

STEPHENS COUNTY,
AVALON, MARTIN,
AND TOCCOA

Georgia

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2004-2025

DRAFT for Review

THE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter is devoted to an introduction of the comprehensive plan for Stephens County and the Cities of Avalon, Martin and Toccoa, including background information related to the plan, public participation and a community vision.

Directive and Purpose of the Plan

In 2003, Stephens County and the Cities of Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa contracted with the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center to prepare a full update to current comprehensive plan. Aside from the basic need for a plan to guide growth and development, the requirement of a plan by the Georgia General Assembly (pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989) to be eligible for certain state grants and loans provides the major impetus for each local government to embark on the comprehensive planning process.

The comprehensive plan is intended to provide the basic data and analysis required in the “minimum planning standards” and the maintenance of “Qualified Local Government” (QLG) status as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The minimum standards include the following elements: population, housing economic development, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, community facilities, transportation, land use and intergovernmental coordination. In addition, the state standards require an implementation segment to the plan. The format of the comprehensive plan text parallels the minimum planning standards by devoting a chapter to each required plan element.

A “Comprehensive Plan” known by other names such as a general plan, development plan, master plan, policy plan and growth management plan, has several characteristics. It is a physical plan intended to guide the physical development of a community by describing how, why, when and where to build or preserve the community. The plan is also long range, in that it considers a horizon of twenty years. It is utopian in the sense that it is a picture of what the community desires to become, but it is also realistic with regard to anticipated social, economic, physical and political constraints. The plan is comprehensive because it covers the entire County and Cities geographically, encompasses all the functions that make a community work, and considers the interrelationships of functions. A comprehensive plan is a statement of policy, covering future direction desired by the community in each plan element, and it is a guide to decision making for the elected and appointed local government officials and other members of the citizenry.

Comprehensive planning is also a continuous process. Formulation of this text and maps is the ultimate objective; the use of the plan is what is important, and a comprehensive plan is only as good as the measures used to implement the plan. No single document can pose solutions to all community problems, and the comprehensive plan must be a flexible, continuous and changing activity that is periodically updated based on changing conditions, the shifting of resources and the alteration of goals.

In addition to providing a general organization of the local community interests, the comprehensive plan serves the following purposes and functions.

The comprehensive plan represents a focusing of planning thought and effort – an attempt to identify and analyze the complex forces, relationships and dynamics of growth in order that they can be shaped and directed in accordance with recognized community goals and aspirations. It is a realistic appraisal of what the community is now, a normative and futuristic blueprint of what the community wants to be, and a specific set of programs for achieving community desires.

The plan is based on the foundation that if a community knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there. The plan attempts to recognize the relationship between diverse develop goals and objectives and establishes a meaningful basis for the resolution of conflicts. A comprehensive plan functions as a master yardstick for evaluating all significant future development proposals. The plan is intended to provide the essential background and perspective for decision making in respect to regulations, land subdivisions, public investment and capital improvement programs. The plan also provides guidance to businesses and development regarding the development policies and the future direction and intensity of growth. For the community at large, the plan (if properly implemented) assures that land use and service delivery conflicts will be resolved if not avoided, that misuses of land will not occur, that traffic congestion will be minimized or averted, that community facilities will be located in areas where people can best access and use them, and that the community's growth will take place in an orderly, rational manner.

Previous Planning Efforts

In 1993, Stephens County and the Cities of Avalon, Martin and Toccoa prepared a comprehensive plan that meeting all the minimum planning standards. Update to the plan's Short Term Work Program took place in 1998. Though very useful the existing comprehensive plan is outdated and no longer adequately serves its purposes. With growth and development since the plan was first formulated some Eleven years ago, Stephens County and its municipalities now face new development trends and more complex growth issues.

Public Participation

As a part of the planning process each local government must provide and implement opportunities to encourage public participation during the preparation of the comprehensive plan. The purpose of this is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process, are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan elements, and have adequate access to the process of defining the community's vision, values, priorities, goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements in the newspaper (legal organ) of the planning effort soliciting participation and comments. In addition, each local government must provide

opportunities for public participation through other means and methods to help articulate a community vision and develop associated goals and implementation program.

A planning schedule for completion of the plan must be developed and published. The Stephens County and Cities of Avalon, Martin and Toccoa Plan schedule is found below.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Initial Public Hearing	August 2003
Steering Committee Solicited and Selected	August/September 2003
Plan Kick-Off Meeting	September 2003
Sub Committees Organized	September 2003
Data Collection	September 2003 - April 2004
Sub Committee Analysis	October 2003 – April 2004
Articulation of Needs and Goals	April/May 2004
Community Vision Development (Survey)	January –April 2004
Work Program Development	May 2004
Second Public Hearing	May 2004
Plan Submitted for Review	May 2004
Plan Adopted	July 2004

Specific public participation activities were initiated with the solicitation of citizens to serve on an appointed steering committee. This committee represented citizens with varying and broad backgrounds and interests in the community. The 40 member committee included residents from each local government with diverse backgrounds and interests.

The steering committee divided amongst themselves to serve on sub-committees addressing the elements within the plan. The sub-committees were at liberty to solicit additional members of the public to participate in the planning process. The sub-committees met as often as weekly to analyze and discuss the plan data, identify needs and to develop specific goals and policies.

An additional sub-committee was formed to determine the best method to solicit input from the public in general to develop a community vision. This sub-committee determined that a comprehensive community survey would serve as the primary visioning tool for the comprehensive plan. The survey was developed and distributed and collected through utility billing by the City of Toccoa. There were approximately 2,250 responses to the community vision survey.

An initial and final public hearing were announced according to local public hearing procedure requirement to solicit additional public participation and comments. In addition, work sessions were held with local government leaders to discuss plan status, plan data and garner additional comments from elected officials.

Community Survey Results (2,250 Surveys)

Question 1

How long have you lived in Toccoa/Stephens County?

11 + years	823
All my life –born here	808
5-10 years	236
1-4 years	222
Less than one year	75
Do not live here	9

Question 2

How many years do you plan to live in Toccoa-Stephens County?

The rest of my life	1,323
Unsure	486
More than 10 years	159
Do not live here	56
1-2 years	43
3-5 years	43
6-10 years	41
Less than one year	36

Question 3

Top three reasons why you reside in Toccoa-Stephens County.

Family located in the area	1,310
Friendly People	965
Quality and pace of life	960
Cost of living/housing costs	510
Low crime	342
Economic/employment opportunities	302
Environmental quality	287
School/educational opportunities	193
Low taxes	140
<i>Other</i>	
Lake Hartwell	17
Toccoa Falls College	13
Religion/Church	9
Climate	6
Job Transfer	5
Location of Business	4
Can't afford to move	3
Retired	2
Medical Facilities	2
Change of Lifestyle	2
City Water	1
Good Neighborhood	1
Smaller Town	1

Question 4

The housing in my neighborhood is generally well maintained.

Yes	1,497
Maybe	318
No	255

Question 5

There should be no changes in development design standards for businesses along public roads. Rules regarding frontage, landscaping, setbacks, sidewalks, parking lot trees, signage and lighting for new construction should remain unchanged.

Maybe	976
No	882
Yes	488

Question 6

What do you think should be included in the Toccoa-Stephens County Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement?

More economic/employment opportunities	1,720
Protection of natural resources	1,004
Consolidate local governments	758
County-wide land use controls	510
More community facilities	476
Environmental quality protection	442
Consolidates services	341
Protection of historic resources	330
Stricter sign ordinance	169
<i>Other</i>	
Lower Utilities	13
Litter Control	12
Youth Facilities	9
Adult Facilities	8
Downtown Business'	7
City & County Should Work Together	6
Upgrade Emergency Service	5
Road Clean Up	3
Consolidation of City & County taxes	2
Traffic Control	2
Transportation for Senior Citizens	1
More Police & Sheriff Staff	1
Stricter Building & Landscaping Ordinances	1

Question 7

What would you like to see Toccoa-Stephens County become in the next 10 years?

More industry	1,358
More shopping	1,056
More restaurants	747
Improved highway access	540
Controlled growth	325
More biking/walking trails	306
More tourism	267
More parks	230
More residential houses/apartments	115
<i>Other</i>	
More Jobs	22
Shopping= Home Depot / Super Walmart / Target	16
Better Paying Jobs	13
Restaurants= Chickfilet / Ryans / Seafood / Cafeteria	12
Lower Taxes	10
Better Maintenance of Parks	9
Commissioners Need to Cooperate	7
Indoor Pool	5
Educational Improvements	4
Tear Down Mall	4
More Clothing Stores	3
More Art & Music	2
Private School	1
Road Beautification	1

Stephens County – Community Profile

County Formed: August 18, 1905

County Seat: Toccoa

Incorporated Cities: Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa

Total Area: 179.3 square miles

History: Stephens County was created in 1905 from parts of Franklin and Habersham counties. The county is named for Alexander Stephens, who served as vice-president of the Confederacy (despite his having opposed secession) and governor of Georgia. The county's first inhabitants were an Indian tribe known as the "Mound Builders." The tribe thrived in Toccoa, at the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. The Mound Builders were followed by the Cherokee tribe. Legend says, named the area "Toccoah", meaning "beautiful" in their language. The City of Toccoa originated in 1874, and can be traced back to the development of a coaling station for the Atlanta to Charlotte Railroad after the Civil War.

Points of Interest: Stephens County is characterized by its bucolic setting and spectacular natural wonders. Located on the campus of the college named for them, Toccoa Falls, which plunge 186 feet, are 19 feet higher than Niagara Falls. The Chattahoochee National Forest, Blue Ridge Parkway, Tugaloo State Park, Lake Hartwell and Yonah Lake beckon to outdoor sports enthusiasts.

Notable Citizens: Toccoa was home to Paul Anderson, the *Guinness Book of World Records'* "Strongest Man ". Anderson was the 1956 Olympic Gold Medalist in super heavy weight and weightlifting.

Education: Toccoa Falls College

Annual Events: Stephens County hosts several community events including the Harvest Festival, the Arts Festival, and the Taste of Toccoa.



COMMUNITY VISION

A vision for the future of the community must be included in the comprehensive plan. The community vision is intended to provide a complete picture of what the community desires to become. The community vision must be based on public input, the assessment of current and future needs and be supported by the goals, policies and objectives in the comprehensive plan.

In addition, there must be consistency between the community vision and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives as well as consistency with the community visions of other communities within the region.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

Stephens County and the Cities of Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa are communities blessed with an abundance of natural scenic beauty and rural character. It is the vision of the Municipalities and County to maintain these characteristics through wise community management and service decisions and protection of all natural and cultural resources while at the same time fostering economic development and growth, which will increase the number of entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs available in the community. While recognizing the importance of traditional heritage and culture, Stephens County and including it municipalities will be a community that welcomes visitors and new residents.

Nestled among the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northeast Georgia is Toccoa, the County seat of Stephens County. When the Cherokee Indians discovered it, they called it "Toccoah" meaning beautiful, and gave it special significance and reverence. Today, "beautiful" is still evident when experiencing the magnificent natural wonders, historic attractions, recreational activities, and the way of life found throughout Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin and Avalon.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE GOALS AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Regional Identity Objective – Stephens County and the Cities of Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa are active members of the Georgia Mountain Regional Development Center and are linked with the many communities within the regional through its abundance natural scenic beauty and rich Appalachian culture. U. S. Forest Service land is found in nine of the thirteen counties in the Georgia Mountain Region. Settlement patterns in the region are similar from the Native Americans to the gold mining operations to the influence of the U. S Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia Power, TVA and other electrical cooperatives.

Growth Preparedness Objective - Stephens County continues to make improvements in infrastructure and coordination of development service areas and activities. Additional improvements such as the creation of a planning and building program, the development of improved regulatory guidelines for growth, economic development planning and leadership development will help the county achieve the quality growth it desires. The City of Toccoa has been committed to providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate past and current growth as well as community leadership. The county and all cities are further committed to making the necessary improvements to accommodate projected growth needs. The county also recognizes the need for a land use and development management guidelines to assist them as they grow.

Appropriate Business and Educational Opportunity Objectives – Stephens County is fortunate that they have a workforce with skill levels appropriate for industry and businesses in the community. With the new North Georgia Technical College campus located between Toccoa and Avalon, industries in the county will be able to benefit from the skills of the graduates provided by the college. This plan calls for placing a NGT representative on the county development authority to assist in the development of the appropriately needed skills for existing industry and businesses and well as in providing skilled workers for industries and businesses that are being recruited into the area. The need for higher education degrees, beyond technical skills, within the county have been identified in the plan and is a goal for the future.

Employment Options Objective – There are a variety of businesses, industries and services located within Stephens County and its cities. The location of NGT within the county will assist in providing a range of employment skills for local employers. The development of economic, industry marketing and recruitment plans and teams, as called for in this plan, will help continue to provide a wide range of job opportunities in the area.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES GOAL

Heritage Preservation Objective – Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin and dAvalon are rich in historic and archeological resources. Toccoa in particular benefits from the establishment of a Main Street Program. The county benefits from a local historic society. The plan calls for further preservation opportunities by identifying additional historic district, calling for an

updated survey, and encouraging protection of important archeological site that could potentially be lost to development.

Open Space Preservation Objective – Nearly one-quarter of the land in Stephens County is owned by the federal government and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Lake Hartwell provides additional open space in the County. Generally, scenic views and open spaces in the county and city are well protected. It is recommended in the plan that future development set back from the USFS boundary.

Environmental Protection Objective – Water supply watersheds, wetlands, mountains, river corridors, significant groundwater recharge areas and flood plains are protected in Stephens County and Toccoa. Steep slopes, sensitive soils, and prime agricultural areas are not protected. Measures to protect these sensitive resources in the future are recommended in the plan.

Regional Cooperation Objective – Toccoa and Stephens County work together to provide water supply watershed protection for the city's drinking water intake. The County also participates with the Georgia Mountains TMDL Regional Task Force providing guidance and input on TMDL planning and implementation for those streams in the county and region not meeting designated uses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL

Transportation Alternative Objective – Stephens County and its municipalities have limited alternative transportation facilities. Toccoa contains the only public sidewalks for pedestrian travel, but there is no linkage among the facilities to community facilities and services, and much of it is in a state of repair. A four county transportation study and plan, that includes Stephens County, is being finalized by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Stephens County and its cities are also participating in a regional bicycle and pedestrian assessment and plan. These plans will consider and recommend transportation alternatives and implementation measures for Stephens County and its cities.

Regional Solutions Objective – Stephens County actively participates in regional programs and funding in areas of public safety, courts, animal control, planning, and economic development. The cities and county willingly participates in regional activities and solutions that will improve efficiency in service delivery and costs saving to tax payers.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES GOAL

Housing Opportunities Objective – The median price of a home in Stephens County is increasing dramatically, as well as land prices, which causes some concerns over housing affordability. However, Stephens County, Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa all support providing a whole range of housing opportunities in order for those working in the Cities and County to be able to affordably live here too. The plan recommends a variety of housing types and locations meeting the needs of senior citizens and families with low or moderate incomes.

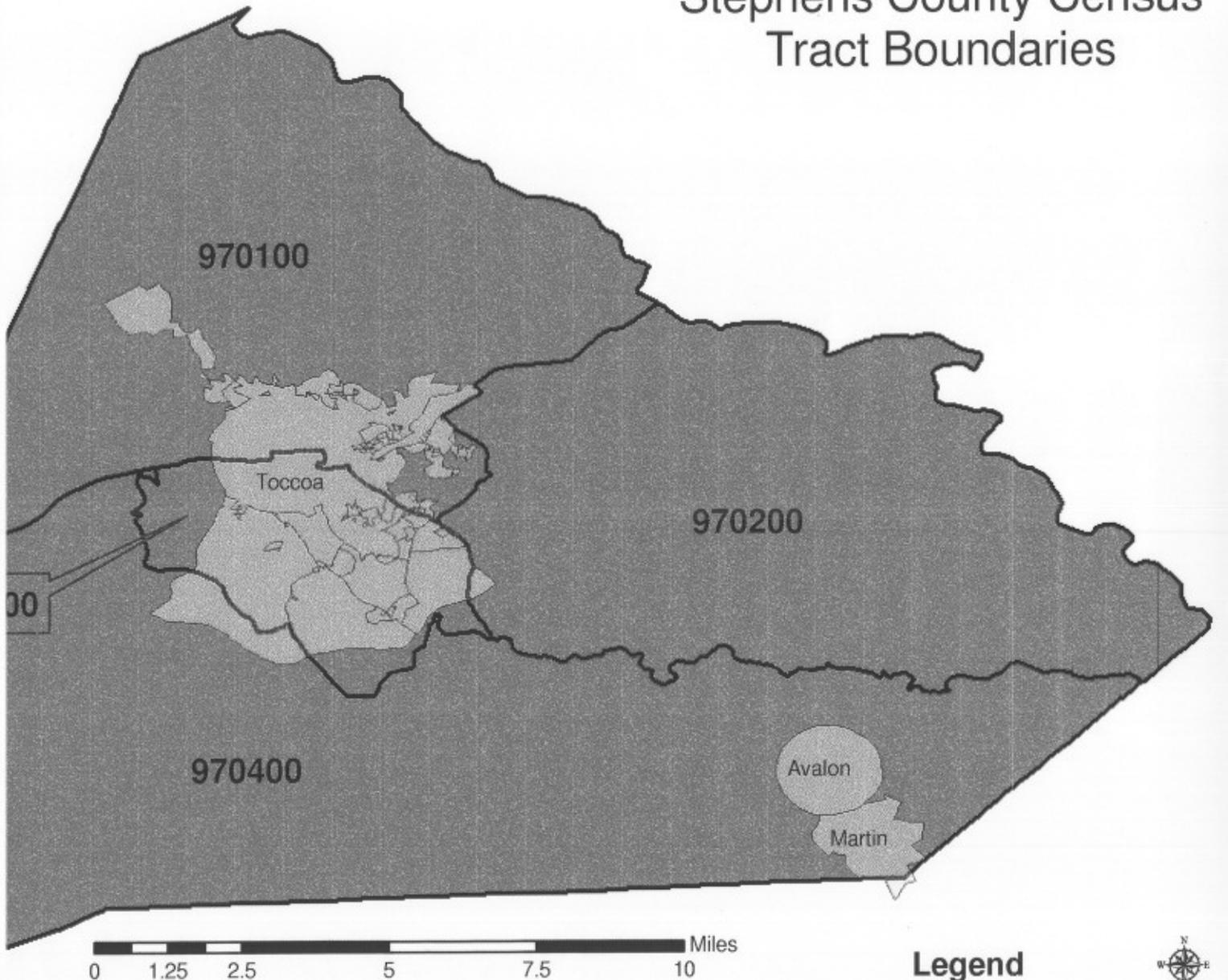
LAND USE GOAL

Traditional Neighborhood Objective – Traditional neighborhood patterns are solely located in the City of Toccoa. The City is committed to continue this type of development as there are a number of small vacant lots and properties dotted around the City that will more than likely be converted to single and multi family uses. The plan identifies the need for some development within the County to occur in close proximity to Toccoa at higher densities, taking advantage of City infrastructure and close at distances to community goods and services.

Infill Development Objective – Infill development opportunities exists primarily in Stephens County. They are at a limited scale in the County where most development is scattered. However, the county is committed to encourage development in areas where infrastructure is already in place through the promotion of land use policies and appropriate measures. Infill within the Toccoa is projected to occur to a smaller degree as the City looks to redevelopment of some areas.

Sense of Place Objective – The City of Toccoa is the focal point of most activity within Stephens County. Most of the county businesses, services and industries are located within or adjacent to the City limits. Most city and county services, including schools and recreation are located within or adjacent to the City as well. There are several churches located within the City where people gather to worship and socialize. The City is further committed to help Toccoa remain the focal point of community activity.

Stephens County Census Tract Boundaries



CHAPTER 2

POPULATION ELEMENT

Included in this chapter is an inventory and analysis of the population and related demographics for Stephens County, Georgia. An understanding of population growth and other population characteristics is an important first step in the development of a comprehensive plan. The dynamics of the population have an impact on all other elements found within the comprehensive plan. This element serves as the foundation for policy and goal development and implementation addressing the needs for growth. Analysis of this data allows communities to see the changes that have occurred in population over time. Historic population data, and the accompanying trends, enable managers to evaluate previous population growth or decline in perspective as they evaluate the other planning elements.

INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF THE POPULATION

TOTAL POPULATION

Current population figures enable communities to make decisions about community facility and public service adequacy. Informed decisions can be made, based on current population data, concerning housing stock and employment opportunities, among other things. If changes need to be made to accommodate growing numbers; the community can plan accordingly to bring the revealed inadequacies up to an acceptable level.

TABLE 2-1
POPULATION TRENDS, 1980-2000
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON

AREA	1980	1985	1990	80-90% CHANGE	1995	2000	90-00% CHANGE
Toccoa	10,226	9,725	8,266	- 19.2	8,688	9,323	12.8
Martin	219	230	247	12.8	271	311	25.9
Avalon	196	187	164	- 16.3	205	278	69.5
Stephens County	21,764	22,471	23,257	7.0	24,249	25,435	9.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Once again, Stephens County experienced steady growth over the last ten years. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the county population grew from 23,257 persons in 1990 to 25,435 in 2000. The county grew respectively 7% and 9.4% through out the last two decades. The population development of cities located within Stephens County has varied. Since 1980, Avalon's population has grown from 196 to 278 – an increase of 41.8%. Over the same time period, Martin increased in size from 219 to 311 – an increase of 42%. On the other hand, Toccoa has declined in its population figures, changing from 10,226 in 1980 to 9,323 in 2000 – a decrease of 9.7%. (Table 2-1)

**TABLE 2-2
POPULATION TRENDS
STEPHENS COUNTY AND THE STATE OF GEORGIA, 1990-2000**

AREA	1990 POPULATION	2000 POPULATION	GROWTH RATE	ACTUAL CHANGE
Stephens County	23,257	25,435	9.4	2,178
State of Georgia	6,478,216	8,186,453	26.4	1,708,237

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

The population of Stephens County has grown by 2,178 persons since 1990. This figure converts to a 9.4% growth rate from 1990 to 2000, and is well below the state's growth rate for that same time period. (Table 2-2)

**TABLE 2-3
POPULATION TRENDS
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON, 1990-2000**

AREA	1990 POPULATION	2000 POPULATION	GROWTH RATE	ACTUAL CHANGE
Stephens County	23,257	25,435	9.4	2,178
Toccoa	8,720	9,323	6.9	1,057
Martin	243	311	27.9	68
Avalon	159	278	74.8	119

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Toccoa experienced a population growth of 1,057 persons from 1990 to 2000 – a growth rate of 6.9%. The growth rate for Toccoa (1990-2000) was slightly lower than that of Stephens County, at 6.9%. Martin's growth rate for that same decade was 27.9%, which almost triples that of the county. Likewise, Avalon's growth rate for the same decade was almost eight times that of the county's. At 74.8%, Avalon's growth rate shows that it was the fastest growing municipality in Stephens County from 1990 to 2000. (Table 2-3)

TABLE 2-4
LOCATION OF POPULATION
DISTRIBUTION BY CENSUS DIVISION
1990 AND 2000

AREA	POPULATION					HOUSING UNITS
	1990	2000	2000 Share	1990-2000 CHANGE	1990-2000 % CHANGE	2000
970100	6,615	7,173	28.2%	558	8.4	2,944
970200	4,151	5,549	21.8%	1,398	33.7	2,839
970300	7,477	6,666	26.2%	- 811	- 10.8	3,263
970400	5,014	6,047	23.8%	1,033	20.6	2,606
TOTAL	23,257	25,435	100%	2,178	9.4	11,652

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Stephens County is divided into four Census Block Number Areas (BNA). Observing growth within the BNA's reveals more detail as to where the growth is exactly occurring in Stephens County. BNA 970100, which includes the north part of Toccoa, is the most populated area in the county with 28.2% of the county living within its boundaries. However, BNA 970200 and 970400 are growing at faster rates. (Table 2-4)

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections, based on past trends, further serve local planning efforts. The projectors figures are not exact predictors, but they do allow for better planning practices. Plans for future provisions of services, facilities, jobs, and housing can be better made from projected numbers of future population. One of the primary functions of the planning process is to help communities set goals and policies and establish programs to help ensure a high quality of life for its existing and future residents. Population projections help to facilitate this process.

**TABLE 2-5
PAST POPULATION ESTIMATES AND
POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 1980-2025
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON**

YEAR	AVALON	MARTIN	TOCCOA	STEPHENS COUNTY
1980	196	219	10,226	21,764
1985	187	230	9,725	22,471
1990	164	247	8,266	23,257
1995	205	271	8,688	24,249
2000	278	311	9,323	25,435
2001	281	312	9,350	25,489
2002	284	315	9,488	25,642
2003	287	317	9,582	25,803
2004	290	320	9,677	25,974
2005	294	323	9,733	26,183
2006	298	327	9,830	26,356
2007	302	331	9,928	26,529
2008	307	336	10,027	26,702
2009	312	341	10,128	26,875
2010	317	346	10,229	27,048
2015	343	371	10,859	27,912
2020	374	401	11,527	28,776
2025	406	438	12,358	29,641

Source: U.S Bureau of Census. Projection based on census trend.

Table 2-5 presents the projected populations for Stephens County, Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa through the year 2025. County population is expected to increase by 6.34% over the next decade (2010) to 27,048 persons. This trend is expected to increase to a 9.58% growth rate, from 2010 to 2025, making the total population in 2025, 29,641.

Avalon is expected to grow to 406 persons by 2025 - a change of 128 persons from 2000 figures. Martin's projections show its population increasing from 312 in 2000, to 438 by 2025. Toccoa's projected figures show an increase from 9,323 in 2000 to 12,358 by the year 2025.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION

This section includes a discussion of age distribution as well as numerical tables including information on age distribution by numbers or percentage for Stephens County and the cities of Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon. The age distribution data assists communities in determining their present and future needs for all age groups including small children, teen-agers, middle-aged, and elderly residents.

