes and implements very important tools that will be used to guide future land development and capital investment decisions in Lowndes County and the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta via Character Area Maps.

The Character Area maps for Lowndes County and the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta are based on the County's and City's vision for the future, and have been developed in coordination with the citizens, the stakeholders, and elected officials. The Character Area Maps (included in the Appendix to this plan) are a required component of the Comprehensive Plan under Chapter 110-12-1.03 of the DCA Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, most recently updated October 1, 2018.

The Character Area descriptions define a specific vision for each Character Area, and the maps outline the boundaries on a local scale. Each Character Area is defined with its own description and implementation measures. In addition, the policies associated with each Character Area describe which land uses, zoning, and development patterns should be present within that area. Also included are Quality Community Objectives to be pursued and identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns. The development strategy developed for each character area should serve as a guide for all development and redevelopment taking place in that character area. Adherence to these development strategies will ensure consistent and complementary development, which promotes a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life.

Character areas were defined by looking at the size and type of lots, site design features, and availability of infrastructure, density and intensity of development, type of development, environmental features and vision for future development. Some character areas are more generic and cover several geographic areas which show similar characteristics, issues and goals for their future. Other character areas are more specific and defined as such in their name, and act more as an overlay zone than a future land development designation.

#### **Urban Service Area (USA)**

In an effort to control the timing, location, and scale of new development and to avoid a situation of "playing catch-up" in the provision of public facilities and infrastructure, the Greater Lowndes communities have established an Urban Service Area, which is reflected in the following Character Area/Future Development Maps.

An Urban Service Area (USA) is a geographically defined boundary that specifies where the local governments will provide urban services, such as water supply or sewage treatment, in the future. By delineating an USA, the community is effectively saying that it will support new urban density development only within the delineated area. Promotion of the USA will encourage higher density infill development within the boundaries, while helping to conserve natural resources and maintain the rural character of areas lying outside the boundary. (Areas outside of the USA boundary are often referred to as the Rural Service Area (RSA)).

The USA boundaries delineated in following Character Area/Future Development Maps should not be considered a projection for the long term. Currently, the USA boundaries are based