**TABLE 2-6
MEDIAN AGE OF PERSONS, 1970-2000
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AVALON, AND THE STATE OF GEORGIA**

YEAR	STEPHENS COUNTY	TOCCOA	MARTIN	AVALON	STATE OF GEORGIA
1970	29.5	27.4	N/A	N/A	25.9
1980	30.5	33.6	N/A	N/A	28.6
1990	33.7	37	35.9	33.8	31.6
2000	37.7	37.7	39.5	36.8	33.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

When compared with the State of Georgia, the median ages of Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon are slightly higher. It is quite possible that this trend will continue as the baby boom generation moves into retirement and finds that Stephens County and its incorporated areas are attractive places to live. This phenomenon has been noticed in several other mountain communities in the Georgia Mountains Region. (Table 2-6)

**TABLE 2-7
PAST AND PROJECTED
POPULATION BY AGE 1980-2025
STEPHENS COUNTY**

AGE BRACKET	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Age 0 to 4	1,545	1,547	1,555	1,833	2,056	2,261	2,360	2,490
Age 5 to 9	1,520	1,529	1,727	1,728	1,839	1,758	1,698	1,867
Age 10 to 14	1,920	1,528	1,738	1,519	1,461	1,340	1,324	1,393
Age 15 to 19	1,892	1,835	1,797	1,911	2,137	2,233	2,561	2,519
Age 20 to 24	1,918	1,893	1,808	2,095	2,002	1,870	1,439	1,452
Age 25 to 34	3,275	3,380	3,228	4,085	3,760	3,740	3,482	3,290
Age 35 to 44	1,460	3,315	3,539	3,325	3,111	2,903	2,676	2,490
Age 45 to 54	2,047	2,586	3,456	2,514	2,515	2,652	2,388	2,253
Age 55 to 59	1,343	1,036	1,387	1,178	1,461	1,758	1,784	2,134
Age 60 to 64	1,060	1,111	1,219	1,126	1,406	1,647	1,842	2,045
Age 65 to 74	1,795	2,138	2,038	2,068	2,326	2,596	3,309	3,557
Age 75 to 84	805	1,131	1,468	1,911	2,029	2,121	2,705	3,023
Age 85 & Over	183	228	465	890	947	1,033	1,237	1,186
Total	21,763	25,257	25,435	26,183	27,048	27,912	28,776	29,641

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. Projection made by Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2004

Tables 2-7, 2-8, 2-9, and 2-10 show the population for Stephens County and its incorporated areas by breaking them down by age group and projected the figures out to the year 2025. In Stephens County in 2000, 26.8% of the county's residents were age 19 or younger, while 15.6% were age 65 or older. This data supports the projected trend that the population will continue to age. Shown from these projections, the age group of 65 or older will increase to 26.2% of Stephens County's total population by 2025. (Table 2-7) In 2000, 65 or older residents of Toccoa make up 20.9% of its total population. By 2025, it is expected that Toccoa's residents 65 and older will make up 25.9% of its total population. (Table 2-8) This trend continues with Martin and Avalon. In 2000, 12.5% of Martin's residents were 65 and older. We expect that by 2025, this age bracket will make up 25.8% of Martin's total population. (Table 2-9) In 2000, 10.4% of Avalon's residents were 65 and older. This figure is expected to change to 25.9% by 2025. (Table 2-10)

**TABLE 2-8
PAST AND PROJECTED
POPULATION BY AGE 1980-2025
TOCCOA**

AGE BRACKET	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Age 0 to 4	612	575	585	691	798	912	1,003	1,075
Age 5 to 9	641	512	630	652	716	706	680	766
Age 10 to 14	719	499	567	574	563	532	553	593
Age 15 to 19	710	567	566	711	808	869	1026	1,050
Age 20 to 24	741	616	747	779	757	728	576	606
Age 25 to 34	1,305	1,154	1,146	1,518	1,422	1,455	1,395	1,347
Age 35 to 44	906	1,069	1,090	1,236	1,176	1,129	1,072	1,026
Age 45 to 54	873	963	1,149	934	951	1,032	957	952
Age 55 to 59	617	382	467	438	532	652	715	890
Age 60 to 64	459	445	447	399	532	641	738	853
Age 65 to 74	956	934	908	759	859	988	1,303	1,471
Age 75 to 84	441	525	741	711	757	825	1,060	1,248
Age 85 & Over	124	125	280	331	358	391	450	482
Total	9,104	8,266	9,223	9,733	10,229	10,859	11,527	12,358

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. Projection made by Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2004.

**TABLE 2-9
PAST AND PROJECTED
POPULATION BY AGE 1980-2025
MARTIN**

AGE BRACKET	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Age 0 to 4	32	17	21	23	27	31	35	38
Age 5 to 9	22	17	23	22	24	24	24	27
Age 10 to 14	53	15	24	19	19	18	19	21
Age 15 to 19	24	17	26	24	27	30	36	37
Age 20 to 24	25	18	15	26	26	25	20	21
Age 25 to 34	48	33	35	50	48	50	49	48
Age 35 to 44	36	40	47	41	40	39	37	36
Age 45 to 54	20	24	54	31	32	35	33	34
Age 55 to 59	16	6	16	15	18	22	25	32
Age 60 to 64	43	10	11	13	18	22	26	30
Age 65 to 74	26	29	18	25	29	34	45	52
Age 75 to 84	14	14	14	24	26	28	37	44
Age 85 & Over	3	3	7	11	12	13	16	17
Total	362	243	311	323	346	371	401	438

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. Projection made by Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2004.

**TABLE 2-10
PAST AND PROJECTED
POPULATION BY AGE 1980-2025
AVALON**

AGE BRACKET	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Age 0 to 4	13	14	20	21	25	29	33	35
Age 5 to 9	9	16	28	20	22	22	22	25
Age 10 to 14	13	3	20	17	17	17	18	19
Age 15 to 19	16	5	19	21	25	27	33	35
Age 20 to 24	34	11	8	24	23	23	19	20
Age 25 to 34	31	34	37	46	44	46	45	44
Age 35 to 44	25	24	42	37	36	36	35	34
Age 45 to 54	20	16	35	28	29	33	31	31
Age 55 to 59	18	4	13	13	16	21	23	29
Age 60 to 64	7	7	27	12	16	20	24	28
Age 65 to 74	22	15	14	23	27	31	42	48
Age 75 to 84	11	9	12	21	23	26	34	41
Age 85 & Over	5	4	3	10	11	12	15	16
Total	214	159	278	294	317	343	374	406

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. Projection made by Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2004.

RACE AND GENDER OF THE POPULATION

TABLE 2-11
RACE OF POPULATION 1990-2000
STEPHENS COUNTY

RACE	STEPHENS COUNTY			
	1990	%	2000	%
White	20,300	87.3	21,808	85.7
Black	2,787	12	3,053	12
Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	32	0.14	66	0.3
Asian or Pacific Islander	101	0.4	166	0.7
Other-Race	37	0.15	341	1.3
Hispanic Origin *	144	0.6	250	1.0
TOTAL	23,257	100	25,435	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

* In 1990 and 2000, Hispanic origin can be of any race.

According to the 2000 Census, in Stephens County, 85.7% of the residents were white and 12.0% were black. Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut residents made up 0.3% of Stephens County's population, while Asian or Pacific Islander residents composed 0.7% of the same population. Hispanic origin, which can be identified as being of any race in the Census data, made up 1.0% of the county's population. Statewide, 65.1% of residents were white, 28.7% were black and 5.3% were Hispanic. The county's population did grow, however, only slight changes in the percentage breakdown of Stephen County's total population occurred in the decade from 1990 to 2000. (Table 2-11)

TABLE 2-12
RACE OF POPULATION 1990-2000
TOCCOA

RACE	TOCCOA			
	1990	%	2000	%
White	6,409	77.5	7,036	75.5
Black	1,790	21.7	2,001	21.5
Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	10	0.12	27	0.3
Asian or Pacific Islander	26	0.32	79	0.9
Other-Race	31	0.38	49	0.5
Hispanic Origin *	111	1.34	131	1.4
TOTAL	8,266	100	9,323	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

* In 1990 and 2000, Hispanic origin can be of any race.

According to the 2000 Census, in Toccoa, 75.5% of the residents were white and 21.5% were black. Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut residents made up 0.3% of Toccoa's population, while Asian or Pacific Islander residents composed 0.9% of the same population. Hispanic origin, which can be identified as being of any race in the Census data, made up 1.4% of Toccoa's population. While the population did grow, in Toccoa, only slight changes in the percentage breakdown of its total population occurred in the decade from 1990 to 2000. (Table 2-12)

TABLE 2-13
RACE OF POPULATION 1990-2000
MARTIN

RACE	MARTIN			
	1990	%	2000	%
White	164	66.4	224	72
Black	81	32.8	82	26.4
Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	2	0.81	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	3	1.0
Other-Race	0	0	1	0.3
Hispanic Origin *	0	0	2	0.6
TOTAL	247	100	312	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

* In 1990 and 2000, Hispanic origin can be of any race.

According to the 2000 Census, in Martin, 72% of the residents were white and 26.4% were black. Asian or Pacific Islander residents composed 0.9% of Martin's total population. Hispanic origin, which can be identified as being of any race in the Census data, made up 0.6% of Martin's population. While the population did grow, in Martin, only slight changes in the percentage breakdown of its total population occurred in the decade from 1990 to 2000. For that decade, the most notable of those changes were the white population growing by 5.6% and the black population dropping by 6.4%. (Table 2-13)

**TABLE 2-14
RACE OF POPULATION 1990-2000
AVALON**

RACE	AVALON			
	1990	%	2000	%
White	145	88.4	255	91.7
Black	19	11.6	22	7.9
Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	0	0	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0.4
Other-Race	0	0	0	0
Hispanic Origin *	0	0	7	2.5
TOTAL	164	100	285	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

* In 1990 and 2000, Hispanic origin can be of any race.

According to the 2000 Census, in Avalon, 91.7% of the residents were white and 7.9% were black. Asian or Pacific Islander residents composed 0.4% of Avalon's total population. Hispanic origin, which can be identified as being of any race in the Census data, made up 2.5% of Avalon's population. While the population did grow, in Avalon, only slight changes in the percentage breakdown of its total population occurred in the decade from 1990 to 2000. For that decade, the most notable of those changes were the white population growing by 3.3% and the black population dropping by 3.7%. (Table 2-14)

**TABLE 2-15
POPULATION BY GENDER 1990-2000
STEPHENS COUNTY**

SEX	STEPHENS COUNTY			
	1990	%	2000	%
Male	11,226	48.3	12,214	48
Female	12,031	51.7	13,221	52
TOTAL	23,257	100	25,435	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The composition of Stephens County by gender did not change significantly over the last decade. The countywide female population increased by just three tenths of a

percent during the ten year period to make up 52% of the total population of Stephens County. (Table 2-15)

**TABLE 2-16
POPULATION BY GENDER 1990-2000
TOCCOA**

SEX	TOCCOA			
	1990	%	2000	%
Male	3,814	46.1	4,197	45.0
Female	4,452	53.9	5,126	55.0
TOTAL	8,266	100	9,323	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

In Toccoa, the female population increased by just 1.1% during the last decade, to make up 55% of its total population. (Table 2-16)

**TABLE 2-17
POPULATION BY GENDER 1990-2000
MARTIN**

SEX	MARTIN			
	1990	%	2000	%
Male	118	48.6	154	49.5
Female	125	51.4	157	50.5
TOTAL	243	100	311	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

In Martin, the female population decreased by just 0.9% during the last decade, to make up 50.5% of its total population. (Table 2-17)

TABLE 2-18
POPULATION BY GENDER 1990-2000
AVALON

SEX	AVALON			
	1990	%	2000	%
Male	74	46.5	135	48.6
Female	85	53.5	143	51.4
TOTAL	159	100	278	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

In Avalon, the female population decreased by 2.1% during the last decade, to make up 51.4% of its total population in 2000. (Table 2-18)

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 2-19
HOUSEHOLD AND GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION
1980, 1990 AND 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON

AREA	TOTAL PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLDS			TOTAL PERSONS IN GROUP QUARTERS		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Stephens	21,035	22,738	24,494	559	519	948
Toccoa	8,891	8,291	8,884	202	30	439
Martin	327	214	311	0	0	0
Avalon	215	158	278	0	0	0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

In Stephens County there were 24,494 persons living in households in the year 2000, which is 96.3% of its total population. In the same year there were 948 persons, or 3.7% of the total population, were residing in group quarters. In 2000, Toccoa, the county seat, saw a major increase in the group quarters population from 1990, while 95.3% of its total population resided in households. Martin and Avalon have no group quarters within their boundaries, meaning, 100% of their residents live in households. (Table 2-19)

TABLE 2-20
HOUSEHOLDS AND SELECTED HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
1980, 1990 AND 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON

AREA	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS			FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS			NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS			PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Stephens County	7,773	8,949	9,951	3,145	6,633	7,070	1,628	2,316	2,881	2.71	2.54	2.46
Toccoa	3,507	3,493	3,879	2,530	2,385	2,445	977	1,108	1,434	2.54	2.37	2.29
Martin	116	82	127	96	61	85	20	21	42	2.82	2.61	2.45
Avalon	81	59	109	59	49	81	22	10	28	2.65	2.68	2.55

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The total number of households in Stephens County increased from 7,773 in 1980, to 8,949 in 1990, to 9,951 in 2000. This is a 78.1% increase in the number of total households in that twenty-year period. The numbers of family and non-family households, in the county, have risen since 1980. Family households are up to 7,070 in 2000, from 6,633 in 1990, and 3,145 in 1980. Over that same twenty-year period the percentage of family households has increased to 71% in 2000, from 40.6% in 1980. Accordingly, non-family households grew from 20.9% to 28.9% of total households from 1980 to 2000. The number of persons per household has steadily decreased over the last twenty years from 2.71 persons per household in 1980 to 2.46 persons in 2000. Avalon's total households have almost doubled since 1990, changing from 59 in 1990 to 109 in 2000. Martin's total households have increased from 82 in 1990 to 127 in 2000. The number of total households in Toccoa has steadily risen up to 3,879, since 1980, when the figure was 3,507. (Table 2-20)

TABLE 2-21
HOUSEHOLDS BY NUMBER OF PERSONS
PER HOUSEHOLD, 1980, 1990 AND 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
1 Person	1,556	20	2,131	23.8	2,544	25.5
2 Persons	2,544	32.7	3,070	34.3	3,456	34.7
3 Persons	1,528	19.7	1,661	18.5	1,780	17.9
4 Persons	1,242	15.9	1,339	14.9	1,388	13.9
5 Persons	579	7.5	536	5.9	606	6.0
6 Persons or more	324	4.2	212	2.4	195	2.0
TOTAL	7,773	100	8,949	100	9,969	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The number of persons per household continues to grow smaller in Stephens County. The percentage of one and two person households increased from 1990 to 2000, while households with larger numbers of persons decreased over the same time frame. (Table 2-21)

TABLE 2-22
HOUSEHOLD SIZE PROJECTIONS, 2004-2024
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON

AREA	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Stephens County	2.71	2.54	2.46	2.44	2.41	2.38	2.36	2.32
Toccoa	2.53	2.36	2.29	2.27	2.24	2.20	2.18	2.17
Martin	2.10	2.34	2.45	2.46	2.49	2.48	2.46	2.44
Avalon	2.43	2.37	2.55	2.57	2.59	2.57	2.55	2.52

Source: Georgia Mountains RDC Projection, 2004.

Household size projections have been based on anticipated household populations in Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon. Each community's household size is projected to be lower than the current figures for 2000 show. (Table 2-22)

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The education levels of a community can indicate several things, including:

- Literacy- a general idea of the number of residents with the ability to read and write with understanding.
- Educational Attainment- the number of years of education that residents have obtained and the economic base that results. Implications include an evaluation of local public educational programs, technical schools or training encouraged, and/or additional programs to assure a strong and qualified labor force for existing and future economic base.

An analysis of the educational attainment of Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon reveals that the education level is increasing in those communities. In 1990, almost 50% of the county had less than a high school education. That percentage has decreased to 28.9% of the county's population, in 2000. Over the same time frame, the percentage of high school graduates has increased from 30.6% to 35.9%. (Tables 2-23, 2-24, 2-25, and 2-26)

TABLE 2-23
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER, 1990
(By Years of School Completed)

AREA	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL (1-3)	HIGH SCHOOL (4)	COLLEGE (1-3)	COLLEGE (4+)	TOTAL
Stephens County	2,856	3,128	4,591	2,465	1,973	15,013
Toccoa	1,150	994	1,539	998	894	5,575
Martin	23	24	49	23	18	137
Avalon	18	12	47	15	9	101
Franklin County	2,181	2,819	3,107	1,754	1,030	10,891
Banks County	1,245	1,565	2,347	904	413	6,474
Habersham County	3,544	3,553	5,188	2,958	2,084	17,327
State of Georgia	483,755	686,060	1,192,935	684,109	777,158	4,023,420

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 2-24
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER, 1990
BY PERCENTAGES

AREA	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (0-8)	HIGH SCHOOL (1-3)	HIGH SCHOOL (4)	COLLEGE (1-3)	COLLEGE (4+)
Stephens Co.	19	20.8	30.6	16.4	13.2
Toccoa	20.6	17.8	27.6	17.9	16
Martin	16.8	17.5	35.8	16.8	13.1
Avalon	17.8	11.9	46.5	14.9	8.9
Franklin County	20	25.9	28.5	16.1	9.5
Banks County	19.2	24.2	36.3	14	6.4
Habersham County	20.5	20.5	29.9	17	12
State of Georgia	12	17	29.6	17	19.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

TABLE 2-25
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER, 2000
(By Years of School Completed)

AREA	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL (1-3)	HIGH SCHOOL (4)	COLLEGE (1-3)	COLLEGE (4+)	TOTAL
Stephens County	1,909	2,934	6,014	3,552	2,362	16,771
Toccoa	789	1,167	2,003	1,345	1,047	6,351
Martin	20	46	95	45	16	222
Avalon	15	28	70	33	26	172
Franklin County	1,487	1,947	5,039	2,585	1,390	13,448
Banks County	1,244	2,011	3,603	1,733	810	9,401
Habersham County	3,113	3,733	7,931	5,006	3,718	23,501
State of Georgia	393,197	718,152	1,486,006	1,328,432	1,260,178	5,185,965

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 2-26
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER, 2000
BY PERCENTAGES

AREA	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (0-8)	HIGH SCHOOL (1-3)	HIGH SCHOOL (4)	COLLEGE (1-3)	COLLEGE (4+)
Stephens Co.	11.4	17.5 ↓	35.9 ↑	21.2 ↑	14.1 ↑
Toccoa	12.4	18.4	31.5	21.2	16.5
Martin	9	20.7	42.8	20.3	7.2
Avalon	8.7	16.3	40.7	19.2	15.1
Franklin County	11.1	21.9	37.5	19.2	10.3
Banks County	13.2	21.4	38.3	18.4	8.6
Habersham County	13.3	15.9	33.7	21.3	15.8
State of Georgia	7.6	13.9	28.7	25.6	24.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

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TABLE 2-27
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER, 1980, 1990, AND 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	1980		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 9th grade	4,182	32.2	2,856	19	1,909	11.4
9th to 12th grade, no diploma ✕	3,172	24.5	3,128	20.8	2,934	17.5
High School Graduate	3,035	23.4	4,591	30.6	6,014	35.9
Some College, no degree	1,299	10	1,857	12.4	2,982	17.8
Associate degree	--	--	608	4	570	3.4
Bachelor's degree	1,280	9.9	1,428	9.5	1,580	9.4
Graduate or Professional degree	--	--	545	3.6	782	4.7
Total Persons, 25 Years and Over	12,971	100	15,013	100	16,771	100
Percent High School Graduate or Higher	43.28		60.14		71.12	
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	9.9		13.14		14.08	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Emphasis on educational attainment and the necessity of higher education to compete in the job market is reflected in the population of Stephens County. The percentage of the age twenty-five plus population with post-secondary education, including some college, Associates, Bachelors, Graduate or Professional degrees increased from 19.9% in 1980, to 29.6% in 1990, to 35.3% in 2000. (Table 2-27)

**TABLE 2-28
EDUCATION STATISTICS
STEPHENS COUNTY**

CATEGORY	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)	80%	81%	75%	67%	61%	74%	64%
H.S. Dropout Rate	14.8%	11.1%	6.9%	5%	10%	8.4%	6%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges	17.0%	19.8%	19.5%	17.6%	19.3%	--	--
Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools	10.3%	11.8%	27.9%	11.9%	14.7%	15.7%	--

Source: Georgia Department of Education.

Between 1995 and 2000, the Stephens County school system reported to the Georgia Department of Labor, an average high school dropout rate of 8.8%, for students in grades 9 to 12. Statewide, this rate is 7.3% for the same period of time. From viewing Georgia Department of Community Affairs data, it should be noted here that Stephens County spent an average of \$5,372 per student for public education each year between 1996 and 2000. This expenditure was greater than the statewide average of \$5,285. Also noteworthy from that same data source was: Based on the 2000 graduating class for Stephens County school system, 50.5% of the students were eligible for the HOPE Scholarship Program. The scholarship is available to eligible students to attend a post-secondary school in Georgia. Statewide, 57.9% of the graduating students were eligible for the HOPE scholarship. In Stephens County, 19.3% of its high school graduates were attending public colleges in Georgia. (Table 2-28)

**TABLE 2-29
2000 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
PERSONS THREE YEARS AND OVER ENROLLED IN SCHOOL
STEPHENS COUNTY**

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF PERSONS
Preprimary School	474
Elementary or High School	4,381
Percent in Private School	0
College	1,500

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Table 2-23 indicates that there are 6,355 persons in Stephens County enrolled in

some type of educational institution. There are 474 children attending pre-primary school, 4,381 students in elementary school, and 1,500 persons attending post-secondary institutions. (Table 2-29)

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

**TABLE 2-30
PER CAPITA INCOME (\$) - 1980, 1990-2000
STEPHENS COUNTY**

AREA	1980	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Stephens Co.	6,941	14,268	14,814	15,668	16,469	17,210
Georgia	8,474	17,722	18,201	19,170	19,886	20,841
% Of State	81.9	80.5	81.4	81.7	82.8	82.6

TABLE 2-30 (CONT.)

AREA	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Stephens Co.	18,118	19,192	20,117	20,955	21,170	22,302
Georgia	21,806	23,055	23,911	25,447	26,499	27,794
% Of State	83.08	83.24	84.13	82.35	79.89	80.24

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, 2004.

The Stephens County per capita personal income in 2000 was \$22,302, as compared with \$27,794 for Georgia. In 2000, the county had a per capita income that was 80.24% of the State's per capita income. The gap between Stephens County's per capita income and the State's has shown fluctuation, but maintained relatively constant, since 1980. (Table 2-30)

**TABLE 2-31
PER CAPITA INCOME (\$) - 1990 AND 2000
TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON**

AREA	1990	2000
Toccoa	10,145	14,942
Martin	15,273	15,008
Avalon	9,630	13,701

Source: The U.S. Bureau of Census.

In Toccoa, The per capita income has grown from \$10,145 in 1990 to \$14,942 in 2000. In Martin, the per capita income has decreased slightly from \$15,273 in 1990 to \$15,008 in 2000. In Avalon, the per capita income has grown from \$9,630 in 1990 to

\$13,701 in 2000. (Table 2-31)

TABLE 2-32
1990 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AVALON, AND GEORGIA

CHARACTERISTIC	STEPHENS	TOCCOA	MARTIN	AVALON	GEORGIA
Median Household	22,204	19,044	15,625	28,125	29,021
Median Family	27,768	25,012	19,250	28,125	33,529

Source: The U.S. Bureau of Census.

Income characteristics for Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon, from 1990 to 2000, show a steady increase in median household and median family incomes. Median family income increased in the county from \$27,768 in 1990 to \$35,660 in 2000, a 28.4% increase. Median household income rose in the county from \$22,204 in 1990 to \$29,466 in 2000, a 32.7% increase. (Table 2-32 and 2-33)

TABLE 2-33
2000 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AVALON, AND GEORGIA

CHARACTERISTIC	STEPHENS	TOCCOA	MARTIN	AVALON	GEORGIA
Median Household	29,466	25,345	29,000	31,000	42,433
Median Family	35,660	31,912	43,750	35,625	49,280

Source: The U.S. Bureau of Census.

TABLE 2-34
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME, 1990
STEPHENS COUNTY

INCOME IN \$	STEPHENS	%	TOCCOA	%	MARTIN	%	AVALON	%
Less than 10,000	2,128	23.5	999	28.6	23	28	14	23.7
10,000- 19,999	1,910	21.1	811	23.2	27	32.9	5	8.5
20,000- 29,999	1,653	18.3	574	16.4	4	4.9	12	20.3
30,000- 39,999	1,471	16.3	468	13.4	13	15.9	18	30.5
40,000- 49,999	971	10.7	327	9.4	4	4.9	5	8.5
50,000- 59,999	360	4	116	3.3	9	10.9	2	3.4
60,000- 74,000	315	3.5	136	3.9	0	0	0	0
75,000- 99,000	101	1.1	38	1.1	0	0	3	5.1
100,000 or more	128	1.4	24	0.7	2	2.4	0	0
Total	9,037	100	3,493	100	82	100	59	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

TABLE 2-35
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME, 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY

INCOME IN \$	STEPHENS	%	TOCCOA	%	MARTIN	%	AVALON	%
Less than 10,000	1,376	13.8	742	19	23	16	23	23
10,000- 19,999	1,824	18.3	722	18.5	29	20.1	9	9
20,000- 29,999	1,875	18.8	822	21	22	15.3	16	16
30,000- 39,999	1,381	13.9	536	13.7	14	9.7	15	15
40,000- 49,999	898	9	296	7.6	17	11.8	7	7
50,000- 59,999	872	8.8	283	7.2	18	12.5	11	11
60,000- 74,000	708	7.1	210	5.4	9	6.3	6	6
75,000- 99,000	551	5.5	118	3	10	6.9	11	11
100,000 or more	484	4.9	180	4.6	2	1.4	2	2
Total	9,969	100	3,909	100	144	100	100	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

When comparing the distribution of household income in Stephens County a few interesting statistics stand out. There was a large reduction of households with an income of less than \$10,000. This income classification was reduced by just more than 70% from 1990 to 2000. The largest income classification in 2000 was the \$20,000-\$29,999 group, making up 18.8% of the county's total households. The higher income classifications have increased over the last decade. In particular, the number of households with an income of \$100,000 or more has increased three and a half fold over the 1990/2000 decade. (Tables 2-34 and 2-35)

TABLE 2-36
2000 HOUSEHOLD INCOME
STEPHENS COUNTY

INCOME CLASSIFICATION (S)	STEPHENS COUNTY	%
Less than 10,000	1,376	6.9
10,000-24,999	2,816	25.3
25,000-49,999	3,165	34.7
50,000-74,999	1,580	19.3
75,000-99,999	551	7.1
100,000-149,999	318	4.3
150,000-199,999	95	1.3
200,000 or more	71	1.0
Median (S)	29,466	-
Total	9,969	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

According to the 2000 Census, Stephens County's median household income in was \$29,466. This amount was less than the state's median household income of \$42,433 in that same year. Nationally, the median household income, according to the 2000 Census, was \$41,994. (Table 2-36)

TABLE 2-37
2000 FAMILY INCOME
STEPHENS COUNTY

INCOME CLASSIFICATION (S)	STEPHENS	%
Less than 10,000	485	6.9
10,000-24,999	1,795	25.3
25,000-49,999	2,459	34.7
50,000-74,999	1,368	19.3
75,000-99,999	503	7.1
100,000-149,999	301	4.3
150,000-199,999	95	1.3
200,000 or more	71	1.0
Median (\$)	35,660	- -
Total families	7,077	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

The median family income in Stephens County increased from \$27,768 in 1990 to \$35,660 in 2000. A distribution of median family income shows that 34.7% of families in Stephens County have an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999, making up the largest classification of family income in the county. The next largest classification is designated for those families that have an income between \$10,000 and \$24,999, making up 25.3% of the county's total families. (Table 2-37)

TABLE 2-38
2000 NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLD INCOME
STEPHENS COUNTY

INCOME CLASSIFICATION (\$)	STEPHENS	%
Less than 10,000	919	31.7
10,000-24,999	1,084	37.4
25,000-49,999	671	23.2
50,000-74,999	161	5.5
75,000-99,999	40	1.3
100,000-149,999	17	0.5
150,000-199,999	0	0
200,000 or more	0	0
Median (\$)	16,450	--
Total non-family households	2,892	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

An observation of income distribution for non-family households reveals that they earn significantly less than family households. The majority of non-family households fall into the three lowest income classifications. Only 7.3% of non-family households have an income not in the three lowest income classifications. The median non-family income for Stephens County in 2000 was \$16,450. This is significantly lower than the \$35,660 median family income for Stephens County in that same year. (Table 2-38)

**TABLE 2-39
2000 POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS
STEPHENS COUNTY, TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON**

POVERTY CHARACTERISTIC	STEPHENS	TOCCOA	MARTIN	AVALON
Total Persons Below Poverty Level	3,702	1,934	37	41
% Total Persons Below Poverty Level	14.6	21.7	10.6	15.1
Total Persons 65 Years and Over Below Poverty Level	698	310	18	12
Related Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level	1,009	606	5	13
% Related Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level	17.3	31	6	14.3
Total Families Below Poverty Level	801	391	3	12
Families Below Poverty Level with Female Householder (No Husband Present)	216	164	3	10

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

During 2000, 14.6% of the county's population lived below the poverty level. Of these persons living below the poverty level, 698 or 18.9% of them are person 65 years of age or older. 17.3% of those living under the poverty line are children under the age of 18. (Table 2-39)

**TABLE 2-40
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF INCOME, 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY**

INCOME TYPE	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (\$)
Wage and Salary Earnings	7,617	76.6	40,093
Self-Employment	649	6.5	N/A
Social Security	3,170	31.9	10,085
Public Assistance	306	3.1	1,963
Retirement	1,586	15.9	15,287

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Analysis of household income by type in Stephens County identifies that 76.6% of the households derive their income from wage and salary earnings. This group has a mean income of \$40,093. There are 649 households that are self-employed. Just over 50% of the households in the County receive, either, social security, public assistance, or retirement income. (Table 2-40) An identical breakdown for Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon follows in Table 2-41.

**TABLE 2-41
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF INCOME, 2000
TOCCOA, MARTIN, AND AVALON**

INCOME TYPE	TOCCOA			MARTIN			AVALON		
	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (\$)	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (\$)	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (\$)
Wage and Salary Earnings	2,716	70	34,957	110	86.6	40,656	74	67.9	38,223
Self-Employment	156	4	N/A	10	7.9	N/A	10	9.2	N/A
Social Security	1,536	39.6	10,056	27	21.3	9,989	25	22.9	8,900
Public Assistance	138	3.6	1,724	2	1.6	150	6	5.5	1,317
Retirement	796	20.5	15,563	4	3.2	12,075	6	5.5	37,383

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS: POPULATION

INVENTORY / SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- In 2000, Stephens County had a population of 25,435, while the state's population was recorded at 8,186,453.
- The percent of change in the county's population between 1990 and 2000 was 9.4%, while the state's was 26.4%.
- The county's population continues to steadily increase.
- Generally Stephens County has maintained uniform distribution of population increase by age group. Shown from GMRDC projections, the age group of 65 or older will increase to 26.2% of Stephens County's total population by the year 2025.
- Stephens County's minority population has grown by 1.6% since 1990, to 15.3% of its total population in 2000. The minority percentage is made up of primarily black residents (12%). However, very slight increases can be seen in each listed minority group since 1990.
- 71.2% of adults (25 or older) in Stephens County have a high school diploma, some college, associate's, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.
- Stephens County is predicted to grow to 29,641 by the year 2025.

SUMMARY

- Population growth has grown at a rate of 9.4% over the past decade and is predicted to grow to 29,641 by the year 2025. While the older adult age brackets have grown in recent years, the population of younger adults and children have shown only small changes. This trend is expected to continue over the next twenty years. Further demographic statistics reveal a 15.3% minority population, which is a slight increase since 1990. 71.2% of adults 25 or older, in Stephens County, have a high school diploma, some college, associate's, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree. The average household income is now \$29,466, up from \$22,204 in 1990. 216 families in Stephens County are currently living below the poverty level, which equals 3.5% of the county's total families.

CHAPTER 3

HOUSING ELEMENT

The housing element of this plan provides the local governments with an inventory of the existing housing stock, an assessment of the housing stock's adequacy and suitability for serving current and future population needs, a determination of housing needs, and a set of policies and strategies for providing housing for all population sectors.

Upon completion of the housing inventory, the assessment is intended to determine whether existing housing is appropriate to local housing needs and demands, especially with respect to the supply, type, condition and affordability of housing units in the community. In particular, an assessment is made of the existing or anticipated housing problems and issues, and what actions might be taken to improve the situation. The policies and strategies will set forth programs and actions for housing development and assistance to be undertaken over the next ten years.

INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING

NUMBER AND TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS

Over the past 20 years the rate of growth for housing in Stephens County has slowed. The number of housing units in Stephens County grew by almost 1,400 units from 1990 to 2000, an increase of 13.6% over the decade. (Table 3-1) The number of units and rate for the current decade are less than the previous decade. This is contrary to the population growth in the county which saw a higher rate of increase from 1990 to 2000 over than in 1980 to 1990. Also, worthy of discussion on this topic is that the number of persons per housing units decreased from 2.54 person per housing unit in 1990 to 2.45 persons per housing unit in 2000. The end result is that there are a higher percentage of persons in Stephens County living in group quarters rather than housing units in the more recent decade. (Group quarters may include college dormitories, fraternity or sorority houses, nursing homes or assisted living centers, correctional facilities, boarding houses and shelters.)

The total number of housing units in the City of Toccoa in 2000 was 4,386. This number is a 14.3% increase over the number of units that were in the city in 1990. The current growth rate of housing in the city is over twice the current population growth rate (6.9%). This indicates that the number of persons per occupied housing unit has increased over the last ten years. Just as in population growth, both Avalon and Martin saw a big jump in the total number of housing units within their incorporated boundaries.

TABLE 3-1
HOUSING TRENDS, 1980 – 2000
STEPHENS COUNTY AND MUNICIPALITIES
(Total Number of Housing Units)

AREA	1980	1990	80-90 % CHANGE	2000	90-00 % CHANGE
Stephens County	8,571	10,254	19.6	11,652	13.6
Toccoa	3,325	3,836	15.4	4,386	14.3
Avalon	69	86	24.6	112	30.2
Martin	106	127	19.8	158	24.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980-2000.

An analysis of the census data on types of housing units in Stephens County reveals that while the total number of single family housing units in the county increased over the last ten years, they are a lower percentage of total housing units in the county than in the previous ten years (Table 3-2). On the other hand, mobile homes have increased their percentage share of total housing in the county from 18.5% in 1990 to 24.3% in 2000. There was also a decrease in the number of multi-family units in the county over the last decade as well. This reveals that persons in Stephens County are choosing manufactured housing as their housing choice. The reason for this choice is more than likely that manufactured housing is moderately priced and more in line with household incomes. It is expected that there will continue to be another slight increase in the use of manufactured housing in Stephens County at least for the next decade.

Both Avalon and Martin have no multi-family housing in their communities. (Table 3-3 and Table 3-4) Both cities have experienced a big increase in the number of mobile homes over the last ten years. The increase in the number of housing units in Toccoa has occurred mainly in the form of single family housing and mobile homes (Table 3-5). Toccoa also saw an increase in attached single family homes and a small increase in multi-family housing units. The higher percentage of multi-family housing in Toccoa can be attributed the City making public sewer services available for this type of development. Because of the utilities available Toccoa will continue to provide the majority of multi-family housing in the county. There is an opportunity for Toccoa to encourage higher density single family housing in areas of the city that have not been developed or are in need of re-development.

When comparing the county and cities with the Georgia Mountains Region and the State of Georgia there is not much variation percentage wise when comparing single family housing units. (Table 3-6 and Table 3-7) However, there are differences when looking at multi-family housing and mobile homes. The county is more in line with the Region, but not with the State. The City is more compatible with the State than the Region.

**TABLE 3-2
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS 1980-2000
STEPHENS COUNTY**

TYPE OF UNIT	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
Single Family, Detached	6,204	72.4	6,983	68.1	7,535	64.76
Single Family, Attached	160	0.2	113	0.1	140	0.1
Multi-Family	957	11.2	1,146	11.2	1,130	9.7
Mobile Home, RV, Other	1,000	11.7	1,899	18.5	2,831	24.3
TOTAL	8,571	100	10,254	100	11,652	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980-2000.

**TABLE 3-3
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS 1980-2000
TOWN OF AVALON**

TYPE OF UNIT	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
Single Family, Detached	44	63.8	54	62.8	59	52.7
Single Family, Attached	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Multi-Family	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mobile Home, RV, Other	25	36.2	32	37.2	53	47.3
TOTAL	69	100	86	100	112	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980-2000.

**TABLE 3-4
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS 1980-2000
TOWN OF MARTIN**

TYPE OF UNIT	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
Single Family, Detached	82	77.4	96	75.6	94	59.5
Single Family, Attached	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Multi-Family	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mobile Home, RV, Other	24	22.6	31	24.4	64	40.5
TOTAL	106	100	127	100	158	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980-2000.

**TABLE 3-5
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS 1980-2000
CITY OF TOCCOA**

TYPE OF UNIT	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
Single Family, Detached	2,150	64.7	2,498	65.1	2,971	67.3
Single Family, Attached	119	3.5	91	0.2	140	0.3
Multi-Family	764	23.0	964	25.1	987	22.5
Mobile Home, RV, Other	192	5.7	235	6.1	288	6.6
TOTAL	3,325	100	3,836	100	4,386	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980-2000.

**TABLE 3-6
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS 1990-2000
GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGION**

TYPE OF UNIT	1990	%	2000	%
Single Family, Detached	92,288	69.1	139,685	73.0
Single Family, Attached	1,244	0.9	2,229	1.1
Multi-Family	9,681	7.3	13,089	6.9
Mobile Home, RV, Other	30,265	22.7	36,429	19.0
TOTAL	133,478	100	191,432	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990-2000.

**TABLE 3-7
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS 1990-2000
STATE OF GEORGIA**

TYPE OF UNIT	1990	%	2000	%
Single Family, Detached	1,638,847	62.1	2,107,317	64.2
Single Family, Attached	73,412	2.8	94,150	2.8
Multi-Family	598,271	22.7	681,019	20.8
Mobile Home, RV, Other	327,888	12.4	399,251	12.2
TOTAL	2,638,418	100	3,281,737	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990-2000.

When looking at where housing is located in Stephens County (Table 3-8), it is distributed fairly evenly throughout the four census division in the county. The highest percentage is census division 970300 with 28% of the total housing.

Census divisions 970300 and 970100 contain the highest share of single family housing in the county. These two divisions also contain the bulk of multi-family housing located in Stephens County. Most of the City of Toccoa lies within these two divisions, which has the infrastructural capacity to support this amount and type and density of housing. The largest portion of the mobile homes in the county are located in census divisions 970200 and 970400, the eastern and southern portions quadrants of Stephens County. The southern census division will most likely see a continued growth in the number of manufactured housing in the county, with the eastern division will higher numbers of single family stick built homes.

TABLE 3-8
HOUSING UNITS BY CENSUS DIVISION
STEPHENS COUNTY, 2000

would be nice to have map

CENSUS DIVISION	TOTAL	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	MOBILE HOME/RV
970100	2,944	2,055	558	331
%	25.3	69.8	19.0	11.2
970200	2,839	1,642	17	1,180
%	24.4	57.8	0.6	41.6
970300	3,263	2,245	555	463
%	28.0	68.8	17.0	14.2
970400	2,606	1,733	0	873
%	22.3	66.5	0.0	33.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

AGE AND CONDITION OF HOUSING UNITS

When looking at the age of housing units in Stephens County (Table 3-9) one can see that housing development in the county has been occurring at a steady rate for the past 20 years. Twenty percent of the county housing stock was constructed in the most recent decade as was 20.8% in the previous decade. Only 4% of the county housing stock is more than sixty years old.

Just over one third of the housing stock in Avalon was constructed in the most recent decade. The bulk of the housing was reported to be 21 to 40 years in age. Less than 4% of the housing stock in Avalon is more than sixty years old.

The Town of Martin shows a fairly even distribution in the age of the housing stock within their municipal boundaries. The town has the highest percentage of homes that are more than sixty years old.

The bulk of the housing stock in Toccoa is between 21 and 60 years in age (almost 70%). Though not always the case, older housing may display characteristics of deterioration, which means that there could be a problem within the city of deteriorated housing. The city may need to conduct a housing assessment and study in areas where the housing is aging to identify and document any deteriorated structures and conditions. Documentation of this type of data may provide for opportunities to seek funding to improve the condition of such structures.

**TABLE 3-9
STEPHENS COUNTY AND CITIES
HOUSING UNITS BY AGE, 2000**

	TOTAL UNITS	10 YEARS OR LESS	11 – 20 YEARS	21 – 40 YEARS	41 – 60 YEARS	MORE THAN 60 YEARS
AVALON	112	34.0	8.0	38.4	16.0	3.6
MARTIN	158	23.5	12.0	34.2	13.3	17.1
TOCCOA	4,386	9.4	15.5	37.2	32.5	5.4
STEPHENS COUNTY	11,652	20.0	20.8	34.8	20.3	4.0
GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGION	191,432	39.6	21.8	24.6	9.5	4.5
STATE OF GEORGIA	3,281,737	27.9	22.0	31.2	13.0	5.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

A comparison of Stephens County and its Cities to the Region and the State show that housing growth is occurring at a higher rate throughout the region and state than locally.

The minimum planning standards identify that substandard housings units as those that lack complete plumbing facilities and kitchen facilities as well as those that might not have a source for heat. Inadequate kitchen facilities can lead to the improper use of cooking methods, which can potentially create fire hazards. Potential for unhealthy living conditions increase greatly when housing units lack adequate plumbing facilities.

Stephens County and all of the municipalities have either no housing units that lack these facilities or they have been dramatically reduced over the past decade (Table 3-10, Table 3-11). On the other hand, there has been a very slight increase in the number of housing units that are considered over crowded for the county. In general, living conditions are considered over crowded if there is more than one person per room in the housing unit. The condition is most likely associated with impact of Toccoa Falls College where several student may share a housing unit for economic purposes. Overall, the local jurisdictions in Stephens County fair very well when compared with the region and the state.

**TABLE 3-10
SUBSTANDARD HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 1990**

	STEPHENS COUNTY		AVALON		MARTIN		TOCCOA		REGION	GEORGIA
	UNITS	%	UNITS	%	UNITS	%	UNIT	%	%	%
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	143	1.6	0	0.0	3	2.6	12	0.3	1.3	1.1
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	104	1.2	0	0.0	3	2.6	20	0.4	1.5	1.3
No heating fuel	2	0.0 2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.6	0.7
Over crowded occupied units *	233	2.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	121	3.4	4.0	4.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990. * 1.01 or greater occupants per room.

**TABLE 3-11
SUBSTANDARD HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 2000**

	STEPHENS COUNTY		AVALON		MARTIN		TOCCOA		REGION	GEORGIA
	UNITS	%	UNITS	%	UNITS	%	UNIT	%	%	%
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	33	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	0.2	0.6	0.5
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	17	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.5	0.3
No heating fuel	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Over crowded occupied units *	243	2.5	24	1.9	1	0.7	130	3.4	4.8	4.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000. * 1.01 or greater occupants per room.

OCCUPANCY AND TENURE OF HOUSING

When analyzing the occupancy of total housing units, the occupancy rate in Stephens County has decreased slightly over the last twenty years by 5.5%(Table 3-12). The City of Toccoa also saw a similar type of decrease over the same time frame. The only jurisdiction that experienced an increase in their occupancy rate was Avalon. A comparison to the region and state shows that the county has a lower occupancy rate than both, Toccoa and Martins' occupancy rates are higher than the remainder of the region, but lower than the state. Only Avalon has an occupancy rate that is higher than the region and the state.

TABLE 3-12
TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS, 1980 – 2000

AREA	1980		1990		2000	
	TOTAL OCCUPIED	% OF TOTAL UNITS	TOTAL OCCUPIED	% OF TOTAL UNITS	TOTAL OCCUPIED	% OF TOTAL UNITS
Stephens County	7,787	90.9	8,949	87.3	9,951	85.4
Avalon	N/A	N/A	67	90.5	105	93.8
Martin	N/A	N/A	104	89.7	140	88.6
Toccoa	3,143	94.5	3,479	90.7	3,909	89.1
Region	84,468	N/A	133,478	84.3	166,287	86.9
Georgia	1,869,754	N/A	2,366,615	89.6	3,006,369	91.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980 - 2000.

In Stephens County, the percentage of owner occupied units has decreased only slightly during the past two decades (Table 3-13). In 1980, just over 73% of the occupied units in the county were owner occupied. This percent is only slightly less than 73% in 2000. In turn, the overall percentage of renter occupied units has remained stable over the same time frame.

The City of Toccoa significantly differs from the county and the other two municipalities in that a large share of the housing in the city is renter occupied. Renter occupied units in Toccoa increased from 41.6% in 1980 to 43% in 2000. In the past the reason for high percentages of rental units was that they were associated with industries and access to employment. More recently, a likely reason that this percentage has remained relatively the same over the past twenty years is that the housing stock in the city is aging. Older homes are generally smaller and more modest, and because of their age, owners tend to move out of them, and are less likely to re-invest in them, but they do not sell them either. Or, if they are sold the

new investor purchases them for rental potential. Therefore the units are rented out to families and individuals with low or moderate incomes. A second influence on the high number of rental units in Toccoa is the availability of sewer, which services higher density multi-family developments.

All the local governments within Stephens County, with the exception of Toccoa, compare close to the region for owner occupied units and are higher than the state.

TABLE 3-13
TENURE OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980 – 2000

	TOTAL OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS						TOTAL RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS					
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
Stephens County	5,704	73.3	6,525	72.9	7,237	72.7	2,083	26.7	2,424	27.1	2,714	27.3
Avalon	N/A	N/A	50	74.6	79	75.2	N/A	N/A	17	25.4	26	24.8
Martin	N/A	N/A	83	79.8	109	77.8	NA/	N/A	21	20.2	31	22.2
Toccoa	1,836	58.4	2,025	58.2	2,228	57.0	1,307	41.6	1,454	41.8	1,681	43.0
Region	64,763	N/A	86,057	64.5	130,235	78.3	19,705	N/A	26,510	35.5	36,052	21.7
Georgia	1,215,206	N/A	---	64.9	---	67.5	654,548	N/A	---	35.1	---	32.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980- 2000.

A presentation of vacancy characteristic data (Table 3-14) reveals that a number of the vacant housing units in Stephens County are seasonal or second homes. The 2000 Census reported that there are 570 seasonal units in the county, two in Avalon, three in Martin and 37 in Toccoa. The number for the county equates to approximately one-third of the vacant housing units. Most of these units are located along the lake and in the northern portion of the county on high ridges and mountains, and adjacent to U.S Forest Service land. Stephens County is very similar to most of the other counties in the Georgia Mountains Region in that a large percentage of the vacant housing units are for seasonal use.

The overall vacancy rate for owner occupied units is very low (except for Martin) and compares better than the region and as well as the state. The renter vacancy rate has decline in Stephens County and Toccoa over the last ten years, and is only slightly higher than the region and state. In 2000, both Avalon and Martin had a renter vacancy rate of zero.

Because of the natural amenities that Stephens County offers and as the baby boom generation arrives at retirement age, the construction and use of seasonal units is a trend that is expected to continue for the next ten to twenty years. It is expected that the vacancy rates for owner occupied units and renter occupied units will remain relatively low. However, a unexpected major shift in the local economy could change this expectation.

TABLE 3-14
VACANCY CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSING UNITS, 1990-2000

AREA	SEASONAL UNITS			SEASONAL % OF VACANT UNITS			OWNER VACANCY RATE			RENTER VACANCY RATE		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Stephens County	113	486	570	100.0	37.2	33.5	0.0	3.7	1.9	0.0	17.8	10.4
Avalon	N/A	0	2	N/A	0.0	28.6	N/A	5.7	1.1	N/A	5.6	0.0
Martin	NA/	0	3	N/A	0.0	11.5	N/A	3.5	7.2	N/A	16.0	0.0
Toccoa	0	11	37	0	3.1	7.5	9.3	1.5	2.1	43.1	11.9	9.5
Region	N/A	10,773	13,047	N/A	51.5	51.8	N/A	2.5	2.5	N/A	11.4	8.2
Georgia	N/A	33,637	50,064	N/A	12.4	18.2	N/A	2.5	1.9	N/A	12.2	8.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000.

Ratios for “owner to renter for occupied units” and for “owner to renter of vacancy” are presented in Table 3-15 and Table 3-16. This data provides a statistical snapshot of the total occupied units and the total vacant units in a jurisdiction. The owner to renter ratio for occupied units is the number of owner occupied units divided by the number of renter occupied units. The owner to renter ratio of vacancy refers the number of vacant units for sale in the area versus the number of units for rent.

A comparison of this data reveals once again that Toccoa differs significantly from the rest of the local governments in the county as well as the region and the state.

**TABLE 3-15
OWNER TO RENTER RATIO FOR OCCUPIED UNITS, 1990 - 2000**

AREA	1990	2000
Stephens County	2.69	2.67
Avalon	2.94	3.04
Martin	3.95	3.52
Toccoa	1.39	1.33
Region	3.25	3.61
Georgia	1.85	2.08

Source: U. S Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000.

The owner to renter ratio of vacancy in Stephens County and Toccoa are more in line with the ratio for the state than with the region.

**TABLE 3-16
OWNER TO RENTER RATIO OF VACANCY, 2000**

AREA	2000
Stephens County	0.71
Avalon	N/A
Martin	N/A
Toccoa	0.58
Region	1.45
Georgia	0.51

Source: U. S Bureau of Census, 2000.

An analysis of persons per units by tenure reveal that from 1990 to 2000 owner occupied units and renter occupied units in Avalon and Martin experienced an increase in the number of persons per unit, while Toccoa and Stephens County saw a decrease.

Rental units tend to have smaller household sizes because intact families, which are normally larger in size, tend to live in owner occupied housing situations. As presented in the population element, Toccoa in particular experienced an increase in the number of non-family household, which generally are smaller in size (one person per household in many cases).

Retirees moving into the area more than likely account for the decrease in the owner and renter averages in the County. This is a trend that is expected to continue with the retirement of the “baby boom generation.” The last of the baby boomers will hit retirement age around 2025.

TABLE 3-17
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE OF OCCUPIED UNITS BY TENURE

AREA	PERSONS PER OWNER OCCUPIED UNIT		PERSONS PER RENTER OCCUPIED UNIT	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Avalon	2.26	2.44	2.71	2.96
Martin	2.34	2.45	2.33	2.46
Toccoa	2.40	2.35	2.30	2.21
Stephens County	2.58	2.51	2.43	2.33
Georgia	2.76	2.73	2.49	2.47

Source: U. S Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000.

COST OF HOUSING

Over the past ten years, the median home value in Stephens County and all cities has increased significantly (Table 3-18). From 1990 to 2000, the median home value in the county rose by 62.1%. Toccoa saw a 51.4% increase in the median home value, while Martin and Avalon experienced increases of 45.6% and 27.5% respectively.

Home values in Stephens County are still significantly lower than the rest of the region and the state. The local median home value is 30% less than the median value for the region and 20% less than the state. This is a plus for the local economy. Even with its natural beauty and amenities, Stephens County is a very affordable place to live.

TABLE 3-18
MEDIAN HOME VALUE, 1980 - 2000

AREA	1980(\$)	1990 (\$)	2000 (\$)
Stephens County	32,400	49,900	80,900
Avalon	22,980	53,800	75,000
Martin	33,750	56,800	82,700
Toccoa	31,400	47,300	71,600
Region	N/A	68,800	114,600
Georgia	36,900	71,300	100,600

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980 - 2000.

A comparison of 1990 and 2000 for the value of owner occupied homes by class in Stephens County (Table 3-19 and Table 3-20) reveals that the largest percentage of the units are now valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999 (including cities). The number of units valued at less than \$50,000 has dropped dramatically. The number of units for the higher home values all increased significantly for Toccoa and Stephens County. There were 795 units in the County that were valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999, an increase of more than two and a half times the number in 1990. In the year 2000 there were 677 owner occupied housing units in the County that had a value greater than \$150,000. This is a 632% increase over the number of units that had at least this value or greater in 1990.

TABLE 3-19
1990 SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY VALUE CLASS

AREA	SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	LESS THAN \$50,000	\$50,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$300,000 OR MORE
Avalon	17	7	10	--	--	--	--
Martin	53	19	29	5	--	--	--
Toccoa	1,793	975	670	112	21	12	3
Stephens County	4,316	2,167	1,745	297	73	29	5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990.

TABLE 3-20
2000 SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY VALUE CLASS

AREA	SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	LESS THAN \$50,000	\$50,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$300,000 OR MORE
Avalon	30	--	24	4	--	--	2
Martin	65	2	48	12	--	3	--
Toccoa	2,057	493	1,143	245	120	9	47
Stephens County	4,930	907	2,551	795	441	150	86

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

The minimum planning standards now require intermediate level counties and their respective municipalities, which include Stephens County, to determine and analyze the extent to which households are cost burdened or severely cost burdened and make a comparison to the Region and the State. This measure of affordability is the percent of gross income used to pay for housing costs. Cost burdened is defined as those households that use 30% to 49% of their gross income to pay for housing costs. Severely cost burdened is defined as those households where housing costs require 50% or more the gross income.

Table 3-21 and Table 3-22 present 2000 census data on owner occupied households that are cost burdened and severely cost burdened. Avalon shows that there are two households that are cost burdened and six households that are severely costs burdened. In Martin there are 11 cost burdened households and two severely cost burdened. On average, owner occupied households in Avalon spend about 25% of their income on housing, while those households in Martin spend approximately 22% of their income on housing.

Both Avalon and Martin compare relatively evenly with the region and state on this statistic.

**TABLE 3-21
SELCECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 2000**

Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income	AVALON		MARTIN		REGION	STATE
	SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	%	%
Less than 30 % (not cost burdened)	22	73.3	52	80.0	77.8	78.1
30 to 49% (cost burdened)	2	6.7	11	16.9	21.4	21.0
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	6	20.0	2	3.1	N/A	13.2
Total Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units	30	100	65	100	100	100
Median Monthly Owner Cost as Percentage of Household Income	25.0		22.0		---	18.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

In Toccoa there are 301 (14.6%) owner occupied households that are cost burdened and 120 (5.8%) that are severely cost burdened. Data on the County shows that there are 730 (14.85) owner occupied cost burdened households and 373 (7.6%) households that are severely cost burdened. Both Toccoa and Stephens County compare better than the region and the state. On average, owner occupied households in Toccoa spend about 17% of their income on housing, while those households in Stephens County spend approximately 17.7% of their income on housing.

One reason for this is that the cost of housing in the local area is much less than the region and the state. Also, there are a number of households that are older or retired and live on limited incomes, and therefore, they are focused on living in housing within their financial means.

TABLE 3-22
SELCECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 2000

Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income	TOCCOA		STEPHENS COUNTY		REGION	STATE
	SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	SPECIFIED OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	%	%
Less than 30 % (not cost burdened)	1,618	78.7	3,719	75.4	77.8	78.1
30 to 49% (cost burdened)	301	14.6	730	14.8	21.4	21.0
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	120	5.8	373	7.6	N/A	13.2
Total Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units	2,057	100	4,930	100	100	100
Median Monthly Owner Cost as Percentage of Household Income	17.1		17.7		---	18.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

According to the 2000 Census (Table 3-23), median rents in Stephens County and the cities have risen less than the region and significantly less than the state. While the region and state median rents rose by 49.5% and 78% respectively, the county median rose the most locally by 44.2%. Avalon, Martin and Toccoa median rents increased by 32%, 39.3% and 44%. Stephens County had the highest median monthly rent in the county of \$422. This amount is only 64% of the region median and 69% of the state median monthly rent.

The largest percentage of renter occupied units in all of Stephens County, including cities, pay less than \$500 per month for housing (Table 3-24 and Table 3-25). In the County and in Toccoa there are significantly more renter occupied households that are paying rent in the \$500 to \$749 range currently than in the previous decade. Also, in the year 2000 there were only 15 renter occupied units that had a rent of \$1,000 or more a month.

TABLE 3-23
MEDIAN RENT, 1980 - 2000

CITY/COUNTY	1980 (\$)	1990 (\$)	2000 (\$)
Stephens County	152	292	422
Avalon	185	284	375
Martin	158	275	383
Toccoa	144	283	408
Region	N/A	442	661
Georgia	153	344	613

Source: U.S. Census, 1980- 2000.

TABLE 3-24
1990 SPECIFIED RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
BY RANGE OF MONTHLY RENT

AREA	SPECIFIED RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS PAYING CASH RENT	LESS THAN \$250	\$250 - \$499	\$500 - \$749	\$750 - \$999	\$1000 OR MORE
Avalon	13	12	1	--	--	
Martin	14	13	1	--	--	--
Toccoa	1,347	968	363	6	5	5
Stephens County	2,082	1,429	625	18	5	5

Source: U.S. Census, 1990.

TABLE 3-25
2000 SPECIFIED RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
BY RANGE OF MONTHLY RENT

AREA	SPECIFIED RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS PAYING CASH RENT	LESS THAN \$250	\$250 - \$499	\$500 - \$749	\$750 - \$999	\$1000 OR MORE
Avalon	24	10	10	4	--	--
Martin	28	7	14	7	--	--
Toccoa	1,580	306	819	416	24	15
Stephens County	2,457	389	1,317	671	65	15

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

As with owner occupied units, the minimum planning standards require Stephens County and its municipalities to inventory and analyze the renter occupied households that are cost burdened and severely cost burdened in the year 2000 (Table 3-26 and Table 3-27).

The data shows that in Avalon there are two renter cost burdened households and two that are considered severely cost burdened. The Town of Martin has five renter households that cost burdened. On average, rental households in Avalon spend approximately 20% of their income on housing , while those in Martin spend only 12.1% of their income on housing.

Both Avalon and Martin compare very well against the region and state. The reason for these low numbers is that rents are very affordable in these two cities as presented in the previous tables and discussion.

**TABLE 3-26
MONTHLY GROSS RENT AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 2000**

Monthly Gross rent as a Percentage of Household Income	AVALON		MARTIN		REGION	STATE
	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	%	%
Less than 30 % (not cost burdened)	20	76.9	23	74.2	56.4	56.0
30 to 49% (cost burdened)	2	7.7	5	16.1	31.5	35.4
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	2	7.7	0	0.0	13.6	16.5
Total Specified Renter Occupied Housing Units	26	100	31	100	100	100
Units Not Computed	2	---	3	---	4,182	83,149
Median Gross Rent as Percent of Household Income	20.0		12.1		---	24.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

The data presents a different scenario in the City of Toccoa and in Stephens County. In Toccoa 38.2% of renter households are either cost burdened or severely cost burdened. The same is true for 33.1% of the renter households in Stephens County. The median expenditure for rental housing is about 25.7% of the household income in Toccoa, while those in the county are spending just over 24% of their household income on rental housing.

There two reasons for the higher percentage of cost burdened and severely cost burdened renter households in Toccoa and Stephens County. First is the fact that renter occupied households are smaller in size, thus having lower incomes. Many renter households are non-family households having two or even one person. Second is that in general, most renters tend to have lower incomes thus having to use a higher percentage of their income on housing.

In spite of the higher percentage in Toccoa and Stephens County, both local governments fair better than the region and the state on affordability of renter occupied housing.

TABLE 3-27
MONTHLY GROSS RENT AS A
PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 2000

Monthly Gross rent as a Percentage of Household Income	TOCCOA		STEPHENS COUNTY		REGION	STATE
	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS	%	%	%
Less than 30 % (not cost burdened)	919	54.9	1,536	57.5	56.4	56.0
30 to 49% (cost burdened)	376	22.5	551	20.6	31.5	35.4
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	263	15.7	334	12.5	13.6	16.5
Total Specified Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,674	100	2,669	100	100	100
Units Not Computed	116	---	248	---	4,182	83,149
Median Gross Rent as Percent of Household Income	25.7		24.1		---	24.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

A more detailed presentation cost burdened or severely cost burdened renter occupied housing is presented in Table 3-28, Table 3-29, Table 3-30 and Table 3-31. This data presents the type of housing units that cost burdened or severely cost burdened household are renting. This data disproves the assumption that low income housing or cost burdened households rent either housing that is either multi-family or mobile homes. This is especially true for Toccoa and Stephens County.

In Avalon two of the cost burdened households rent a single family home and two rent a mobile home.

**TABLE 3-28
UNITS IN STRUCTURE BY GROSS RENT
AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME
TOWN OF AVALON, 2000**

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS			
	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	MOBILE HOME	TOTAL UNITS
30% or more. Total cost burdened or severely cost burdened	2	0	2	4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

In Martin all five of the cost burdened households rent mobile homes.

**TABLE 3-29
UNITS IN STRUCTURE BY GROSS RENT
AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME
TOWN OF MARTIN, 2000**

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS			
	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	MOBILE HOME	TOTAL UNITS
30% or more. Total cost burdened or severely cost burdened	0	0	5	5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

The number of cost burdened households in Toccoa are just about evenly divided between renting single family housing and multi-family housing.

**TABLE 3-30
UNITS IN STRUCTURE BY GROSS RENT
AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME
CITY OF TOCCOA, 2000**

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS			
	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	MOBILE HOME	TOTAL UNITS
30% or more. Total cost burdened or severely cost burdened	305	301	33	639

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

There is a fairly even distribution of the type of units rented for cost burdened households in Stephens County.

**TABLE 3-31
UNITS IN STRUCTURE BY GROSS RENT
AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME
STEPHENS COUNTY, 2000**

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	SPECIFIED RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS			
	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	MOBILE HOME	TOTAL UNITS
30% or more. Total cost burdened or severely cost burdened	366	311	208	885

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000.

TABLE 3-32
PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF INCOME
AND HOUSING COSTS FROM 1990 TO 2000
(all are percentage increases)

	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa	Stephens County	Georgia
Median Home Value	27.5	45.6	51.4	62.1	41
Median Rent	32.0	39.3	44.2	44.2	78
Weekly Wages	40.6	40.6	40.6	40.6	56
Household Income	10.2	13.2	33.1	32.7	27
Per Capital Income	42.3	N/A	47.3	47.5	62

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 – 2000.

While the median home value in Stephens County has increased by 62.1% and the median rent by 44.2% over the past decade, they have not been match by the increase in household income and increase in weekly wages. Only per capita income has increased more than median rent increase, but not the median home value increase. The City of Toccoa is in a similar situation to the county.

This more or less means that even though housing is more affordable in Stephens County and in its municipalities than around much of the region and state, it is less affordable than it was a decade ago. Housing costs are rising faster than wages and incomes in the area, particularly for owner occupied housing.

As the county and its cities grow the situation may increase in severity. As growth occurs there is a higher demand for housing, land, etc., which could cause housing values and associated costs to increase. On the other side of the scenario is the fact that the county population is aging and retiring and more people will be living on fixed incomes, and also, local wages and incomes are only expected to rise modestly over the next decade.

This problem lends itself for the need to address and create affordable housing opportunities, programs and incentives within the county in the immediate and long-term future.

HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION AND PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS

Projected household size is presented in Table 3-33 for Stephens County and all the municipalities in the county. Throughout the projected time frame all areas project a decrease in household size. The shrinking size of households in the county and cities is a result of the population aging. Toccoa, because of the large number of apartments, shows the smallest household size, while Avalon contains the largest.

TABLE 3-33
PROJECTED HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 2005-2025
(Total Number of Housing Units)

CITY/COUNTY	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Avalon	2.57	2.59	2.57	2.55	2.52
Martin	2.46	2.49	2.48	2.46	2.44
Toccoa	2.27	2.24	2.20	2.18	2.17
Stephens County	2.46	2.41	2.38	2.40	2.41

Source: Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2003.

Projected housing needs are presented in Table 3-34. It is interesting to note that there already exists within the county enough housing units to accommodate the projected population through the year 2020. The same is true for the City of Toccoa through the year 2010 and for Martin through 2015. The most recent census data reports that there are currently 11,652 housing units in Stephens County, 4,386 housing units in Toccoa, and 158 units in Martin. Avalon is the only community that will need additional housing units by 2005 and beyond.

Contributing factors to this scenario are the aging population, which generates smaller households, and the vacancy rate, including the large number of seasonal units that already exist in the county. Over the projected planning horizon many of the seasonal units will more than likely be converted to full time residences.

Another thing to consider, especially concerning the City of Toccoa, is that a large percentage of the current housing stock is older and may be subject to deterioration, dilapidation, and demolition as time progresses. This type of activity would have an impact on projected housing needs for Toccoa.

This projection only identifies housing needs. Because of the availability of affordable land along or in close proximity to Lake Hartwell and to the Chattahoochee National Forest, additional vacation and second homes will more than likely continue to be constructed to meet the demand of the higher income retirees of the baby boom generation.

see Table 3-1 compare

TABLE 3-34
PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS, 2005-2025
(Total Number of Housing Units)

CITY/COUNTY	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Avalon	114	123	134	147	162
Martin	132	139	150	163	180
Toccoa	4,087	4,327	4,671	4,978	5,345
Stephens County	10,323	10,717	11,170	11,579	12,090

Source: Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2003.

SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

There are segments of the community's population that are often overlooked when it comes to housing needs. There generally exist within the community people seeking some type of emergency or transitional shelter or housing. This type of housing may include homeless shelters, housing for runaway children, domestic violence victims or substance abuse victims. Other types of special needs housing include group quarters facilities or institutions for the elderly, mentally ill or those with physical disabilities.

An inventory of these type housing facilities in Stephens County reveal that there is no officially designated shelter for victims of homelessness. This is not to say that homelessness does not occur or has not occurred in Stephens County. This type of transitional shelter is often accommodated and administered by the many churches in the area and by Family Connection on an as needs basis. Homeless persons and families in the area are generally few and temporary, therefore statistics are not readily available.

Habitat for Humanity has an office located within Stephens County. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build and renovate decent, affordable housing. The houses then are sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest charged.

Volunteers provide most of the labor, and individual and corporate donors provide money and materials to build Habitat houses. Partner families themselves invest hundreds of hours of labor - 'sweat equity' - into building their homes and the homes of others. Their mortgage payments go into a revolving Fund for Humanity that is used to build more houses. Also, the local HFH Thrift Store generates much of the money needed for new home construction.

The Stephens County, Georgia HFH is a locally run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI). As of December 2003, HFH has completed 12 houses in Stephens County and will begin construction on the 13th house soon.

Assessment and counseling services for mental health and substance abuse are provided to citizens in Stephens County by the Mental Health Department and by the Georgia Mountain Community Health Services. The department refers patients who need assistance and treatment out to facilities located outside the County. Department officials expressed the need for such facilities to be located within Stephens County.

The Georgia Circle of Hope provides services for victims of domestic violence for the Northeast Georgia Counties of Habersham, Stephens and White. The mission of Circle of Hope is to provide temporary shelter for women and their children who are victims of family violence; to provide support for persons who are victims of sexual, emotional and physical abuse; and to increase public awareness of the realities of family violence.

Circle of Hope was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency in 1987 in response to a community needs assessment. Volunteers worked from January 1989 to September 1990 to complete a shelter offering a home like atmosphere to women and children fleeing dangerous relationships. Two hours after its opening in September of 1990, the shelter

accepted its first resident.

2002 Statistics

Residential Women and Children Served	132 (2,478 bednights)
Non-Residential Women and Children Served	443
Women and Children Served (face-to-face)	575
Women and Children Relocated (shelter full)	53
Crisis Calls	1,468
Volunteer Hours	4,679

In order to provide protection and privacy for victims, the location of shelters are not disclosed. According to the providers of this service, problems exist with over crowding and privacy. There is a need for expanded or a larger facilities to address the space problem and to meet a growing demand for services. ✓

ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Once the inventory is complete, an assessment can determine whether existing housing is appropriate to the needs of the residents in terms of quantity, type, location, affordability, and if not, actions needed to correct any deficiencies. The assessment also considers existing and potential housing problems, such as over or under building, lack of community services, concentrations of substandard housing, low ownership rates, etc. This assessment serves as a foundation for the development of goals, policies, objectives and an implementation strategy.

Probably the most significant housing concern in Stephens County is really within the City of Toccoa. A large percentage of the housing stock within the city is considered older (38% over 40 years, almost 70% more than 20 years). Older homes generally suffer from lack of maintenance over the years and eventually become dilapidated. Therefore, age is sometimes used as a sign of the condition or quality of housing in an area. Without adequate housing codes and programs to help maintain the aging housing stock, the city could be faced with a major sub-standard housing problem. A housing code program could provide guidance and assistance to property owners on maintenance, improvements and even demolition and removal.

The use of manufactured housing continues to increase in Stephens County. Manufactured housing is constructed at approximately one-half the cost of construction per square foot than site built homes, therefore making it quite affordable and popular for the more modest income earners within the county. It represents an important housing option for low and moderate income families, and is the primary form of unsubsidized affordable housing in the county and state. The only problem with this type of housing is the resale value of manufactured housing is not affixed to its own site and depreciates over time. This will have a negative impact on the tax base of the county over time as the percentage of manufactured housing increases. One possible resolution to this concern is to require the structure to be attached to a permanent foundation, therefore affixing the structure to the site and reversing the depreciation impact.

There already exist a significant amount of housing within the county and cities that could accommodate population growth for the next ten to fifteen years. However, additional housing units will more than likely be constructed. This is particularly true for the seasonal housing market due to the amount of affordable land available along Lake Hartwell and adjacent to the Chattahoochee National Forest. Because current mortgage interest rates are low site built homes will be constructed and manufactured housing will be placed to accommodate the local demand for newer housing facilities. New housing development that will take place in the county will occur at lower densities (one acre or greater per unit). New housing that may occur in the City of Toccoa is not likely to be multi-family housing as sufficient amounts exist. There is a need in Toccoa for new, modest housing units, at higher densities (six to eight units per acre) that are close to community services and shopping.

Almost 40% of renter occupied households in Stephens County (and cities) are either cost burdened or severely cost burdened. Historically, renter households have lower incomes and are more likely to be cost burdened. Cost burdened households may not have sufficient amounts of money for other household necessities such as food, clothing, and medicine. There

is a high percentage renter occupied units in Toccoa, which identifies the need for a program to encourage home ownership. Because many households have low incomes a home ownership program for workforce housing may need to be targeted. Programs for the purpose of assisting low income families to achieve homeownership are available through HUD, USDA, and Georgia DCA at the State level. Also, all local governments should encourage the type of efforts that has been going forth through the local Habitat for Humanity office and with other organizations of this nature that encourage home ownership and responsibility.

Housing affordability will continue to be an important issue in Stephens County. Housing rents and values are increasing at a higher rate than household incomes. Due to the aging population base, the size of households in the county and cities is expected to get smaller. In smaller households there are less persons to contribute to housing costs, thus making it harder to keep housing within the realm of affordability. Because the population is aging there are more households that are retiring and living on fixed incomes. The local housing authority has indicated that there is sufficient amount of housing for elderly available for the upcoming decade.

As the population ages the number of persons living in group quarters is expected to rise. These people will need nursing home care and assisted living facilities. There will be a need for these types of facilities as current facilities are near or at capacity. Because of sewer availability within the City of Toccoa more than likely accommodate these facilities and will see a rise in the group quarters population.

As reflected by the data presented, there is a need to develop adequate facilities accommodating temporary shelter for victims of domestic violence within Stephens County.

HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

To provide adequate, safe and affordable housing for citizens of Stephens County.

Objectives

Adopt a uniform housing and building code program and land use development standards throughout Stephens County.

Strengthen subdivision standards throughout the county and in the cities.

Encourage the rehabilitation or renovation of deteriorating and repairable housing units and improve the quality of existing housing units.

Identify methods to increase home ownership for low and moderate income families. Participate in Federal and State Programs that promote and assist in homeownership.

Expand local government infrastructure to meet community growth needs.

Encourage higher density clusters of modest housing where infrastructure is available.

Promote resort and retirement housing by utilizing Stephens County's diverse natural features and amenities.

Encourage and support the establishment and expansion of adequate housing facilities for those segments of the population who have special needs (elderly, victims of domestic violence and substance abuse, homeless).

CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

4.1 – Introduction

The economic development element provides an inventory of both the labor force and the economic base in Stephens County in order to evaluate the current economic climate. Information on the community's labor force is provided for such areas as occupation, wage levels, commuting patterns, and employment rates. Economic base information is provided to assess the number of employees in various sectors of the economy and the revenues generated, to identify major employers, and to determine the impact of tourism on the economy.

4.2 – Economic Development Data Analysis

4.2.1 – Income

Both per capita and household income data has been provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for Stephens County and the State of Georgia. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide historical comparisons from 1980 through projected 2025 figures.

The per capita and household incomes for Stephens County continues to run lower than the state amounts over the past decade. Both the county and the state figures are projected to continue to grow at the same percentage rate over the next decade keeping Stephens County below the Georgia averages.

Table 4.1
Per Capita Income

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Stephens County Income per Capita (1996 \$)	\$12,568	\$14,402	\$16,660	\$18,383	\$20,704	\$21,970	\$23,219	\$24,436	\$25,692	\$27,010
Georgia Income per Capita (1996 \$)	\$15,353	\$18,512	\$20,715	\$22,287	\$25,433	\$26,975	\$28,549	\$30,141	\$31,767	\$33,413

Source: U.S. Census; Projections Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

Table 4.2

Average Household Income

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Stephens County Mean Household Income (Current \$)	NA	NA	\$23,695	\$30,993	\$37,952	\$40,868	\$37,962	\$46,713	\$49,629	\$50,913
Georgia Mean Household Income (Current \$)	NA	NA	\$33,259	\$35,692	\$42,158	\$44,169	\$52,533	\$54,203	\$63,964	\$59,049

Source: U.S. Census; Projections Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

4.2.2 – Employment by Occupation

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the total employment of Stephens County increased just over 9% since 1990. The majority of residents are employed in three major categories-precision production, craft, and repair positions (21.18%); clerical and administrative support (15.34%); and professional and technical specialty (14.84%). The middle tier of the labor force is made up of machine operator, assemblers and inspectors (12.20%), and Sales (8.74%). This is followed by the lower tier comprised of service occupations; then executive, administrative, and managerial; with the remainder in transportation and material moving (Tables 4.3 and 4.4).

Table 4.3

Stephens County: Employment by Occupation		
Category	1990	2000
TOTAL All Occupations	11097	12018
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	813	1005
Professional and Technical Specialty	1150	1784
Technicians & Related Support	238	NA
Sales	986	1050
Clerical and Administrative Support	1217	1843
Private Household Services	45	NA
Protective Services	215	NA
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	1023	1173
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	230	106
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	1738	2546
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	2170	1466
Transportation & Material Moving	628	720
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers & Laborers	644	NA

Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.4

Stephens County: Employment by Occupation (%)		
Category	1990	2000
TOTAL All Occupations	100.00%	100.00%
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	7.33%	8.36%
Professional and Technical Specialty	10.36%	14.84%
Technicians & Related Support	2.14%	NA
Sales	8.89%	8.74%
Clerical and Administrative Support	10.97%	15.34%
Private Household Services	0.41%	NA
Protective Services	1.94%	NA
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	9.22%	9.76%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	2.07%	0.88%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	15.66%	21.18%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	19.55%	12.20%
Transportation & Material Moving	5.66%	5.99%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers & Laborers	5.80%	NA

Source: U.S. Census

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 84 percent of the labor force in Stephens County is private wage or salary workers. Over 15 percent are employed as government workers. The remainder is self-employed (Table 4.6). This figures area consistent with the Georgia averages (Table 4.6).

Table 4.5

Georgia: Earnings by Sector (%)										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total (1996 \$)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm (1996 \$)	0.16%	1.27%	1.36%	1.40%	0.98%	0.93%	0.89%	0.85%	0.82%	0.79%
Agricultural Services, Other (1996 \$)	0.37%	0.41%	0.46%	0.53%	0.59%	0.60%	0.61%	0.62%	0.62%	0.62%
Mining (1996 \$)	0.65%	0.48%	0.36%	0.29%	0.27%	0.25%	0.22%	0.21%	0.19%	0.18%
Construction (1996 \$)	5.66%	6.57%	5.82%	5.39%	6.00%	5.86%	5.67%	5.46%	5.26%	5.06%
Manufacturing (1996 \$)	22.54%	20.03%	17.51%	16.84%	14.86%	14.45%	14.05%	13.59%	13.08%	12.53%
Trans, Comm, & Public Utilities (1996 \$)	9.33%	8.85%	8.75%	9.43%	9.89%	9.99%	10.01%	9.96%	9.84%	9.63%
Wholesale Trade (1996 \$)	8.87%	9.04%	8.86%	8.17%	8.44%	8.36%	8.21%	8.05%	7.88%	7.71%
Retail Trade (1996 \$)	10.33%	10.64%	9.17%	9.08%	8.99%	8.97%	8.93%	8.87%	8.80%	8.71%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate (1996 \$)	5.44%	5.59%	6.43%	6.86%	7.57%	7.66%	7.73%	7.78%	7.81%	7.82%
Services (1996 \$)	15.63%	17.36%	21.95%	24.33%	26.77%	27.78%	29.02%	30.44%	32.02%	33.73%
Federal Civilian Government (1996 \$)	5.64%	5.11%	4.66%	4.17%	3.39%	3.11%	2.87%	2.67%	2.49%	2.33%
Federal Military Government (1996 \$)	3.72%	3.68%	2.69%	2.49%	2.06%	1.94%	1.83%	1.72%	1.62%	1.53%
State & Local Government (1996 \$)	11.67%	10.97%	11.97%	11.01%	10.18%	10.10%	9.95%	9.78%	9.58%	9.37%

Source: U.S Census; Projections Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Table 4.6

Stephens County: Earnings by Sector (%)										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total (1996 \$)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm (1996 \$)	0.38%	1.42%	2.25%	2.80%	2.47%	2.32%	2.28%	2.28%	2.29%	2.29%
Agricultural Services, Other (1996 \$)	0.10%	0.24%	0.12%	0.11%	0.18%	0.20%	0.20%	0.21%	0.22%	0.22%
Mining (1996 \$)	0.62%	0.53%	0.70%	0.25%	0.41%	0.39%	0.38%	0.36%	0.35%	0.33%
Construction (1996 \$)	5.15%	6.23%	7.24%	5.87%	7.21%	6.78%	6.39%	6.03%	5.70%	5.41%
Manufacturing (1996 \$)	50.31%	43.67%	44.06%	41.49%	35.82%	33.72%	32.10%	30.79%	29.72%	28.85%
Trans, Comm, & Public Utilities (1996 \$)	3.22%	3.98%	4.10%	2.32%	2.07%	2.09%	2.10%	2.10%	2.08%	2.05%
Wholesale Trade (1996 \$)	3.50%	6.41%	2.03%	1.92%	2.43%	2.30%	2.19%	2.10%	2.03%	1.99%
Retail Trade (1996 \$)	10.39%	11.07%	9.55%	10.49%	11.13%	10.34%	9.65%	9.01%	8.41%	7.85%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate (1996 \$)	2.71%	1.70%	3.23%	4.23%	5.47%	6.16%	6.54%	6.78%	6.94%	7.03%
Services (1996 \$)	11.54%	12.41%	13.31%	16.73%	16.80%	19.60%	21.83%	23.77%	25.56%	27.29%
Federal Civilian Government (1996 \$)	1.04%	1.02%	0.99%	0.95%	0.97%	0.96%	0.94%	0.92%	0.89%	0.85%
Federal Military Government (1996 \$)	0.33%	0.53%	0.41%	0.37%	0.37%	0.36%	0.35%	0.34%	0.33%	0.32%
State & Local Government (1996 \$)	10.72%	10.79%	12.01%	12.48%	14.68%	14.79%	15.05%	15.31%	15.48%	15.51%

Source: U.S. Census; Projections Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

According to the most recent figures, the Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate sector averaged the highest weekly private wages (\$678), followed by the Manufacturing sector (\$543) and the Transportation, Communication, and Utilities sector (\$514) as shown in Table 4.7. This compares with three of the top four in State figures shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7

Stephens County: Average Weekly Wages											
Category	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
All Industries	\$318	\$328	\$345	\$349	\$359	\$365	\$377	\$394	\$422	\$427	\$447
Agri, Forestry, Fishing	NA	212	237	237	258	NA	NA	327	NA	NA	NA
Mining	NA										
Construction	NA	343	334	336	351	344	385	396	405	439	436
Manufacturing	NA	372	393	399	411	432	449	472	506	474	543
Transportation, Comm, Util	NA	347	319	366	397	411	395	453	480	509	514
Wholesale	NA	271	298	302	323	329	350	366	380	382	420
Retail	NA	188	199	198	218	231	237	242	248	278	296
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	NA	492	535	593	648	700	731	659	690	663	678
Services	NA	269	291	310	291	265	275	314	343	374	344
Federal Gov	NA										
State Gov	NA	434	NA								
Local Gov	NA	325	333	316	353	339	369	387	457	356	368

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

Table 4.8

Georgia: Average Weekly Wages											
Category	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
All Industries	\$404	\$424	\$444	\$471	\$480	\$488	\$509	\$531	\$562	\$598	\$629
Agri, Forestry, Fishing	267	276	285	297	304	312	322	336	347	373	390
Mining	561	589	605	NA	NA	698	734	741	781	832	866
Construction	NA	434	439	451	461	479	508	534	556	590	623
Manufacturing	NA	450	473	503	511	531	555	588	620	656	684
Transportation, Comm, Util	NA	603	635	689	709	720	737	769	805	842	895
Wholesale	NA	603	632	669	695	711	729	762	809	873	932
Retail	NA	236	244	255	260	267	275	286	299	318	335
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	NA	544	569	627	648	648	693	741	799	872	900
Services	NA	414	439	464	471	475	501	519	551	580	611
Federal Gov	NA	543	584	612	651	667	666	701	774	791	808
State Gov	NA	451	462	460	471	NA	493	517	533	561	579
Local Gov	NA	387	401	401	410	420	440	461	480	506	523

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

4.2.3 – Skill Level

Stephens County has received recognition for their school system in recent years and prides itself on producing a qualified labor pool. The community has six County public schools and produced 204 graduates in 2002. Over 18% of the graduates have attained a 2-year degree or higher (Table 4.9). The high school drop out rate in Stephens County was 6 percent (compared with 6.4 percent for the State of Georgia) during 2001 (Tables 4.10, 4.11). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredit all schools in the County.

Table 4.9

Stephens County: Educational Attainment			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	12971	15013	16771
Less than 9 th Grade	4182	2856	1909
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	3172	3128	2934
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	3035	4591	6014
Some College (No Degree)	NA	1857	2982
Associate Degree	NA	608	570
Bachelor's Degree	NA	1428	1580
Graduate or Professional Degree	NA	545	782

Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.10

Stephens County: Education Statistics							
Category	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)	80%	81%	75%	67%	61%	74%	64%
H.S. Dropout Rate	14.8%	11.1%	6.9%	5%	10%	8.4%	6%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges	17.0%	19.8%	19.5%	17.6%	19.3%	NA	NA
Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools	10.3%	11.8%	27.9%	11.9%	14.7%	15.7%	NA

Source: Georgia Department of Education

Table 4.11

Georgia: Education Statistics							
Category	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)	82%	76%	67%	68%	66%	68%	65%
H.S. Dropout Rate	9.26%	8.60%	7.30%	6.50%	6.50%	6.50%	6.40%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges	35.0%	30.0%	30.2%	38.8%	37.5%	37.3%	36.1%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools	5.4%	6.2%	7.1%	6.5%	6.4%	7.4%	8.8%

Source: Georgia Department of Education

Access to higher formal education and training is also within comfortable commuting distance from Stephens County. These colleges include North Georgia Technical College at Clarkesville, Emmanuel College, Toccoa Falls College, Piedmont College, and Truett-McConnell College.

A number of technical college graduates are in the Stephens County area. There has been a higher percentage attending technical schools than in the State in general. The Office of Technical Education, Georgia Department of Technical Education, provided the following data in Table 4.12. Data shown are from Athens, Gwinnett, Lanier, and North Georgia Technical Colleges.

Table 4.12
Technical College Graduates, 2001-2002
 Stephens Area

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>GRADUATES</u>
AGRICULTURE/NATURAL RESOURCES TECH.	
Golf Course Management	7
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES	
Accounting	27
Business and Office Technology	79
Computer Information Systems	20
Networking Specialist	17
HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES	
Medical Assisting	13
Practical Nursing	24
INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGIES	
Air Conditioning Technology	13
Automotive Technology	6
Commercial Photography	13
Electrical Technician	8
Machine Tool Technology	18
Manufacturing Technology	9
Marine Engine Technology	7
PERSONAL/PUBLIC SERVICE TECHNOLOGIES	
Cosmetology	18
Culinary Arts	11
TECHNICAL CERTIFICATES	
A+ Technician	13
Air Conditioning Technology	10
Automotive Technology	36
Cisco Specialist	15
CNC Set Up and Programming	7
Commercial Truck Driving	62
Construction	25
Culinary Arts	7
Customer Service Specialist	69
Data Entry	20
Electrical Technician	6
Emergency Medical Technician	47
Entrepreneurship	38
Health Care Technician	20
Hospitality Industry Fundamentals	8
Industrial Maintenance	6
Leadership Development	44
Manufacturing Specialist	29
Medical Office Administration	22
Microcomputer Applications	29
Office Accounting	15
Web Site Designer	17
Welding	6
Wiring	9

Definitions: All graduates except those listed as technical certificates are diploma and degree graduates. Diploma and degree programs are one to two years in length. Technical certificates are less than a year in length.

Note: Only those programs with five or more graduates are listed.

Source: Office of Technical Education; Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education Program Enrollment Exits/Placement Analysis

Table 4.13

Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Georgia, Georgia Mountains Region, and Counties

Georgia	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	3467191	3577505	3617165	3738850	3904474	4014526	4078263	4173274	4131569	4292330
Employment	3265259	3391782	3440859	3566542	3727295	3845702	3916080	4018876	3966348	4071469
Unemployment	201932	185722	176306	172308	177179	168824	162183	154398	165221	220861
Unemployment Rate	5.8	5.2	4.9	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.0	3.7	4.0	5.1
Ga. Mtns. Region	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	3467191	3577505	3617165	3738850	3904474	4014526	4078263	4173274	4131569	4292330
Employment	3265259	3391782	3440859	3566542	3727295	3845702	3916080	4018876	3966348	4071469
Unemployment	201932	185722	176306	172308	177179	168824	162183	154398	165221	220861
Unemployment Rate	5.8	5.2	4.9	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.0	3.7	4.0	5.1
Stephens County, GA	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	12402	12353	12492	12733	12882	12639	11916	11661	11530	12383
Employment	11626	11737	11838	11901	12155	11926	11334	11233	10836	11701
Unemployment	776	616	654	832	727	713	582	428	694	682
Unemployment Rate	6.3	5.0	5.2	6.5	5.6	5.6	4.9	3.7	6.0	5.5
Banks County, GA	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	5779	5830	5635	5868	6049	6051	6325	6539	6353	7165
Employment	5471	5587	5368	5589	5726	5809	6087	6336	6112	6853
Unemployment	308	243	267	279	323	242	238	203	241	312
Unemployment Rate	5.3	4.2	4.7	4.8	5.3	4.0	3.8	3.1	3.8	4.4
Franklin County, GA	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	8911	8857	9301	9778	10127	9845	10150	10581	10356	10942
Employment	8342	8411	8786	9198	9628	9470	9808	10211	9829	10428
Unemployment	569	446	515	580	499	375	342	370	527	514
Unemployment Rate	6.4	5.0	5.5	5.9	4.9	3.8	3.4	3.5	5.1	4.7
Habersham County, GA	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	14339	14300	14465	14600	15113	15459	15753	15853	15648	16168
Employment	13710	13680	13876	13876	14347	14851	15189	15317	14945	15529
Unemployment	629	620	589	724	766	608	564	536	703	639
Unemployment Rate	4.4	4.3	4.1	5.0	5.1	3.9	3.6	3.4	4.5	4.0

Since 1992, Stephens County has had a slightly higher unemployment rate than the other counties in the region and the State of Georgia. Unemployment rates in Stephens County were the highest in 1996, 6.5 percent (Table 4.13)

Table 4.14

**Labor Force Estimates
December 2003**

	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>
United States	147,277,000	138,603,000	8,674,000	5.9
Georgia	4,384,902	4,211,052	173,850	4.0
Stephens County	12,636	11,919	717	5.7

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Information & Analysis

4.2.4 - Commuting Patterns

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Census, approximately 76.7 percent of residents of Stephens County work within the County. A total of 13 percent commute to the immediate surrounding counties of Franklin, Habersham, and Oconee, South Carolina. This is almost double the number percent commuting to those same counties in 1990 (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15

Stephens County: Labor Force by Place of Work

<u>Category</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Worked in County of Residence	7662	8941	9045
Worked outside Co. of Residence	1266	1720	2387

Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.16 takes into account the entire workforce employed in Stephens County. Residents that live in the surrounding counties and commute into Stephens County are represented. The majority of workers live in Stephens County (79.3%) followed by Franklin County (7.3%) and Habersham County (4.0%) (Table 4.17).

Table 4.16**Employed Residents of Stephens County**

<u>County Employed</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Stephens	9,045	76.7
Franklin	735	6.2
Habersham	694	5.9
Gwinnett	158	1.3
Hall	147	1.2
Oconee Co. S.C.	144	1.0
Fulton	116	1.0
Hart	101	0.9
Other	655	5.6
Total Residents:	11,795	100

Source: US Census Bureau-2000 County-to-County Worker Flow Files

Table 4.17**Persons Working in Stephens County**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Stephens	9,045	79.3
Franklin	835	7.3
Habersham	459	4.0
Oconee, S.C.	262	2.3
Hart	210	1.8
Rabun	107	0.9
Banks	103	0.9
White	76	0.7
Other	302	2.6
Total Residents:	11,399	100

Source: US Census Bureau-2000 County-to-County Worker Flow Files

4.3 – Economic Base Analysis

The economic base analysis includes the inventory and assessment of the employment structure, type of work in which they are engaged, the employment diversification, trends, and employment projections. The economic base analysis enables a community to evaluate the economic climate in terms of the following questions:

- Is the business community healthy?
- Is the community diversified or is it dependent on one type of business?
- Do the businesses employ the residents to education and training capacity or are residents underemployed?
- How many and what type of job opportunities will be available in the future?

The following tables (Table 4.18 and 4.19) depict the number and percentages of employment by sector in the Stephens County community. According to the 2000 figures, Manufacturing industries employ the highest number of employees. However, from 1980 the percentage employed dropped from 42.46% to 36.32% in 1990. It continued to drop to 27.50% in 2000 and is projected to continue to drop during the next decade. The second largest employer in 2000 was the Services industry, which grew from 12.12% in 1980 to 23.13% in 2000. It is projected to continue to grow over the next decade. Retail Trade, which was second in 1990, dropped to third in 2000. The Mining industry continues to be the smallest employer followed by Federal Government employees.

Table 4.18

Stephens County: Employment by Sector										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	11,231	11,849	13,143	14,748	14,200	14,886	15,515	16,126	16,765	17,465
Farm	310	289	296	297	288	260	247	238	231	224
Agricultural Services, Other	30	56	55	66	90	101	110	118	126	133
Mining	52	35	67	36	46	47	49	50	51	53
Construction	578	782	926	897	1,045	1,041	1,038	1,034	1,034	1,038
Manufacturing	4,769	4,455	4,773	4,930	3,905	3,771	3,678	3,615	3,582	3,584
Trans, Comm, & Public Utilities	242	341	493	323	259	269	278	286	293	299
Wholesale Trade	344	697	291	302	338	341	343	349	358	371
Retail Trade	1,616	1,870	2,184	2,395	2,346	2,318	2,292	2,260	2,228	2,199
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	592	445	452	509	749	851	912	959	999	1,036
Services	1,361	1,635	2,167	3,312	3,285	3,924	4,475	4,994	5,515	6,066
Federal Civilian Government	53	54	65	58	68	71	73	74	75	76
Federal Military Government	93	107	103	103	96	97	99	100	100	100
State & Local Government	1,191	1,083	1,271	1,520	1,685	1,795	1,921	2,049	2,173	2,286

Source: U.S. Census; Projections Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

4.3.1 - Agriculture

Historically, farm population, number of farms, and proportions of land in farms has steadily declined in the United States as a result of mechanization, and increasing job opportunities, and income outside of agriculture in rural communities. Agriculture's importance to the economy of Stephens County has also continued to decline in recent years. The Agriculture Services industry has shown a slight increase over the past two decades at 0.45%.

Table 4.19 (Percentage Employment by Sector) indicates that the number of farmers has dropped from 2.25% of the employment sector in 1990 to 2.03% in 2000. It is estimated that it will continue to drop to 1.59% by 2010 while the number employed in the Agriculture Services industry will grow slightly.

4.3.2 – Mineral Industries

The impact of mining on the economy in Stephens County is minimal. According to the U.S. Census Bureau report on 2001 County Business Patterns, Stephens County has only one mineral industries establishment employing 46 people. Although projections show a slight increase of employees in this industry, it will play a small role in the County's economic base.

Table 4.19

Stephens County: Employment by Sector (%)										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	2.76%	2.44%	2.25%	2.01%	2.03%	1.75%	1.59%	1.48%	1.38%	1.28%
Agricultural Serv & Other	0.27%	0.47%	0.42%	0.45%	0.63%	0.68%	0.71%	0.73%	0.75%	0.76%
Mining	0.46%	0.30%	0.51%	0.24%	0.32%	0.32%	0.32%	0.31%	0.30%	0.30%
Construction	5.15%	6.60%	7.05%	6.08%	7.36%	6.99%	6.69%	6.41%	6.17%	5.94%
Manufacturing	42.46%	37.60%	36.32%	33.43%	27.50%	25.33%	23.71%	22.42%	21.37%	20.52%
Trans, Comm, & Pub Utilities	2.15%	2.88%	3.75%	2.19%	1.82%	1.81%	1.79%	1.77%	1.75%	1.71%
Wholesale Trade	3.06%	5.88%	2.21%	2.05%	2.38%	2.29%	2.21%	2.16%	2.14%	2.12%
Retail Trade	14.39%	15.78%	16.62%	16.24%	16.52%	15.57%	14.77%	14.01%	13.29%	12.59%
Finance, Ins, & Real Estate	5.27%	3.76%	3.44%	3.45%	5.27%	5.72%	5.88%	5.95%	5.96%	5.93%
Services	12.12%	13.80%	16.49%	22.46%	23.13%	26.36%	28.84%	30.97%	32.90%	34.73%
Federal Civilian Gov	0.47%	0.46%	0.49%	0.39%	0.48%	0.48%	0.47%	0.46%	0.45%	0.44%
Federal Military Gov	0.83%	0.90%	0.78%	0.70%	0.68%	0.65%	0.64%	0.62%	0.60%	0.57%
State & Local Gov	10.60%	9.14%	9.67%	10.31%	11.87%	12.06%	12.38%	12.71%	12.96%	13.09%

Source: U.S. Census; Projections Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

4.3.3 - Manufacturing

Manufacturing industries are still the largest employer in Stephens County providing 27.5% of all jobs within the community in 2000 (Table 4.19). However, this is a dramatic decline from 42.46% in 1980 and 36.32% in 1990 and reflects both the state and national trend for United States manufacturing concerns. While the Georgia Department of Labor Industry Mix – 2002 chart (Table 4.20) shows the percentage of manufacturing employment increasing to 29%, significant job losses continue to occur from 2002 to 2004 when 9 manufacturing establishments ceased operations and eliminated close to 800 permanent jobs.

Manufacturing will remain a key part of the Stephens County local economy for years to come. Even with the increase in service sector employment projected to overtake manufacturing in 2005, manufacturing sector earnings will continue to be greater than all other sectors even past 2025 further highlighting the importance of manufacturing. Table 4.6 Earnings by Sector graphically illustrates the importance of manufacturing and its influence and relationship to other sectors such as retail, service industries.

Unfortunately, the trend for American manufacturing, struggling to remain competitive in the global economy, is to modernize and automate often resulting in fewer overall employees. The challenge facing the community will be to stabilize the manufacturing sector and support initiatives promoting positive growth in all sectors of the local economy due to the increased out-sourcing of manufacturing production in the global economy to overseas.

4.3.4 – Wholesale Trade

In 1985, there was an increase of 2.82 % in the employment sector from 3.06 % in 1980 to 5.88% within the community (Table 4.19). However, in 1990, there was a decline from the 5.88% to 2.21% and had steadily declined until 2000 where there was a slight increase. Unfortunately, it is projected to continue to decline in 2005 through 2025.

4.3.5 – Retail Sales

In 1985, there was an increase of 1.39% in the employment sector from 14.3% in 1980 to 15.78% within the community and continuing up to 16.62%, then dropping .38% rising to 16.52% and then steadily declining through 2025 (Table 4.19).

Table 4.20

Industry Mix - 2002

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF FIRMS	Stephens			Stephens Area			
		NUMBER	PERCENT	WELY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	NUMBER	PERCENT	WELY WAGE
Goods Producing	136	3,777	35.6	\$ 585	439	12,458	35.1	\$ 580
Agriculture, forestry, & fishing	7	66	0.0	415	38	823	2.3	644
Mining	-	-	-	-	3	30	0.1	727
Construction	74	614	5.8	502	285	1,792	5.1	519
Manufacturing	54	3,084	29.2	604	174	9,834	27.7	560
Food Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beverage & tobacco mfg	0	0	0.0	0	-	-	-	-
Textile mills	5	996	9.4	598	12	2,401	6.8	512
Textile product mills	0	0	0.0	0	4	45	0.1	379
Apparel Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	4	60	0.2	249
Wood product Manufacturing	3	67	0.6	455	24	413	1.2	480
Paper Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Printing and related activities	-	-	-	-	12	326	0.9	499
Chemical Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	3	310	0.9	680
Plastics & rubber products mfg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nonmetallic mineral product mfg	0	0	0.0	0	9	270	0.8	518
Fabricated metal product mfg	11	463	4.4	629	25	960	2.7	588
Machinery Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	11	536	1.5	586
Computer & electronic product mfg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electrical equipment/appliance	0	0	0.0	0	-	-	-	-
Transportation equipment	-	-	-	-	12	838	2.4	578
Furniture and related product mfg	18	474	4.5	563	30	699	1.9	507
Miscellaneous mfg industries	-	-	-	-	6	1,030	2.9	613
Service Producing	424	4,910	46.5	426	1,476	16,582	46.7	425
Wholesale trade	44	383	3.6	544	114	842	2.4	555
Retail trade	104	1,303	12.4	368	360	4,291	12.1	370
Transportation and warehousing	6	117	1.1	299	53	1,052	3.0	561
Utilities	-	-	-	-	11	185	0.5	620
Information	12	96	0.9	598	30	388	1.1	586
Finance and insurance	35	235	2.2	625	112	659	1.9	619
Real estate and rental and leasing	20	147	1.4	337	66	274	0.8	343
Professional, scientific/tech svcs	41	151	1.4	595	134	508	1.4	583
Management, companies/enterprises	4	267	2.5	1,258	13	643	1.8	541
Administrative and waste svcs	31	507	4.8	239	92	1,341	3.8	307
Educational services	-	-	-	-	11	840	2.4	454
Health care and social services	38	550	5.3	490	138	1,990	5.8	516
Arts, entertainment and recreation	6	32	0.3	393	15	156	0.4	254
Accommodation and food services	37	635	6.0	173	157	2,730	7.7	192
Other services (except government)	42	222	2.1	251	139	673	1.9	300
Unclassified - industry not assigned	6	23	0.2	327	25	66	0.2	319
Total - Private Sector	585	8,711	82.8	495	2,020	25,110	62.1	483
Total - Government	36	1,038	17.4	536	142	9,366	17.9	626
Federal government	6	69	0.7	807	26	273	0.8	719
State government	19	100	1.0	547	49	1,076	3.0	673
Local government	14	1,961	15.7	523	57	5,014	14.1	506
ALL INDUSTRIES	621	10,549	100.0	\$ 502	2,162	35,476	100.0	\$ 490
ALL INDUSTRIES - GEORGIA								\$ 687

Note: *Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cleared by release.
 This data uses the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories (as opposed to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories).
 Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a pay period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding since all figures represent Annual Averages.
 Health services include government hospitals. Educational services include state and government institutions.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. The data represents jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

Table 4.21

Stephens County: Personal Income by Type									
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total (1996 \$)	\$274,261,000	\$326,815,000	\$391,126,000	\$461,132,000	\$526,954,000	\$577,373,000	\$630,779,000	\$688,152,000	\$750,675,000
Wages & Salaries (1996 \$)	\$174,966,000	\$185,496,000	\$218,514,000	\$243,923,000	\$261,461,000	\$285,704,000	\$310,527,000	\$336,633,000	\$364,775,000
Other Labor Income (1996 \$)	\$18,933,000	\$21,696,000	\$30,403,000	\$33,711,000	\$29,828,000	\$32,159,000	\$34,491,000	\$36,894,000	\$39,442,000
Proprietors Income (1996 \$)	\$25,558,000	\$30,574,000	\$30,182,000	\$36,520,000	\$42,287,000	\$45,570,000	\$49,048,000	\$52,649,000	\$56,462,000
Dividends, Interest, & Rent (1996 \$)	\$37,695,000	\$56,610,000	\$66,013,000	\$74,739,000	\$97,793,000	\$107,511,000	\$117,810,000	\$128,668,000	\$140,052,000
Transfer Payments to Persons (1996 \$)	\$46,869,000	\$57,620,000	\$70,906,000	\$97,015,000	\$108,246,000	\$121,348,000	\$136,311,000	\$153,350,000	\$172,781,000
Less: Social Ins. Contributions (1996 \$)	\$10,891,000	\$13,866,000	\$17,329,000	\$20,302,000	\$20,468,000	\$23,261,000	\$26,301,000	\$29,521,000	\$32,963,000
Residence Adjustment (1996 \$)	(\$18,869,000)	(\$11,315,000)	(\$7,563,000)	(\$4,474,000)	\$7,807,000	\$8,342,000	\$8,893,000	\$9,479,000	\$10,126,000

Source: U.S. Census; Projections Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

Table 4.22

Stephens County: Labor Force Participation		
Category	1990	2000
TOTAL Males and Females	18377	20117
In Labor Force	11689	12542
Civilian Labor Force	11665	12542
Civilian Employed	11097	12018
Civilian Unemployed	568	524
In Armed Forces	24	0
Not in Labor Force	6688	7575
TOTAL Males	8703	9448
Male In Labor Force	6275	6579
Male Civilian Labor Force	6259	6579
Male Civilian Employed	5957	6325
Male Civilian Unemployed	302	254
Male In Armed Forces	16	0
Male Not in Labor Force	2428	2869
TOTAL Females	9674	10669
Female In Labor Force	5414	5963
Female Civilian Labor Force	5406	5963
Female Civilian Employed	5140	5693
Female Civilian Unemployed	266	270
Female In Armed Forces	8	0
Female Not in Labor Force	4260	4706

Source: U.S. Census

4.3.6 - Service/Professional Establishments

Over 4,000 citizens are employed in the Service and Professional Sectors and represent one-third of all employed in Stephens County. The annual gross receipts for these sectors in 2000 were \$74,280,000, an increase of 61% from 1990 (\$41,169,000). These are the fastest growing sectors with the health care industry and tourist-related employment on the rise.

4.3.7 – Government Employment

Due to the fact that the County has no large federal employer inside it's borders, most positions are found within the state or local government. Thus, it will play a relatively minor role in the County's economic base.

4.3.8 - Tourism

According to the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, over 42,000,000 visitors came to Georgia in 2002. Tourism is Georgia's second largest industry and expenditures amounted to \$23.9 billion (direct, indirect and induced spending) supporting \$5.8 billion in resident wages earned and 207,100 tourist-related jobs. Tourism brought in \$682 million in state tax revenue, with \$367 in per household tax savings on the state and local levels.

Stephens County has been hard at work to increase tourism. There are several projects already underway to bring more visitors to our community. The Tugaloo Corridor is a primary example of utilizing preservation, environmental education and recreation as an economic development tool. The Stephens County Foundation, Inc., a 501C3 non-profit organization whose mission is education, owns an 87-acre tract of land along the Tugaloo River. The property was the home of the old Estatoe Cherokee Indian Village that was partially excavated by the Smithsonian Institute and the University of Georgia Archaeology Department prior to the construction of the Hartwell Dam. The site will be the anchor for biking and hiking trails, heritage/environmental education center and the construction of a replica of Prather Bridge. There are over 100,000 school children in Georgia within an hour's drive of Toccoa and over 500,000 within two hours of the site.

Hospitality training has been made available to tourist-related businesses so that visitors can receive encouragement and information that will make their stays longer and more exciting. Attractions currently available are:

Toccoa Falls	Traveler's Rest
Lake Hartwell	Lake Yonah
Panther Creek Trail/Fishing	Historical Museum
Currahee Mountain	ATV Trails
Currahee Club Golf Course	Camp Mikell
Georgia Baptist Conference Center	Camp Toccoa Paratrooper Site
Camp Toccoa	Paul Anderson's Home/Park
Martin Driving Tour	Camp Toccoa Driving Tour
Henderson Falls Park	Antique Markets/Shops
Cemeteries	Roselane Park
Trembly Bald Resort	Historic Courthouse
The Depot	RV Park & Campsites
The Pines Golf Course	

There are three camps/conference centers in the community: Georgia Baptist Conference Center, Mikell Camp and Conference Center and Camp Toccoa. These facilities sleep a total of 1,400 people per night and the first two have major expansion projects on the drawing board. Also, Trembly Bald is a collection of antique cabins that have been reassembled here and are available for rental to 75-90 people per night.

The community is fortunate to have cultural activities that are outstanding. The year 2004 celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Toccoa-Stephens County Community Theatre, and The Toccoa Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. In addition, the Northeast Georgia Community Concert Association is headquartered here, Toccoa Falls College offers cultural arts series each year and the Currahee Arts Council continues its support of the arts and related activities. As a result, Toccoa serves as the center for the area's cultural activities and hosts thousands annually for the programs offered by these organizations.

4.4 – Economic Conditions Element – Significant Findings

The following items describe six significant findings regarding Stephens County's economic conditions.

1. Per capita and household income is 25% to 30% lower in Stephens County than the Average for the State of Georgia and the United States.
2. 76.7% of the work force in Stephens County work within the community and 23.3% commute to other counties.
3. Stephens County has continued to be a manufacturing-based economy, yet trends indicate a change over to a service-based economy; 27.5% are employed by manufacturers, 16.52% by retailers, and 23.13% by services (Table 4.18).
4. Unemployment rates have averaged slightly lower than the State of Georgia and the United States in recent years (Table 4.14)
5. Tourism revenues could be higher with additional tourist and visitor oriented facilities and promotional efforts.
6. Education should be a high priority in order to excel in the changing, competitive economic environment.

4.5 – Economic Development Committee – Final Committee Report

4.5.1 – Purpose

The purpose of the Economic Development Committee was to analyze historical, current and future economic data and trends to recommend an economic development strategy for Toccoa and Stephens County.

4.5.2 – Findings

The Economic Development Committee contends that an absolute relationship exists between the quality of life in our community and our ability to attract new jobs and retain existing jobs. An effort needs to be made in creating new jobs through entrepreneurial initiatives and programs. Further, the committee believes that the City and County Commissions, Stephens County Development Authority, Toccoa-Stephens County Chamber of Commerce and Board of Education all must allocate greater resources to improving the quality of life in our community. An adequate infrastructure, proper planning and funding must be in place to assume this.

4.5.3 – Stephens County Development Authority

The Stephens County Development Authority is crucial to the economic viability of the community. Additional funding and staff would give the Authority greater flexibility to stimulate a more aggressive economic development strategy. Through greater financial and political support from the local governments, the Authority would be strengthened in its regional competitiveness.

The Stephens County Development Authority is a constitutionally established authority created by the Georgia State Legislature and ratified in a 1968 countywide referendum. Organizational changes to the board composition cannot be made at the local level, and because of financial obligations, such as bonded indebtedness, any proposed changes should be studied cautiously. The Stephens County Board of Commissioners is responsible for appointments to the Stephens County Development Board. Board appointments should be carefully considered due to the crucial role each member plays in the economic competitiveness of our community.

A new economic development strategy for the Stephens County Development Authority should be considered. Increased sources of revenue, broader involvement in the Authority by the community at large and businesses in particular, and a broadened economic development focus could result.

4.5.4 – Toccoa-Stephens County Chamber of Commerce

The Toccoa-Stephens County Chamber of Commerce also plays a vital role in economic development. The Chamber should be encouraged to continue improving the business climate of the community by promoting tourism, retirement, and arts/entertainment. A close working relationship with the Development Authority is essential in strengthening entrepreneurship program initiatives.

4.5.5 – Funding

In order for the community to regain its competitive edge, the Development Authority should expand funding for business/industrial promotional efforts, land acquisitions and site improvements. Funding to the Chamber of Commerce should be increased for tourism, retirement, and arts/entertainment promotional projects.

4.5.6 – Incentives

All surrounding states and many localities within Georgia offer economic incentives for business/industrial recruitment and retention. Efforts should be made to research and develop any and all avenues in order to accomplish this goal of gaining the competitive edge. The community cannot be competitive in attracting quality businesses, unless it is afforded the opportunity to offer public and private sector incentives.

However, prior to offering any incentives to a particular business, the Stephens County Development Authority should run a Local Economic Impact Analysis ("LOCI"), which will assist the City and County officials in carefully weighing the costs versus the benefits of the project. No incentives should be automatic, but tailored to each prospect.

4.5.7 – Development Priorities

The primary focus of the Development Authority has been recruitment of manufacturing industries. This focus should now shift and adapt to reflect the current trends within the economy. The Authority should have a clear set of priority recruitment targets and develop a list to be utilized in allocating resources.

All recruitment efforts should strive to match jobs with the existing labor force, recognizing that a number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs are needed in our community. However, changing economic factors that have also been recognized and acted upon include:

- An increased demand for technical skills by all employers
- Upgraded educational & skill levels of employees
- Employer participation in economic development efforts within the community.
- Continued strengthening and support of existing industry efforts.
- A shift from a manufacturing-dominated economy to a service, technology and information-oriented economy.
- A gradual elimination of low end/unskilled jobs.
- A shift from larger to smaller employers who are not as reliant on land and infrastructure.
- Programs to enhance and further enable small business expansions, entrepreneurial initiatives, and revitalizing depressed areas.

4.5.8 - Site Improvements/Development

There needs to be an ample inventory of sites that are maintained by the Development Authority staff. With the creation of the Haystone/Brady Industrial Park, more prospects are being attracted to the community. Maintenance, signage and lighting will enhance the park and make it more competitive.

4.5.9 – Quality of Life

In order for a community to thrive economically, a good quality of life is vital. Here are some of the positive assets our community has to offer:

1. *Healthcare:* Excellent medical care available right here in our county. Stephens County Hospital has the largest number of hospital beds in the seven county area. Countywide ambulance service. State of the art cancer treatment facility and dialysis center.

2. *Recreation:* Unlimited outdoor recreation opportunities: hiking, biking, boating, fishing and hunting. New Recreation Park with Senior Center and therapeutic pool. Henderson Fall Park with amphitheatre. Nine tennis courts, three public parks, one public golf course, one private golf course, two swimming pools, movie theater, multi-activity arts council, state parks.
3. *Cost of living and housing:* Cost of living is very affordable and housing is available at all market levels. Compared to surrounding communities, we have the only lake lots in the price range for middle & upper middle class.
4. *Climate:* The climate is moderate with four distinct seasons. Golf and other outdoor activities can be enjoyed 10-11 months out of the year.

Our community also has some deficiencies concerning the quality of life, making it difficult to attract new businesses. Changes need to be made in:

- Absence of land use regulation in unincorporated areas
- The overall appearance of our major entrances into the community. These areas are littered, neglected and inadequately signed.
- More emphasis on starter homes so that the mobile home market is diminished.
- Inadequate code enforcement and land use controls in the community
- The Downtown lacks a strong retail anchor and has inadequate building occupancy.
- Weak subdivision regulations that do not require sidewalk, curb/gutters, storm sewers, etc.

4.5.10 – Infrastructure

An abundant water supply is one of our best attributes. However, development of a sanitary sewer collection system is lagging far behind. The City of Toccoa must position itself to meet future demands for sewage treatment by increasing treatment capacity and the service area for collection. Street and road improvements should continue based on the availability of LARP (Local Area Road Projects) and SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) funds.

4.5.11 – Workforce

Although the school dropout rate in Stephens County is lower than the state average, some estimates declare that 29% of the adult population within the County does not have a high school diploma. Although this is an improvement from 40% just a decade ago, given the current change to an information/technology based economy, few, if any, jobs will be available for non-high school graduates with no technical training. This deficiency creates a distinct disadvantage in recruiting high tech businesses. (Table 4.10)

For the past 18 months, a community collaborative has been working to identify educational needs, barriers, opportunities, and goals. This initiative is called Stephens

Works and is an ongoing project. This type of community involvement in education is crucial in achieving a more competitive workforce.

4.5.12 – Short-term Goals

- The City and County must recognize the critical roles the Development Authority and the Chamber of Commerce both play in our local community. Local government officials should take steps to strengthen them and make our community more competitive by holding each accountable to tangible results. The Stephens County Development Authority and the Toccoa-Stephens County Chamber of Commerce are ultimately accountable to the public. Careful consideration should be given in reviewing both entities so as to broaden each organization and their prospective bases of support.
- Considering the current global situation, our community has remained flat or declining, which is understandable, but must not be acceptable. With the future economic environment looking brighter, efforts should be redoubled to reflect a secure and strong work force for the community's future.
- County appropriation should be increased to reflect the economic returns to the community.
- All revenue options should be explored including: use of the hotel/motel tax for promotional purposes only, a percentage of the city gas fund, and a portion of SPLOST to fund infrastructure as well as capital improvements.
- The City and County should, in cooperation with the Development Authority, adopt a specific incentive program, not just limited to tax abatements for new industries and expansions of existing industry. Such incentive programs must result in a positive, short-term return on investment for local governments and our community or adequate reparations be made.
- In recruiting business and industry the Development Authority and/or the Chamber, should “target” the following to the extent feasible:
 - Smaller, non-land intensive industries
 - Expansion of existing businesses and industries
 - Service businesses
 - Technology/information
 - Aerospace
 - Tourism/Arts/Entertainment
 - Retirement
 - Metal Fabrication
 - Plastic extrusion
 - Furniture
 - Automotive/equipment
 - Non-polluters
 - Non-heavy solid waste generators
 - Supportive/ancillary industries for existing firms

- The Development Authority should, in cooperation with the City and County, develop an economic development strategy. Objectives of this strategy include:
 - To have diversity of businesses, services, manufacturers and industries representing all economic sectors.
 - To work with the Chamber's volunteers in order to strengthen the efforts of the Development Authority in areas such as industry and entrepreneurial development.
 - To attract and retain businesses, services, manufacturers and industries that enhance our quality of life and are commensurate with our labor force.
 - Develop cluster-group incubators
 - Update trend forecasts annually
- Stephens County should adopt Countywide Land Use Controls consistent with those used by the City of Toccoa and the cities of Avalon & Martin.
- The City and County should work together adopting codes as necessary, to remove junk, improve blighted conditions, and to beautify and maintain all major entranceways including: SR17, 17A, 365, 106, 145 and U.S. 123.
- The County should adopt and enforce anti-litter and nuisance ordinances. The City should place a greater emphasis on enforcement of its existing laws and strengthen them where necessary.
- Encourage the City and County to adopt and enforce stricter subdivision regulations requiring paved road, curbs and gutters, storm sewers and sufficient right-of-ways for all present and future utility placement and alternative transportation modes. In all cases, D.O.T. paving standards should be adopted.
- RG LeTourneau Field Runway Extension should be completed, the terminal replaced with a larger facility and promoted as a tri-state regional airport.
- To create an entrepreneurial program that encourages and empowers individuals to start innovative new companies as well as nurture and strengthen those currently in existence so as to stimulate job growth.
- Design and develop a state of the art website that is easily navigated and continuously updated in order to find resources, tool kits, seminars, and workshop training sessions, as well as an email-based informational network.

4.5.13 – Long-term Goals

1. All industrial park roads should have curb and gutter with asphalt paving and driveway cuts for existing sites and space adequate for alternative transportation modes.
2. The following additional industrial sites are needed:
 - One graded railway site and one graded non-rail site, both ready for immediate construction.
 - Two large independent sites, one with rail and one without, outside the industrial parks, but with all utilities
 - A 50,000 Sq. Ft. expandable Spec Building

3. The City, County and the Development Authority should do everything possible to accelerate the widening of the Toccoa By-Pass and the four-laning of Hwy. 17 from Interstate 85.
4. New wastewater facilities should be constructed to broaden treatment sewage capacity throughout the County. Privatization of wastewater activities should be explored.
5. Toccoa, in cooperation with Stephens County, should develop the capacity for small-scale sewage treatment facilities in isolated areas. This would open up sites away from current wastewater treatment facilities.
6. Encourage utilization of NGTC, TFC, and other public/private schools to make use of every available resource to assure a qualified workforce.
7. Reduce high school dropout rate through community involvement and mentoring.
8. Develop a K-12 entrepreneurial study program.

4.6 – Commercial Enhancement Goals and Objectives

The following areas were examined regarding commercial enhancement: Existing economic conditions, existing structures, historic preservation, community design, market analysis and promotion. Proposed goals and their prospective objectives are outlined below:

Goal: To improve the overall appearance of local businesses and reduce the vacancy rate of business locations downtown.

Objectives

- Implement urban design plan for downtown Toccoa
- Emphasize the “entrance ways” welcoming people into the community
- Review city ordinances for building maintenance: encourage and enforce upkeep of existing structures through the use of building inspectors
- Adopt a plan for building façade design/renovation for the downtown area
- Formulate incentive package for business recruitment and retention
- Explore alternative funding resources to remove canopies and open Doyle Street to one-way traffic

Goal: To increase promotional efforts for our community through the Chamber of Commerce, Toccoa Main Street Program, and the Stephens County Development Authority.

Objectives

- Encourage/educate local residents to check locally before they make purchases
- Continue Main Street program in downtown Toccoa
- Coordinate organization for retail/service matters
- Develop strategic plan for attracting new retail/commercial businesses to the community and customers from outside the community
- Websites at the Development Authority and Chamber should be linked, state of the art, user friendly and continuously updated
- Branding for the community is important and a uniform symbol should be adopted for community recognition and promotion

Goal: To increase the identification of the potential regional market for new services and retail stores downtown.

Objectives

- Utilize the upper story space for enhanced retail, office or alternative uses such as housing.
- Achieve maximum utilization of the Schaefer Center by the community
- Focus downtown retail recruitment on clothing, children's apparel, shoe store, evening sit down restaurant, antique and specialty stores, bed and breakfast, sporting goods, audio/video store, hardware, home furnishings, interior decorating, floor coverings, a variety store, a cyber-cafe, and a performing/visual arts space.
- Encourage entrepreneurial efforts and assist in small business development

Goal: To encourage the promotion of tourism and retirement

Objectives

- By moving the Stephens County Historical Society and the Chamber of Commerce into the Depot in downtown Toccoa, once renovations are completed, in order to take advantage of AMTRAK's twice daily stops, expanded visitor's hours, and spurring on revitalization of the downtown area.
- Continued emphasis on, participation in, and expansion of ongoing seasonal events and festivals.
- Continued efforts in marketing and promoting the area through multimedia outlets such as print, radio, television, billboards, and the Chamber website.
- Collaborate with regional groups such as Lake Hartwell Marketing Alliance, Great Lakes of Georgia, and the Northeast Georgia Mountain Travel Association.

Goal: To encourage the development of Lake Hartwell in a manner that combines economic development through tourism and quality land use.

Objectives

- Coordinate economic development plan on a County-wide basis in a manner that recognizes Lake Hartwell.
- Consider a variety of land uses along Lake Hartwell and establish consistent land use controls to guide future development along Lake Hartwell.
- Consider designing a greenspace corridor linking Lake Hartwell with downtown Toccoa.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT

The community facilities element provides local governments the opportunity to inventory a wide range of community facilities and services, to assess their adequacy for serving the present and future population and economic needs, and to articulate community goals and an associated implementation program for providing the desired level of public facilities and services throughout the planning period. The purpose of this element is to assist local governments in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services in order to make most efficient use of existing infrastructure as well as future investments and expenditures for capital improvements and long-term operation and maintenance costs. Each local government must address in this element those facilities that provide service within its jurisdiction.

INVENTORY

WATER SUPPLY AND TREATMENT

There are two water providers in Stephens County. Most of the county water supply is provided by the City of Toccoa. Both Avalon and Martin are provided water by the Martin Water System.

The City of Toccoa Water Department employs 21 persons and jointly shares a director and administrative clerk with the Waste Water Department.

A Water and Waste Water Master Plan was prepared for the City of Toccoa in 1993. A master plan update was undertaken in 1998 and was developed for two phases. The City completed Phase I of its Master Plan in 1999, which consisted of updated water demand projections through the year 2015 and a raw water supply system evaluation. Phase 2 of the plan was completed in 2002. This phase included updating and extending the population and demand projections from Phase 1 through the year 2050; defining required improvements for regulatory compliance and high rating the existing facilities to meet short-term future demand at the City's Toccoa Water Treatment Facility (WTF); and, development of water system (supply and treatment) expansion alternatives to meet projected mid and long-term needs. Additionally, the adequacy of the distribution system to meet projected short and mid-term needs was evaluated. Based on these findings a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) was approved in March 2003 to fund the improvements recommended.

The City's current water supply sources, including Lake Toccoa, Davidson Creek Reservoir, Lake Lawson and Lake Yonah, are estimated to provide a minimum of 8.8 MGD (millions gallons per day) of raw water on an annual average daily basis. A minimum of 10.2 MGD can be supplied by the combined sources during peak demand days, as the City maintains a contract with Georgia to withdraws a maximum daily quantity of 6.0 MGD from Lake Yonah. The average annual and peak daily demands for the City's water system are estimated to reach approximately 17 and 26 MGD, respectively, in the year 2050. Table 5-1

summarizes the projected short, mid and long-term need of the system. To meet the projected long-term water demand of 26 MGD, an additional 15.8 MGD of raw water will need to be supplied by Lake Yonah or other water supply sources.

**TABLE 5-1
SUMMARY OF PROJECTED WATER DEMANDS**

PROJECTED WATER SYSTEM NEEDS	TARGET PLANNING YEAR	ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY DEMAND (MGD)	PEAK DAILY DEMAND (MGD)
Short-term	2007	8	12
Mid-term	2025-2030	12	18
Long-term	2050	17	26

Population and water demand projections in Phase 2 have been reviewed and approved by Georgia Mountains RDC and by Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The City of Toccoa is taking the appropriate measures to reasonably implement Phase 2 of the Water Master Plan Update to provide a sufficient amount of water to residences and industry.

The Town of Martin Water Department serves the Town of Martin, the Town of Avalon and portions of Stephens County. The department employs two full-time persons and one part-time employee. The water supply source for the system comes from six deep wells. A seventh well is currently not on line. The system has a purchase agreement with the City of Toccoa to provide water in times of water emergencies. The system currently serves 600 customers. Peak demand has been approximately 175,000 (GPD) gallons per day and average daily demand is approximately 125,000 GPD. There is one 75,000 gallon water tank that aids in storage and water pressure. The system is in need of another tank for additional storage and pressure. The system has adequate capacity to serve the area for the next ten years. Beyond 2015, the system will need to look for additional sources of raw water.

SEWER AND WASTE WATER

The City of Toccoa provides the only Wastewater Treatment in Stephens County. The department employs eight persons and jointly shares a director and an administrative assistant with the water department. Toccoa provides sewer service within nearly all of the city limits and portions of Stephens County where industry has located. The City, under a consent order from Georgia EPD spent nearly \$10 million to bring the current treatment facilities into environmental compliance. Current data on the status of waste water treatment facilities are listed below.

City Of Toccoa

Current Wastewater Permits, Obligations & Excess

Prepared at Request of the Stephens County Industrial Development Authority

March 8, 2004

(All quantities in Million Gallons Per Day, or MGD)

	A	B	C	D	E
	NPDES Permit	Actual Daily Flow (Feb. '04)	Amount Allocated to Haystone*	Amount Allocated to Schools**	Actual Available Capacity (A-B-C-D)
Eastanollee Creek Wastewater Treatment	1.450	0.962	0.130	0.220	0.138
Toccoa Creek Wastewater Treatment	0.410	0.252	0.000	0.000	0.158
Total:	1.860	1.214	0.130	0.220	0.296

* = Amount allocated via City/County/Industrial Development Authority Agreement for a period of ten (10) years. Currently, .006 MGD is being received.)

** = Amount allocated via City/St. County Schools System in a "not-to-exceed" basis, as a result of the Stephens County High School connecting in Spring, '04.

The table above identifies that there is slightly less than 300,000 gallons of treated waste water capacity available for future use. This is certainly enough capacity to accommodate the projected population growth in the Toccoa service area. However, there is not enough capacity available to attract a lot of future industry. Currently much of the City of Toccoa's funding for sewer expansion is allocated to reducing the debt to pay for recent

Revised
added
County
sewer
line

required improvements. A lack of funding is available to expand treatment capacity and to increase the permitted discharge.

Stephens County owns a sewer collection line that connect the Haystone Brady Industrial Park to the City of Toccoa sewer collection system and waste water treatment plant.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

The amount of solid waste currently being collected and disposed of from Stephens County is estimated to be 6,192 ton for the fiscal year 2002-03. Generated solid waste may be disposed of in the following manner.

- Residents in Stephens County deposit household waste in five convenience centers located throughout the county. Recyclables are also accepted at the convenience centers.
- The City of Toccoa provides residential curbside pickup for household waste, recyclables, yard trimmings, as well as household trash.
- Stephens County operates a landfill that accepts Inert/construction and Demolition waste.
- Solid waste picked up by the City of Toccoa is transported to the city transfer station, Carter's Royal Disposal.
- Stephens county has a roadside litter crew that picks up waste throughout the county.
- A privately operated transfer station and recycling center provides service to county and municipal residents, businesses and industry.
- The county has adopted the Pay as you throw alternative for waste disposal.

The county department employs 15 full-time and two part-time positions. Toccoa employs three positions for solid waste.

Stephens County has a contract with R&B Landfill, a waste management company located in Homer, Georgia. The solid waste is transported from the conveyance site and transfer station to a landfill site located outside of Stephens County.

Stephens County operated a C&D landfill. The most recent capacity report provided to Georgia EPD (July 2003) reported the facility to have a remaining capacity life of 3.29 years. Once at capacity Stephens County plans to close the landfill and allow C&D waste to be disposed through private contractors.

The County also performs post closure monitoring activities on a close municipal solid waste landfill in the county.

Details of all solid waste facilities and services in Stephens County and its municipalities can be found in the Solid Waste Management Plan for Stephens County and the Cities of Avalon, Martin and Toccoa.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Facilities and Services for City of Toccoa

The City of Toccoa Police Department is located on the bottom floor of City Hall on North Alexander Street and occupies approximately 5,000 square feet of the building. The department employs 25 sworn officers, two detectives, five dispatch personnel, three clerical. The department provides all police patrol and investigative services within the City of Toccoa. The police department utilizes 25 city vehicles. The department's dispatch office provides county-wide dispatch services. The dispatch office is scheduled to be turned over to Stephens County in 2005 when the county opens an Enhanced 911 office (E911).

The Stephens County Sheriffs office is located in the new courthouse located on North Alexander Street. The office moved into the new facility in 2003. The Sheriffs Office employs 44 persons. The Sheriff's Office operates a patrol and criminal investigations division and is responsible for operations in a multi-jurisdictional drug task force and provides school resource officers to the local schools.. The office serves all the courts in Stephens County. The office also operates its owns dispatch.

The Patrol Division provides non-stop patrol and security to the residents of the County. Each deputy is provided a late-model Ford Crown Victoria cruiser, fully equipped with the necessary tools to provide the highest standard of law enforcement. All Stephens County deputies are certified law enforcement officers having received their training at the State of Georgia P.O.S.T training center in Forsyth, Georgia. In addition, all are CPR and First Aid trained to be able to respond quickly to any emergency situation.

The Jail Division officers provide security at the jail and are specifically trained in the latest jail procedures. They receive and process arrestees from the Georgia State Patrol, Toccoa Police Department and various of the State and Regional law enforcement agencies. They also transport inmates to and from court appearance and transfer inmates to other facilities when appropriate.

Additional deputy staff includes a drug task force agent, a D.A.R.E. officer who teaches drug awareness and resistance, and School Resource Officers who work strictly in the local schools.

Avalon and Martin rely on the Stephens County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement.

Neither Toccoa or Stephens County follow a vehicle replacement schedule. Vehicles are replaced on an as needs basis.

Stephens County operates a Probation Office that employs two people. The officers work in the State Court systems in Stephens County and work with individuals placed on probation by the courts.

The City of Toccoa operates the animal control department for all of Stephens County. The county provides funding as well as a facility for operations. The office's primary duty is

to respond to resident's call concerning stray or injured animals as to enforce local Animal Control Ordinances. There are two Animal Control Officers in the department. The officers pick up stray animals and offers them for adoption. The office responds to and investigates animal bites and cases of animal cruelty, often appearing in court. A database is also kept of lost and found animals.

Assessment, Level of Service and Future Service Needs

Staffing levels and equipment provision are considered adequate at the present time. However, additional personnel are likely to be needed to keep up with future county and city population and economic growth. Future Homeland Security initiatives at the federal and state level will more than likely have a great impact on staffing and equipment.

Neither local government monitor call response times. This is not as much of an issue within the Toccoa as most locations within the City are within one to three minutes from the police station. In the county response can take up fifteen minutes or more depending on the local of the call.

There are 52 law enforcement personnel employed by Toccoa and Stephens County. Based on the current population there are 2.02 law enforcement employees per 1000 persons in the county. Population projections show that there will need to be nine additional law enforcement personnel by the year 2025 to maintain the same level of service as currently provided.

The level of service provided by animal control is adequate. To maintain this level of service, it is projected that the county will need at least six animal control officers by the year 2025.

Fire Protection Services

Fire protection within the City of Toccoa is provided by the Toccoa Fire Department. The fire department is housed in two stations within the city limits and employs a full-time staff of 27 persons. Because of the stations, full-time staff and the fire hydrant coverage, the city is able to provide excellent fire protection services to its citizens and businesses. Because of these excellent services the city has an ISO Class rating of 4.

Fire protection equipment includes: three 2000 Class A pumper trucks; one 2000 110 ft. ladder truck; one 1998 Class A pumper truck; one 1992 Class A pumper truck; one 1981 75 ft. ladder truck; one 1993 service truck; two station vehicles; and, three administrative/command staff vehicles. Much of the equipment used by the department is older. However, it has been well maintained and serves the city well. There is a need for new fire fighting equipment. Eventually, replacement parts for the maintenance of older vehicles are hard to come by making it more expensive to maintain them.

Fire protection within the remainder of Stephens County is provide the Stephens County Volunteer Fire Department. The department has seven stations located in seven fire districts throughout the county and is staffed by 98 volunteers. The Town of Avalon and Martin make up one of the fire districts. Because of the existence of county wide water and

hydrant placement most of the county has an ISO rating of 6. Some of the more remote parts of the county (ie, areas within or adjacent to the Chattahoochee National Forest) have an ISO rating of 7-9.

Equipment for the stations are presented below.

STATION	EQUIPMENT
Eastanollee	2 Pumpers, 1 Fire Knocker
Carnes Creek	1 Pumper, 1 Fire Knocker
New Hope	1 Pumper, 1 Fire Knocker
Big Smith	1 Pumper, 1 Fire Knocker
Martin	2 Pumpers
Shiloh	1 Pumper, 2 Fire Knockers
Tates Creek	1 Pumper, 1 Fire Knocker

Assessment, Level of Service and Future Service Needs

Over the past ten years fire protection services in the county have improved. The number of fire districts increased by two within the county and one additional fully staffed fire station was added within Toccoa. There are within the county areas and communities that are still isolated and are a longer response time away from adequate fire protection facilities and equipment. There is a need to locate at least three more adequately equipped fire stations within the unincorporated area of Stephens County over the planning horizon. Many of the vehicles within the county department are older, therefore, the county should also develop a vehicle and equipment maintenance and replacement program to ensure there are adequate fire fighting capabilities within the department.

911 Services

Basic 911 services are provided for all of Stephens County out of the City of Toccoa Police Department Dispatch Office. Stephens County is in the process of developing an Enhanced 911 (E 911) system and service. The improvements are being funded by SPLOST funds and will be ready to come on line within 18 months. It is anticipated that in addition to a department director, the service will require a staff of 12 to 15 employees. As the population of Stephens County ages, the number of requests for emergency assistance increases.

Emergency Medical Service

Stephens County contracts with the Stephens County Hospital Authority to staff and provide emergency management services within the community. The county provides the emergency vehicles, insures and maintains them as well. The county also funds indigent health care for emergency services as well. The department has a staff of 20 full and part-time individuals.

Below is a list of vehicles that the county provides for EMS.

1978 C-30 Chevrolet
1996 Ford Crown Vic
1988 -350 Ford Ambulance
1992 E-350 Ford Ambulance
1994 E-350 Ford Ambulance
1996 F-350 Ford Ambulance
1998 E-450 Ford Ambulance
1999 F-350 Ford Ambulance
2004 F-350 Ford Remounts
2004 F-350 Ford Remounts

Emergency Management Agency (Civil Defense)

The emergency management office is responsible for maintaining the County Emergency Operations Plan and for the overall management of any disaster that should befall the County. The county operations plan is scheduled for an update in 2005. This plan will identify county emergency operation needs for the next ten years. The office responds to special types of emergencies such as persons lost or injured on trails. The office works closely with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), the American Red Cross, and other state and federal agencies. The Emergency Management office is capable of assisting the police force during emergencies with the help of trained volunteer auxiliary police, fire and medical personnel. The department is operated by a director, an administrative assistant and 19 volunteer personnel.

HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE

Hospitals and Nursing Facilities

Located in Toccoa, Georgia, **Stephens County Hospital** is a 96 bed, acute care, medical/surgical facility . Our 96 beds include a six bed Intensive Care Unit, nine suite Birthing Center, a nine bed pediatric unit and seventy two medical/surgical beds. SCH also has 10 pediatric beds and 71 med/surg beds in its Level II Nursery. In addition to a comprehensive rehabilitation department, Stephens County Hospital has state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment including Nuclear Medicine, CT Scanner, **Open MRI** and Mobile Lithotripsy. The Emergency Department provides round the clock medical care with twenty four hour physician coverage. Our dedicated Outpatient Services Center includes a separate entrance, waiting areas and a ten bed Outpatient Surgery Recovery area. Additional hospital services include twenty four hour Lab service, Radiology, Mammography with stereotactic capabilities, Ultrasound, Respiratory Therapy, a wide range of outpatient services and a modern birthing center - **New Impressions**. Both inpatient and outpatient Physical, Speech and Occupational Therapy is provided by **Southern Rehab Services** of Stephens County Hospital. **Kids' Korner** pediatric unit opened in 1999. Decorated and designed just for children, we're prepared to give our patients the kid glove treatment.

Believing that providing for the continuing needs of our senior citizen population is part of the SCH mission. Their needs are addressed in our two personal care homes. The **Wilkinson Center** is a forty unit facility and the **Clary Care Center** provides forty two beds. These centers provide private resident accommodations, central community rooms for activities, spacious lobbies for visiting with friends and families, and large dining rooms where meals prepared in a dedicated dietary unit are served. Located on the campus of Stephens County Hospital, just seconds away from up-to-date healthcare, both centers feature fully-trained, twenty four hour professional staff.

As evidence that hospital personnel and physicians have met strict standards of excellence, Stephens County Hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Our Hospital laboratory is accredited by the College of American Pathologists and our mammography services are certified by the American College of Radiology. Stephens County Hospital holds membership in the American Hospital Association, the Georgia Hospital Association and the Georgia Association of Community Hospitals, is licensed by the Georgia Department of Human Resources and is governed by the Hospital Authority of Stephens County.

Doctors

Stephens County Hospital has 58 doctors on staff and contract that serve and practice in the following specialties: anesthesia; cardiology; dermatology; ear, nose and throat, emergency medicine; family practice; general surgery; internal medicine; neurosurgery; obstetrics; gynecology; oncology; ophthalmology; orthopedics; pathology; pediatrics; pulmonology; radiology; and, urology.

Based on the data provided Stephens County Hospital provides excellent health care and physician services to the surrounding community. Stephens County has one doctor for every 670 persons. Based on population projection, to maintain this level of quality service the hospital will need to add seven more doctors to its staff by the year 2025. Another factor that comes into play in the need for additional physicians is that the population will be aging, thus increasing the need for medical and hospital services.

County Health Department

The Stephens County Health Department is located in the Old Stephens County Hospital facility. The County Health Department is under the operation of the State of Georgia District 2, Department of Human Resources. The department receives operating funds from the County in the amount of \$140,000 per year. The health department has many clinics to protect our community from health risks, to promote healthy behaviors and lifestyle and to prevent disease and disabilities. Prevention is the backbone of public health and the scope of service at the health department has a broad range.

Some of the clinics provided are: Women's Health, blood pressure screening, pregnancy testing, dental clinic, well-child clinic, hearing and vision testing, WIC program, X-ray clinic, nursing services, vital records, environmental health (water testing, rabies control, restaurant inspections), lab services and child safety seat programs.

The current facility for the health department is currently providing adequate service, and based on county population projections can continue to provide the same level of service through the planning period.

Mental Health Department

The Mental Health Department recently moved from the old hospital to a facility located by the Fernside Fire Department. The department is under the operation of the State of Georgia District 2, Department of Human Resources, Georgia Mountains Community Services. The department receives some operating funds from the County.

The Stephens County Mental Health Department provides a comprehensive system of diagnostic, in-patient, outpatient, day treatment, residential and employment services and treatment of options for County citizens who have mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse disabilities.

The current level of service provided by the mental health department is considered adequate. Future expansion and funding of mental health services is primarily dependant upon the case load methodology of the Georgia Department of Human Resources and will be addressed by the State as Stephens County continues to grow.

Library Facilities

The Toccoa Stephens County Library is located in downtown Toccoa. The library is part of the Northeast Georgia Regional Library System, which includes Habersham, Rabun, Stephens and White Counties. The library employs four full-time and three-part-time employees.

The local library went through a major renovation and expansion in 1988. The 11,000 square foot facility houses more than 35,000 volumes of books and related media. It has a capacity to host up to 50,000 volumes of material. The facility is projected to provide adequate services for Stephens County through the year 2015.

Though their materials are not available for public circulation, other libraries located within Stephens County include the on-campus library at Toccoa Falls College and at each of the public schools.

RECREATION

Active Recreation

Both the City of Toccoa and Stephens County have public recreation facilities. Recreation facilities are listed on the following tables.

City/County Public Park Sites

	FACILITY DEVELOPED							
	Doyle Street	Whitman St. Comm. Ctr.	Emory Johnson Park	Atewine Park	Henderson Falls Park	SC Fairground	Martin City Park	Boyd Field
Owner	City of Toccoa	City of Toccoa	City of Toccoa	City of Toccoa	City of Toccoa	Stephens Co.	City of Martin	Stephens Co.
Total Acreage	15 acres	13 acres	5 acres	21.1 acres	62.7 acres	17 acres	2.5 acres	5 acres
Maint. Building		1						
Rest Rooms	1	1	1	1	2	1		1
Concess. Bldg.	2	1		1		1		1
Community Bldg.	2	4						
Gym		1						
Picnic Pavillion		1		2	4			
Picnic Tables		4		8	32			
Swim Pool	1							
Walk Trails					1			
Nature Trails					1			
Amphitheater					1			
Multi-purpose Court		1					1	
Play Equipment	1	1		1	1			
Football								1
Tennis					3		1	
Lighted Tennis					2			
Baseball							1	
Lighted Sr. Lge Baseball	1	1						
Lighted Youth Baseball	1							
Minor League Baseball	1							
Lighted Softball				2				
Lighted Women's Softball				1				
Lighted Equestrian Ring						1		
Other		A		B				

A - Parks and Recreation Office

B - Pistol Range

Only Stephens County offers a public recreation program. The department employs nine full-time and 10 part-time individuals as well as seasonal employees. Recreation programs offered through the department are open to all citizens of Stephens County. Program included are: basketball, bowling, football, golf, racquetball, softball, tennis, volleyball and wrestling. Other specialized activities include: cheerleading, dance, swimming, summer camps, arts and crafts.

Soccer and little league baseball are offered to the Stephens County community through the YMCA and Toccoa Little League.

Passive Outdoor Recreation

Currahee Mountain is the last mountain in the Blue Ridge chain of mountains. Currahee is a Cherokee Indian name that translates to "Stands alone." From almost any road leading into Stephens County, the mountain can be seen as it "stands alone" above the horizon. Currahee rises in a conical form to a height of 900 feet and has a total elevation of 1740 feet. In the east, it sinks to the level of the valley, but on the western side it blends with a ridge that unites it with the Allegheny chain of mountains. The mountain is located within the Chattahoochee National Forest and Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area where wild game roam through the forest protected by the State and Federal Game Commissions. There are numerous mines dug by Indians and early settlers where rubies, garnets, silver, and some gold were found. Many of the caves were used as a refuge by Cherokee Indians who didn't want to follow the Trail of Tears and later by people who didn't want to be recruited to fight during the Civil War. The two most famous caves are "The Ron's Den" on the west side and "The Silver Mine" on the east side of Currahee.

There is a trail up the front of the mountain that is not designated in the U.S. Forest Trail System, which means it is not maintained by the U.S. Forest Service and is not marked. Eagle Scouts have adopted this trail as a project and have cleared the path. The moderate hike starts gently across a power line clearing and makes a steep ascent up the mountain. The forest types are shortleaf pines and mixed hardwoods, such as oak, hickory and sweet gum. As you reach midway, the number of large rock formations increases and trees wrap their roots picturesquely around them. Close to the top is a giant rock overhang that provides a panoramic view of rolling hills and the beginning of the mountain range. Adventurous souls rappel and hang glide from this perch. Birds fly by at eye level. If you carry a daypack, this is a great place to spread out a blanket, have a picnic and relax. Following the trail further up takes you to the fence surrounding the communications towers next to the maintenance building. On the very peak of the mountain is where the old ranger tower used to be. If you follow the dirt/gravel road a few yards down the other side of the mountain, there is a graffiti covered rock that also provides a nice view, but it doesn't compare with the one at the rock overhang.

If you'd rather not hike that far and your car (and driver) can handle rough terrain, drive to the top and hike down to the jutting rock overlook. The dirt/gravel Currahee Mountain Road is passable, but travel is slow and dicey near the top. You need to be especially careful choosing your path if your car has a low chassis.

Broad River Trail – This trail is located in the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area and is maintained by the U.S. Forest Service because it is in the National Forest System of Trails. Don't hike any trail or road that will take you on Wildlife Management Areas or privately owned land during deer hunting season. Broad River Trail is a camping, hiking, and fishing paradise with an abundance of wildlife. This is a relatively easy hike and is excellent for novice hikers and family groups. The trail follows streams, waterfalls, lush mountain foliage and runs 3.8 miles from Farmers Bottom to where Dicks Creek intersects with Forest Service Road #87.

Panther Creek Trail – This trail is in Habersham and Stephens Counties and is under the jurisdiction of the Chattooga Ranger District in Habersham County. It is part of the National Forest System of Trails and is maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. It is a six-mile hike, one way, and is for the sure-footed and those unafraid of heights. For the experienced hiker, the scenery is well worth the effort: cliffs, huge boulders and waterfalls make this stream one of the most scenic areas in Georgia. The starting point in Stephens County is near Yonah Dam. Cross the metal footbridge and take the trail up the hill to the right. To the left is a large grove of walnut trees, growing in rows. The symmetry is an odd juxtaposition to the natural setting.

This trail is considered easy to moderate and is 6.0 miles, one way. Most of the typical mountain streamside plants abound along Panther Creek. Rhododendron, mountain laurel, large white pine, hemlock and beech grow beside the stream. The first 2.0 miles is difficult because it is less defined and more dangerous than the rest of the trail. You'll come upon a large, enticing pool at the base of a series of waterfalls that has a splashing slide in the middle. Not knowing what to expect, most people are astounded by the beauty, size and power of the waterfall, especially during the high water levels of winter and spring. The steep path goes up the side of the falls to the next protruding vantage point, then goes upward to the outer edge of an immense outcropping and winds along the upper falls. Path-narrowing outcrops past the falls lead to the high shoals near the logged area. For approximately one mile, the path rises and dips, conforming to the creekside topography. The stream becomes calm and the trail is sidewalk flat for a while, then you have to negotiate guy wires, rocks and fallen trees as you walk under the Highway 441 Bridge. Across the road is the Panther Creek Recreation Area, which has restrooms and picnic areas – perfect for a break before you start back to your vehicle.

Yonah Dam, completed in 1925, is the lowest step in the staircase of six power developments down which the waters of the Tallulah, Chattooga, and Tugalo rivers are led in their plunge from the Blue Ridge Mountain heights toward the Atlantic Coastal plain. Yonah's storage lake (approximately 320 acres of surface area and 150,000,000 cubic feet capacity) is impounded by a cyclopean dam 900 feet long and 75 feet high with a direct plunge from surface to waterwheel of 75 feet. It has three 12,500 horsepower waterwheels. Power is developed at a voltage of 6,600 and is stepped up to 110,000 volts for transmission to the 81 cities and towns in the company's territory.

Yonah Dam Road is a great place to ride a bicycle. The road is relatively flat and it's an easy ride next to the Tugalo River. The temperature drops 10 degrees because of the proximity to the flowing river that is fed by Lake Yonah, which in turn is fed by colder mountain lakes and streams. Riding from the picnic area near the dam to Prather Bridge Road,

you pass several historic houses. Up the hill on the right is **Trembly Bald Resort and Mountain**, providing a 30+ mile panoramic view overlooking the Tugalo River Valley. Trembly Bald contains 1, 2, 4 and 8 bedroom original log cabins, including an original Stagecoach Inn and a new 5000 square foot Lodge. The cabins were moved and restored by local craftsmen using cedar and chestnut interior designs to create their special beauty and authenticity. **The Johns House** is a charming Victorian cottage on the right before you get to Prather Bridge Road. Built in 1898, it shows the influence of the era. The trim on the front gable and porch is outstanding. The front door has a fanlight with sidelights. Slender posts with banisters and trim support the porch roof. The present structure was built around a log cabin. Further down on the right, on a hill overlooking the valley of the upper Tugalo River is **Riverside**. This beautiful twelve columned, Greek revival antebellum home was built in 1850 by James D. Prather with the labor of his slaves and the timber from his plantation. As was usual in those days, the kitchen was separate from the house. The smoke house still stands and is now used as a garage. Ice caves still exist. The Prather family cemetery is at the right of the house, about fifteen yards from the porch. During the Civil War, General Robert Tombs, a close friend of Mr. Prather, used the house as a refuge from northern troops. The soldiers pursued him to Riverside, where he was able to hide in a double closet and escape capture. At Riverside, turn to the left, ride down the hill to the concrete bridge and to the right you can see the remains of **Prather's Bridge**. The first Prather's Bridge was a swinging bridge built in 1804 by James Jeremiah Prather. Until then, travelers crossed the Tugalo River at fords and later by ferries. The first bridge was washed away during a freshet (an overflow caused by heavy rain). A more substantial bridge was built in 1850, but was burned in 1863 during the Civil War to keep the enemy from crossing. James Jeremiah and his son, James Devereaux rebuilt the bridge in 1868. This bridge was also washed away in 1918 and was rebuilt in 1920 by James D. Prather. It was replaced by a concrete bridge, but was kept as a landmark until burned by vandals in 1978. The pillars still stand, made from rock quarried by Mr. Prather from a nearby hillside.

Conference Centers

Camp Toccoa is on Hwy 17 Alt., north of Toccoa. Located on 176 beautifully wooded acres and features: hiking trails, streams and waterfalls; fishing and canoeing; horseback riding, volleyball court and playground, ropes courses, swimming pool, and nature center. Owned and operated by Camp Fire Boys and Girls, Inc

The **Georgia Baptist Conference Center – Toccoa** is on Lake Louise Road. Situated on more than 900 acres, it has a 200 acre lake with fishing docks; a sandy beach with lake swimming; Jon boats; rental canoes; nature trails; tennis and basketball courts; ping pong tables; an open field for soccer, football and softball; and an inviting bonfire amphitheater.

Mikell Camp and Conference Center boasts beautiful creeks and trails, a boardwalk in a wetland, ropes courses, a rappelling wall, swimming pool, volleyball court and nature center – all located on 478 acres off Hwy 184 (Prather Bridge Road). Owned and operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta.

Camping

Some of the more popular primitive camping areas open to the public are in the **Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area** and in the **Chattahoochee National Forest**.

Toccoa RV Park and Campground (706-886-2654) offers full hook-ups, laundry room, bathrooms, phone hook-ups, and sewer dump stations. There is also a pavilion and nature walk.

Georgia Baptist Conference Center has a 19-site campground complete with water and electrical hookups, a bathhouse and laundry room.

Hunting

Almost one sixth of Stephens County is part of the **Chattahoochee National Forest** and **the National Wildlife Reserve**. This is a woodsman's paradise. Wildlife includes: deer, turkey, feral hogs, fox, bobcat, raccoon, opossum, and doves. Hunting is permitted in season.

Bird Watching

The Toccoa Bird Club has documented well over 100 species of birds that migrate to or through Stephens County, including: Great Blue Heron, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, Blue-Headed Vireo, Red-Breasted Merganser, Purple Finch.

Fishing, Boating, Skiing, Swimming

Toccoa is fortunate to have two lakes along her borders, **Yonah Lake** and **Lake Hartwell**. Both were built primarily for electric power and both use the waters of the Tugaloo River, which divides Georgia from South Carolina. **Lake Louise** is owned by the Georgia Baptist Conference Center-Toccoa and is also available for public use. There are five watersheds in Stephens County that are excellent for trout fishing: the **Middle Fork Broad River**, upstream from NRCS flood control structure No. 44 (seasonal); **Little Toccoa Creek**, **North Fork Broad River**, upstream from NRCS flood control structure No. 1 (year round); **Panther Creek** (year round); and **Toccoa Creek**, upstream from Toccoa Falls (year round). Fisherpeople reel in black crappie, largemouth bass, striped bass, hybrid bass and channel catfish from local lakes.

In Stephens County, there are four public recreation areas that have accessible ramps for entering boats into Lake Hartwell: **Stephens County Recreation Area**, **Spring Branch**, **Jenkins Ferry**, **Bruce Creek**, and **Holcomb Access**. There are also boat ramps at **Walker Creek** on the Tugaloo River and at **Yonah Lake**.

Horseback Riding

If you have your own horse, you may call the U. S. Forest Service office for information on the many miles of horseback riding trails in Stephens County. **Camp Toccoa** also has horseback riding available.

Golf

The Pines is a nine-hole course publicly operated by the City of Toccoa and is approximately 3 miles north of Toccoa on Alt. 17. . A private championship golf course facility is located at the Currahee Bridge Club.

Tennis

Henderson Falls Park, operated by the city, has five tennis courts. In addition, this 26-acre park has a beautiful 12-foot waterfall, a nature trail, four picnic shelters, a playground and an amphitheater.

Georgia Baptist Conference Center has 2 tennis courts. Call 706-886-3133 for information.

Bicycling

The northern part of the county has more varied terrain than the southern portion, due to the proximity to the mountain ranges. The U.S. Forest Service maintains several dirt/gravel roads in Stephens County that serve as access for recreation use. Bicycle riding on these roads varies from strenuous to easy. The U.S. Forest Service Road #62 up **Currahee Mountain** is a challenging one-way ride. **Black Mountain Road** is both scenic and strenuous after the pavement runs out and you're biking on dirt. There are several paved loops through the countryside on secondary roads. You could incorporate a bike ride into a tour of the **Martin Historic District**. These 26 structures were placed on the National Register of Historic Sites on July 7, 1995. The town of Martin is 12 miles south of Toccoa on Highway 17.

All Terrain Vehicle Trails

Off road vehicles, including two, three and four-wheel vehicles, can enjoy 17 miles of trails in the **Locust Stake ATV Area** near the north fork of the Broad River west of Toccoa. Designated trails in this area range from easy to highly difficult. Users are encouraged to stay on the signed trails to prevent damage to the area. Locust Stake Road is a county road and all state and local motor vehicle laws apply.

Easy Scenic Walks

Toccoa Falls is located on the campus of **Toccoa Falls College**. A meandering stream flows through the lower part of the 1,100 acre wooded campus from the base of the 186-foot high waterfall. This majestic waterfall is 29 feet higher than Niagra. Seasonal flowers and conversation benches line the brief path to the falls. "Toccoah" in the Cherokee Indian language means "beautiful".

There are five walks around downtown Toccoa, varying from 1 mile to 4.5 miles. The paths are marked with hearts.

Assessment of Recreation Facilities and Services

Based on national standards Stephens County has a surplus of park land and is well served by active recreation facilities.

The recreation department may want to expand its services to provide a greater variety of recreational programs and activities. However, to find out specifically what additional programs are needed a recreation survey and services study would need to be performed to determine specific county needs.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Stephens County is served by three elected officials to a county commission and serve four-year terms. The county commission office is located in the County Courthouse Annex. The Courthouse Annex houses Administration Department of Stephens County. The department employs 11 full-time persons, including the County Manager. The Annex also host the County Extension Agent Office, the County Marshall's Office, and the Soil Conservation Office. The Annex facility is lacking in space for any additional services and is in need of renovation.

Adjacent to the Annex is the Historic Stephens County Courthouse which houses court activities. Due to the lack of space at the Historic Courthouse, a second court facility, the Burrell Building, was constructed in 2000. This building also houses the sheriff's office and the county tax and information systems services.

The County administrative facilities in the Courthouse Annex are in dire need of improvement and renovation.

Other County Services

The Stephens County Surveyor is an elected position. Duties are primarily to serve the Magistrate Court in resolving boundary line disputes between property owners.

Stephens County now has a County Marshal's Office. This office, serves civil and criminal papers for the Magistrate Judges' office and maintains those records. The office issues land disturbing permits, enforces floodplain and soil and erosion regulations, trout stream buffers, and construction waste. The office also enforces local and state laws pertaining to illegal dumping, scrap tire management, littering and water quality issues.

The Tax Appraiser's Office has four real property appraisers, one personal property appraiser and one clerk. This office collects and maintains all data related to property owned in the County. They keep records of each individual parcel of property, which includes the evaluation of the land and buildings on each parcel. This information is used to determine property tax bills, which are prepared by the Tax Commissioner.

Ad valorem tax, more commonly known as property tax, is the largest source of revenue for local government. This Tax Commissioner Office prepares and collects all ad valorem tax revenue. Ad valorem tax is figured on the fair market value of a property, which is established by the Tax Assessor the first of each year. The tax is levied on the assessed value of the property which, by law, is established at 40% of fair market value. The amount of tax is determined by the tax rate (mill rate) which is levied by various entities (county, school, and state). (One mill is equal to \$1.00 for each \$1,000 of assessed value, or .001) The millage rate is set each year by the County Commissioner and the School Board. The office also collects revenue from hotel/motel taxes and tags and titles.

The Board of Elections was created in 2001 by the Georgia State Legislature. The legislation requires that two appointments be made from each of the two major political parties as determined by votes received in the most recent presidential election. The County Commissioner also has one appointment. Board members serve staggered terms. The Board is responsible for preparing all election materials, including the certification of qualified individuals, ballot preparation and the actual conducting of elections and certification of results.

The Clerk of Courts is responsible for all the civil and criminal filings made in the Stephens County Superior Court. It also serves as the official recorder of real estate documents for the County maintaining records of deeds, plats, etc. The Clerk also provides the jury pool for Grand Jury and civil and criminal trials.

The Superior Court holds criminal and civil court in the Habersham County Courthouse. Stephens County is part of the Mountain Judicial Circuit which also includes Habersham, Rabun and Stephens Counties.

The Magistrate Judge is an elected official in Stephens County. The Magistrate Court office process various criminal and civil matters and small claims up to \$15,000. The criminal section issues warrants, hold bonds, committal, dispossessory and first appearance hearings for certain offenses. The civil section issues notices of foreclosure, garnishments and Fi-FA's. The Magistrate Judge also performs marriages.

The Judge of the Probate Court is an elected official. The office is the custodian of vital records that allows the issuance of certified copies of birth and death certificates. The office maintains marriage records and copies of the legal organ. The Probate Court is responsible for the probate and administration of estates along with guardianships of minors and incapacitated adults. The court also handles misdemeanor traffic violations for the county. The Probate Judge also performs marriages.

The Juvenile Court handles all cases involving delinquent, unruly, and deprived children, as well as cases involving custody, child abuse, abortion notification, and termination of parental rights, and provides probation supervision of children on probation. Juvenile court also handles all traffic cases involving children under the age of 17, regardless of the jurisdiction of the incident. Juvenile Court is jointly funded with Habersham County.

An elected official, the District Attorney investigates criminal charges in the Mountain Judicial Circuit. The District Attorney represents the citizens of Stephens County in the prosecution of all criminal cases in a manner which best protects the public and best preserves justice for each citizen. The prosecution of any criminal case includes the presentation of a criminal case to the Grand Jury, and the litigation of a criminal case from the arrest of an accused throughout the appellate process conducted in each case.

The Public Defenders Office is jointly funded by Habersham, Rabun and Stephens Counties. This office provides legal defense services for those who cannot afford such services on their own.

The Stephens County Coroner is an elected official in Stephens County. The office responds to and investigates deaths at the request of local law enforcement officials. The office issues death certificates and maintains all county records as required by state law.

The Stephens County Senior Center was constructed with county funds and funding assistance through a Community Development Block Grant. The center was designed to accommodate the Stephens County population to the year 2015. The Senior Center serves hot meals, provides transportation to the center, medical offices and facilities and drug stores. The senior center coordinates the Meals on Wheels program and provides activities and programs for senior citizens. Recently two walking trails have been constructed adjacent to the Senior Center. The center employs 3 full-time positions and 2 part-time positions.

The Toccoa/Stephens County Airport Authority is a five member authority which oversees operation of the R.G. LeTourneau Field located at the northeast corner of Toccoa. The airport serves general aviation in the area with no commercial flights. Membership on the Authority consists of the Chairman of the County Commission, the Mayor of Toccoa, two at large appointees by the County and one at large appointee by the City of Toccoa. Basic funding of the Authority comes from a \$10,000/yr appropriation from the County and \$6,000/yr from the City for operating capital. Inter-governmental coordination occurs between the Airport Authority, Stephens County, Toccoa and agencies such as the Georgia DOT and the Federal Aviation Administration.

The Stephens County Development Authority was created in accordance with Georgia state law, the Development Authority of Stephens County works to attract new industry and expand existing industry in the county. Its members meet to report on projects, plan strategy, consider inducement resolutions for new industries, and to acquire and develop industrial buildings, industrial sites and industrial parks. A local county or city government is permitted to support its Development Authority by dedicating the proceeds of an ad valorem tax to the Authority (up to 1 mill for counties and up to 3 mills for cities). Other support can include proceeds from a local hotel-motel tax and/or providing the Development Authority with property to be used for a proper public purpose. Some of this support may be "passed-through" indirectly to a project.

The Stephens County Public Works Department (Road Department) is responsible for maintaining all the county roads, bridges and drainage facilities associated with roads. The department has 20 full time employees that work out of a county maintenance and facility on Scenic Drive. The department has nearly \$1.5 million in equipment used for grading, scraping, compacting and maintaining roads, pulling ditches and mowing right-of-way. The county is in the process of developing a plan to eliminate dirt and gravel roads in the county.

Municipal Facilities and Services

The City of Toccoa government offices are housed in the Toccoa City Hall located on North Alexander Street. The nearly 25,000 square foot facility houses 32 employees that work in city administration, finance, billing and collection, planning, DDA, personnel, IT services, and utility administration. (The police department is located on the bottom floor of City Hall and is accounted for separately.) Many of the city services are administered in the

building, including utility payment, planning and zoning, issuing of permits and business licensing, building inspection, and tax collection.

The City has a Public Works Department that employs three persons. The department works under the Planning Department and is responsible for the maintenance of streets, stormwater facilities, and side walks.

The Town of Avalon owns a Town Hall facility that is used for council meetings and other meetings concerning town issues.

The Town of Martin owns and maintains the Martin Community Center. The 3,000 square foot facility functions as meeting location for Town Council and for community events.

EDUCATION FACILITIES

The Stephens County Board of Education operates seven school facilities in Stephens County. This includes four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and an alternative school. The school system provides public education to children in grades Pre-K through 12. In 2002 there were 4,401 student in the school system. The system is directed by a seven member Board of Education and a Superintendent of Education. In 2002, the system had a professional staff of 352 persons. The percent of teachers with masters degrees or higher was 70.2% and the student teacher ratio was 15:1. The system provides a support staff (full and part-time) of 258 persons.

Detail of the school system educational facilities are presented below.

FACILITY	GRADES	BUILT/RECENT IMPROVEMENTS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Big A Elementary	PK-5	1994	461
Eastanollee Elementary	PK-5	1994/2003	564
Liberty Elementary	PK-6	1986	562
Toccoa Elementary	PK-5	1996	506
Stephens Middle	6-8	1957	1,080
Stephens High	9-12	1970/1979	1,224
Cross Roads School	6-12	1920/1980	Varies

All of the Stephens County Schools are SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accredited. In 1988 Stephens County High School earned National School of Excellence recognition. In 2002, over 59% of those graduating from Stephens County High School do so with College Prep Diplomas. Also, nearly 52% of graduates are eligible for the Georgia Hope Scholarship. Stephens County Middle Schools received the 2001 Georgia Oglethorpe Award for Education, which is Georgia's highest level of recognition for organizational performance excellence.

The Stephens County Board of Education is busy over seeing facility improvement to just about every school. Currently each elementary school in the county has additions for new class rooms under construction. All are scheduled to be completed by fall of 2004. Construction for a new middle school began last year and is scheduled to open in the fall of 2004. Stephens County High School, which has not seen any major improvements or additions since the late 1970s, is scheduled for major additions to occur in phases, the first of which is classrooms to be added by 2007. Latter phases include a new gymnasium, cafeteria and more classrooms.

Toccoa is home to Toccoa Falls College, an accredited non-denominational four-year liberal arts Bible College that now offers masters degree programs in several fields. Present enrollment is over 1,200 and the school's alumni serve as missionaries all over the world. Beautiful Toccoa Falls, a breathtaking 186 foot high waterfall, is located on the campus of the college.

Truett-McConnell College and North Georgia Technical Institute provide additional educational advantages for residents. Both have full-time extension centers in the community for associate degree programs. North Georgia Tech has a full-time (day and evening) extension center and a Quick Start facility in the same location with Truett-McConnell. Quick Start is the State of Georgia's partnership program with private industry. The purpose of the program is to jointly develop educational processes to help workers improve skills or acquire new ones as required by changing technology.

A new satellite campus for North Georgia Tech is currently under construction and is scheduled to open in 2005.

There are a variety of higher education opportunities available to residents of Stephens County. Emmanuel College is located in Franklin Springs, neighboring Franklin County. Gainesville College is a two year college located approximately 40 miles from Stephens County. The University of Georgia is approximately 60 miles away located in Athens, Georgia. Clemson University is located less than 30 miles away in Clemson, South Carolina.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ASSESSMENT

- There is an ample water supply for approximately the next ten years, increased permit withdrawals and treatment capacity will be needed beyond. The City of Toccoa is following its long-term master plan providing adequate water to its customers. Based on population projections, the Martin water system can provide water adequately for the next ten years. The system is in need of another water tank for storage and system pressure.
- There is very little sewer capacity available for growth. Available capacity is limited due to commitments to the Stephens County Schools and the Haystone Industrial Park. A need for a long term waste water master exists to address the problems with waste water treatment capacity and facilities to accommodate future growth. A commitment may need to come from the Stephens County to assist Toccoa in the expansion of wastewater into areas of the county.
- The cumulative placement and use of septic systems in higher density areas in the county may cause long-term water quality problems, especially in the Lake Hartwell area and where extremely steep slopes exist.
- For its size, Stephens County has an excellent hospital facility in Stephens County Hospital. However, the hospital will need additional seven additional physicians and associated staff to accommodate anticipated population growth.
- With the anticipated increase in the elderly population in over the next twenty years, the need for facilities for assisted living and nursing homes will more than likely double.
- Stephens County has adequately expanded its public safety facilities and services. Anticipated Federal and State Homeland Security initiatives more than likely will have an impact on Public Safety personnel, facilities and equipment. Both Stephens County and the City of Toccoa need to have a vehicle and equipment replacement program. At least nine law enforcement officers will need to be added to provide at least the same level of service that is provided today.
- Excellent fire services are provided within the City of Toccoa. Stephens County has an adequate number of fire stations located throughout the county, however, based on projection will need three more in the future. Many have vehicles that are very old and require much repair and need to be replaced. Some full-time personnel will be needed as well at the end of the horizon of this plan for Stephens County.
- As the mean age of the population increases, so does the number of requests for emergency response.
- Both the Toccoa City Hall and the Stephens County Courthouse Annex are at or near capacity for administrative space and require either expanded or new facilities.

- According to the Stephens County Board of Education, Stephens County Schools are experiencing steady growth in their student population. The growth will be accommodated per the Five-Year Facility Plan as required by the State Board of Education. Post secondary education opportunities are available within Stephens County for technical degrees or for higher education.
- Stephens County offers excellent recreation opportunities and facilities meeting most current public needs. Additional programs will be needed in the future for active/organized recreation. A recreation services study is needed. Passive recreation is excellent for citizens and visitors due to the abundance of the mountains, the lake and streams.
- Office space will be needed to host the new E-911 office in Stephens County. Space will be needed for 10 additional employees and for E-911 equipment. A new facility or location will more than likely be needed as there is not enough space available in the current county buildings.

CHAPTER SIX NATURAL RESOURCES

The purpose of the Natural Resources element of the Stephens County –Avalon – Martin – Toccoa Comprehensive Plan is to:

- Inventory the natural and environmentally sensitive resources of the County and of the local governments in Stephens County;
- Assess needs, concerns, and opportunities associated with the inventoried resources; and
- Communicate goals based on the assessment. (Policies and objectives for appropriate use, conservation and protection of the resources, which are consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, will be shown in the Implementation and Short-term Work Program chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.)

Certain specific items must be addressed in this element, as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (Georgia DCA) document “Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning” (Minimum Standards), effective in January 2004. Methods for evaluating and planning for these specific items, or natural resources, are available from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Georgia DNR) document “Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria,” first adopted in 1989 pursuant to O.C.G.A. §12-2-8. In the near future, the “Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria” may change; however, for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Plan for Stephens County –Avalon – Martin – Toccoa, the current (2004) rules apply. These items, or natural resources, are addressed in subsequent Inventory, Assessment, and Implementation sections.

I. INVENTORY

Public Water Supply Sources.

Public water supply sources in Stephens County –Avalon – Martin – Toccoa include groundwater from crystalline-rock aquifers, surface water from major creeks and rivers, and reservoirs inside Stephens County, and surface water from other sources outside Stephens County.

Groundwater

Private groundwater wells are found throughout the county. As of 2003, there were five private and one public ground drinking water supply systems permitted under the authority of Georgia's Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division (Georgia DNR) in the Water Resources Branch. The City of Martin is the only one governmental groundwater supplier in Stephens County. Currently, the City of Martin obtains water from five groundwater wells. According to the Georgia Wellhead Protection Plan for the City of Martin (1995), there were seven wells in existence with six of the seven described as active. Presently however, the City of Martin is withdrawing groundwater from only five active wells. During emergencies, the City of Martin

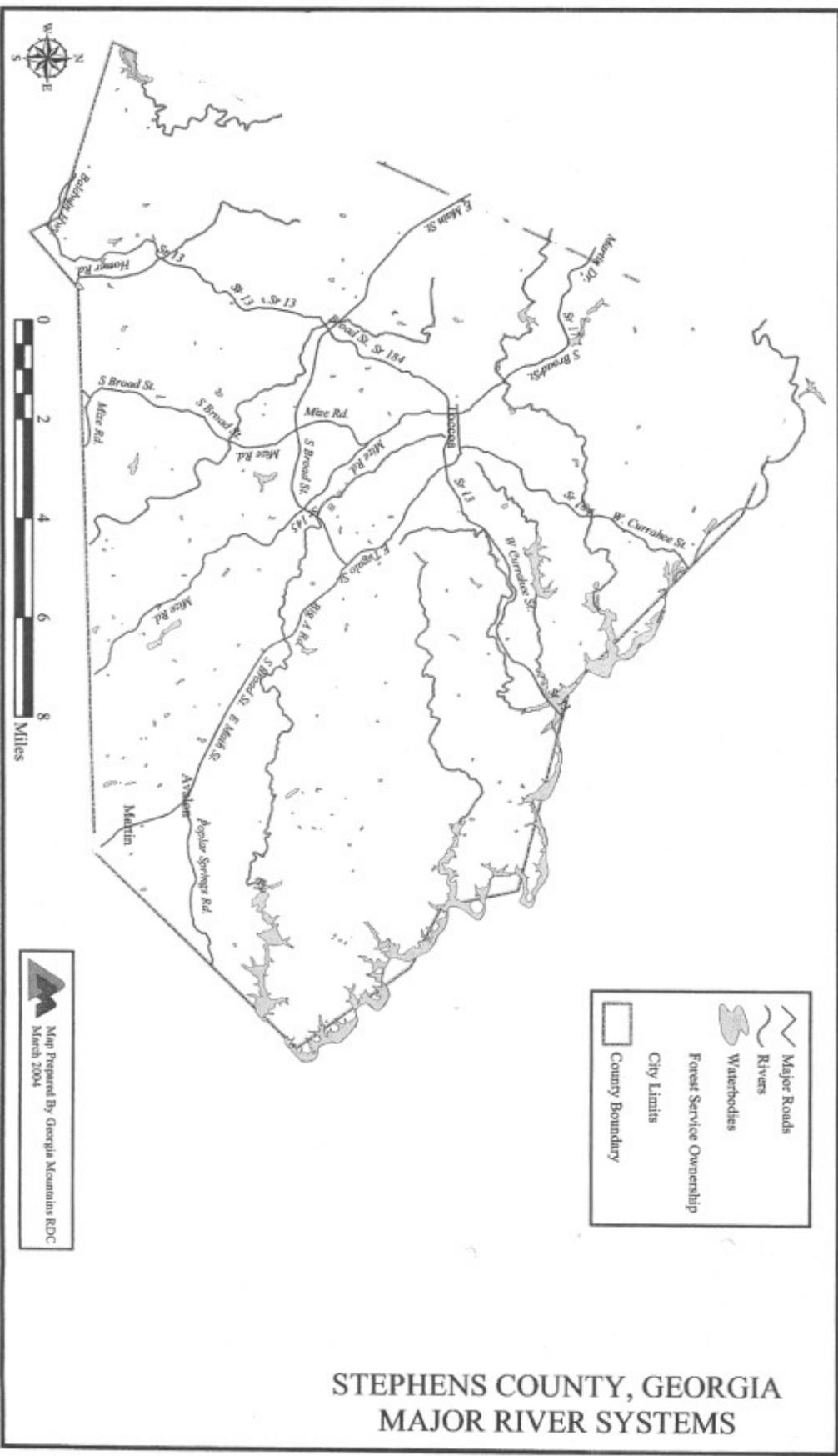
augments their drinking water supply with a tie-on to the City of Toccoa's water system, which is surface water-supplied. All public and private groundwater wells in Stephens County are supplied with water from relatively shallow and mostly connected crystalline-rock aquifers located in the Blue Ridge or Piedmont physiographic provinces of the southeastern United States. Private groundwater wells in Stephens County were not inventoried because the Minimum Standards only require inventorying of *public* water supply sources. During the recent drought from 1997 to 2002, a few private groundwater wells in the county failed to produce water. Late in 2002, rainfall was generous and water levels began to rise. However, of the five major indicators of drought, groundwater levels are always the last to recuperate, behind rainfall, soil moisture, stream flows, and lake levels.

Surface Water

According to information obtained by the "City of Toccoa Source Water Assessment Project" report prepared by The Watershed Group of the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department of the University of Georgia, the City of Toccoa provides drinking water obtained from three different surface water sources to approximately 25,000 citizens. Although the City of Toccoa owns all three surface water intakes and distributes treated water throughout Stephens County, much of the water does not come from Stephens County. Presently, the City of Toccoa first relies on their Lake Toccoa intake (immediately downstream of the Cedar Creek watershed), then relies on their Davidson Creek intake located in Habersham County to supplement Lake Toccoa, and then relies on their Lake Yonah intake to supplement their resources during low level or emergency conditions. As stated in the Source Water Assessment Plan:

The intake on Lake Toccoa was found to have high overall susceptibility, with 100% high priority. The intake on Yonah Lake was found to have a high susceptibility with 53% of the sources high priority and 47% medium priority. Davidson Lake also had a high overall susceptibility with 79% high priority and 21% medium priority. Potential sources within close proximity to surface water, medium toxicity of potential releases, and a relatively flat topography contributed to this medium susceptibility ranking. (The Watershed Group)

According to data captured from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5 minute mylar separates containing the "blue-layer" from the USGS 1:24,000-scale quadrangle maps, there are approximately 485 linear miles (780.8 kilometers) of surface water (rivers, creeks, wetlands, and lakes) inside the county boundaries. As illustrated in the following map, the major river systems, or major creeks with more than three reaches in the county, include Big Leatherwood Creek, Eastanollee Creek, Middle Fork of the Broad River, North Fork of the Broad River, Panther Creek, Rock Creek, Toccoa Creek, Tugaloo River, Walton Creek, and Wards Creek. Since some of these river systems are currently impaired by the State of Georgia's definition regarding water quality, further discussion on surface water quality for planning purposes is warranted.



-  Major Roads
-  Rivers
-  Watersheds
-  Forest Service Ownership
-  City Limits
-  County Boundary

 Map Prepared By Georgia Mountains RDC
March 2004

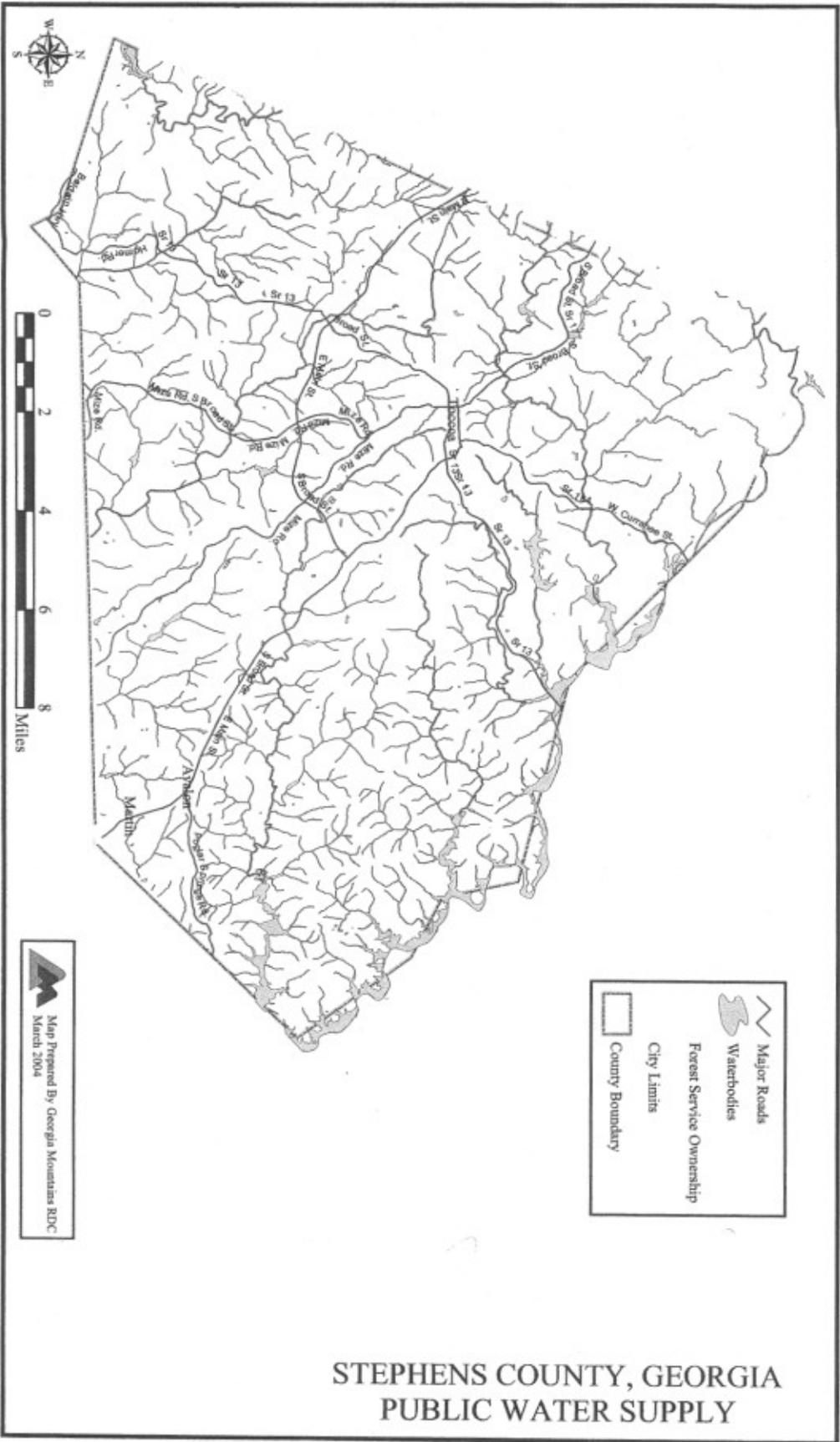
STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA MAJOR RIVER SYSTEMS

Surface Water Quality

When Georgia DNR reports to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and U.S. Congress on the health of Georgia's waters, Georgia DNR identifies impaired surface water bodies through a 305(b)/303(d) listing assessment. The waterbodies on the 303(d) list become what are known as "impaired water bodies" and require special attention. As of 2003, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or a calculation of the quantity of pollutants that impaired waterbodies can accept and still meet Georgia's water quality standards, is determined based on recent land use data, the latest water quality data, and current water quantity data gathered from GA EPD, USGS, and other reliable sources. As of January 2004, some of Stephens County's surface waterbodies are on the impaired waterbodies list and have a TMDL, and they include the following: Eastanollee Creek (for FC, Cu, and FCG), Panther Creek (for FC), Toccoa Creek (for FC), and Tugaloo River arm of Lake Hartwell (See Map). Usually after a TMDL has been calculated for an impaired water body, a TMDL Implementation Plan is developed in order to help decrease the amount of pollution discharged into the impaired water body. All of the aforementioned waterbodies have a TMDL and a TMDL Implementation Plan associated with them to address ways to manage and improve water quality for that specific water body. Two recent issues have complicated the TMDL process, and Stephens County will be affected. First, TMDL Implementation Plans are no longer *required* under current EPA rules, but Georgia DNR still works hard to prepare TMDL Implementation Plans for impaired water bodies. None of the TMDL Implementation Plans already developed for impaired water bodies in Stephens County were prepared by Stephens County or the GMRDC.

General Stormwater Permit

As of 2004, all local issuing authorities certified to issue land disturbing activity permits or NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permits for construction activities larger than one acre, will be required to update their official erosion and sedimentation control ordinance by July 2004. Currently Stephens County issues these permits and performs site inspections, so their ordinance should be updated and submitted to Georgia DNR by July 2004.



	Major Roads
	Waterbodies
	Forest Service Ownership
	City Limits
	County Boundary

 Map Prepared By Georgia Mountains RDC
March 2004

STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

Water Supply Watersheds.

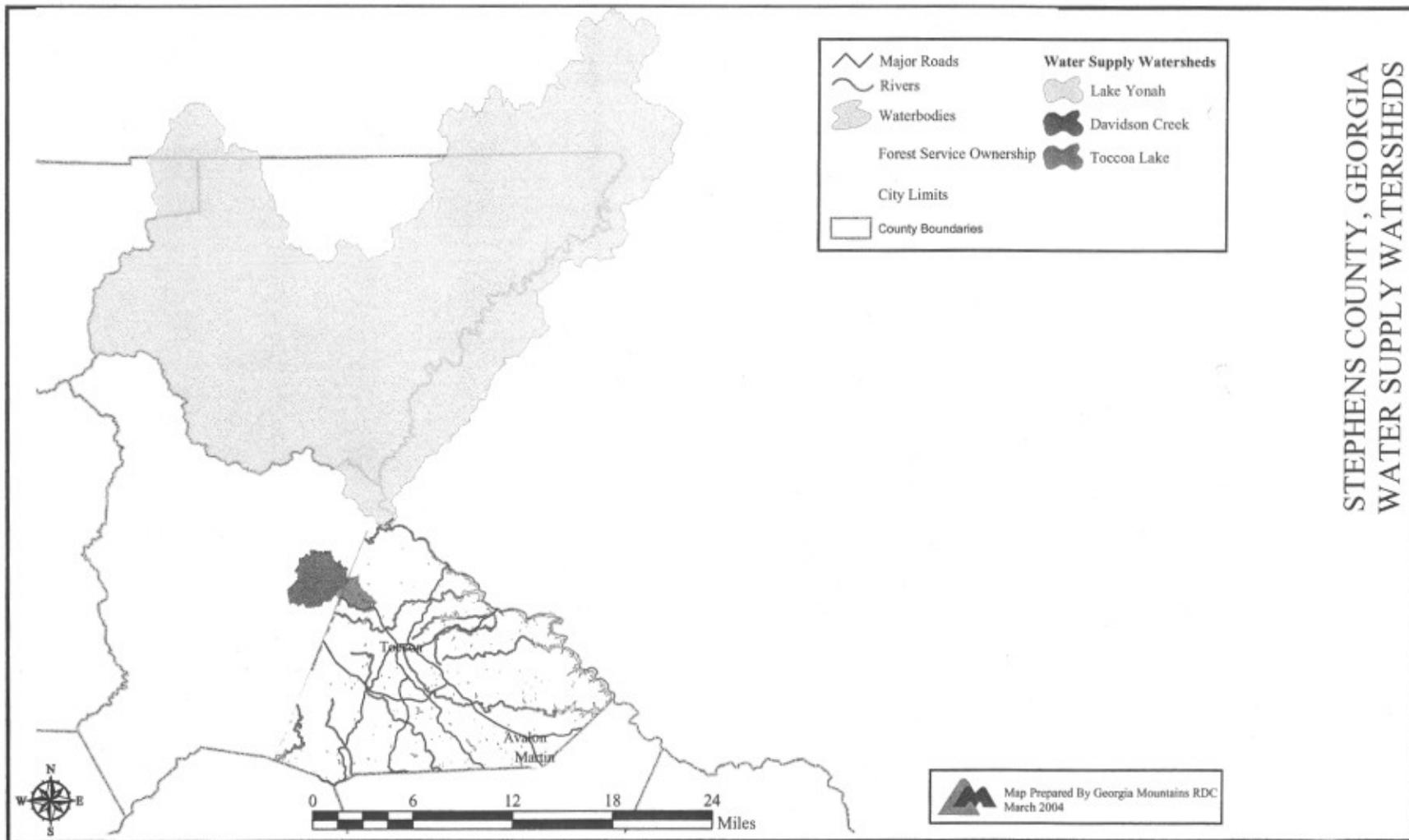
A water supply watershed is defined as the area of land upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water intake. Two watersheds used by Stephens County residents and water customers qualify as water supply watersheds under the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) "Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria," adopted in 1989 pursuant to O.C.G.A. §12-2-8. The Davidson Creek watershed is located in neighboring Habersham County and the Cedar Creek watershed is located upstream of Lake Toccoa, Toccoa Water Works Reservoir. Together they supply water sources for the City of Toccoa. As mentioned in the previous section, the Toccoa Water Works Reservoir and water plant are on Cedar Creek; water is pumped from the Davidson Creek Reservoir pump station, located in Habersham County, into the Water Works Reservoir to supplement natural flows as necessary. Toccoa has another supplemental permitted water supply intake on Lake Yonah, but it is not used primarily. This intake, used to augment water supplies in Davidson Creek Reservoir, is on a Georgia Power reservoir not primarily constructed for water supply purposes. Therefore, its watershed is not considered a water supply watershed for administrative purposes. The following map illustrates the location of the two water supply watersheds.

The Cedar Creek and Davidson Creek watersheds are classified as small watersheds under the State criteria, in as much as they have drainage areas considerably smaller than the 100-square-mile regulatory cutoff for small water supply watersheds and both watersheds include a reservoir. Water supply watershed buffer and setback requirements apply to these watersheds. All of the Stephens County tributary area to these water supply watersheds is within 7 miles of the withdrawal point. Therefore, 100-foot vegetated buffers with additional 50-foot setbacks for impervious surfaces and septic systems apply to both watersheds. Because the Cedar Creek and Davidson Creek watersheds are reservoir watersheds, a 150-foot reservoir buffer requirement also applies.

There are additional requirements for handling of hazardous materials, landfills and a 25% impervious surface limit for small watersheds. Most of the tributary drainage area for these water supply watersheds lies within the Chattahoochee National Forest. As such, the watersheds are primarily timberlands and can be expected to remain essentially undeveloped.

As discussed in the previous section, the City of Toccoa and the University of Georgia developed a Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP) pursuant to the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act in order to help the City of Toccoa Water Works department and its customers understand what type of potential pollution sources currently exist in their water supply watersheds and what future plans should be considered regarding the community's water supply.

STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS



Groundwater Recharge Areas.

Georgia DNR also has established minimum protection criteria for significant groundwater recharge areas under O.C.G.A. §12-2-8. Local governments are required to adopt, implement, and enforce ordinances for recharge area protection according to the Minimum Standards criteria because hazardous pollutants may infiltrate through the soils found in recharge areas and contaminate groundwater sources. To date, the only published source of significant groundwater recharge areas information is the Georgia Geologic Survey's (Hydrologic Atlas 18 – "Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas of Georgia"), a 1:500,00 scale map published in 1989. Stephens County has four mapped areas indicated as Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas on Hydrologic Atlas 18. The largest of the four mapped recharge areas is centered just northeast of the intersection of State Route 365 Connector and State Route 17. A smaller recharge area is mapped just west of State Route 106 near the Franklin County line. The wells used to supply the City of Martin with drinking water are the closest public water sources to these recharge areas. Two other mapped areas are actually split between Stephens and Franklin Counties, one near Broad River and the other along Poplar Springs Road east of Avalon. The combined area of the mapped recharge areas is about 3662 acres, or 3.2% of the total land area of Stephens County.

The basis of the Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas classification is the probability of "thick soils" in the aforementioned areas. Georgia Geologic Survey also completed pollution-susceptibility mapping (Hydrologic Atlas 20 – "Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility of Georgia"), and most Piedmont recharge areas are classified as having low pollution susceptibility. The appropriate ordinances have been adopted based on the Environmental Planning Criteria.

Additionally, Stephens County will be expected to enforce the adopted ordinance to protect the Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas and groundwater resources used by the City of Martin and other groundwater users like Toccoa Falls College and the Lake Harbor Shores Subdivision. At a minimum, the ordinance must do the following for mapped recharge areas:

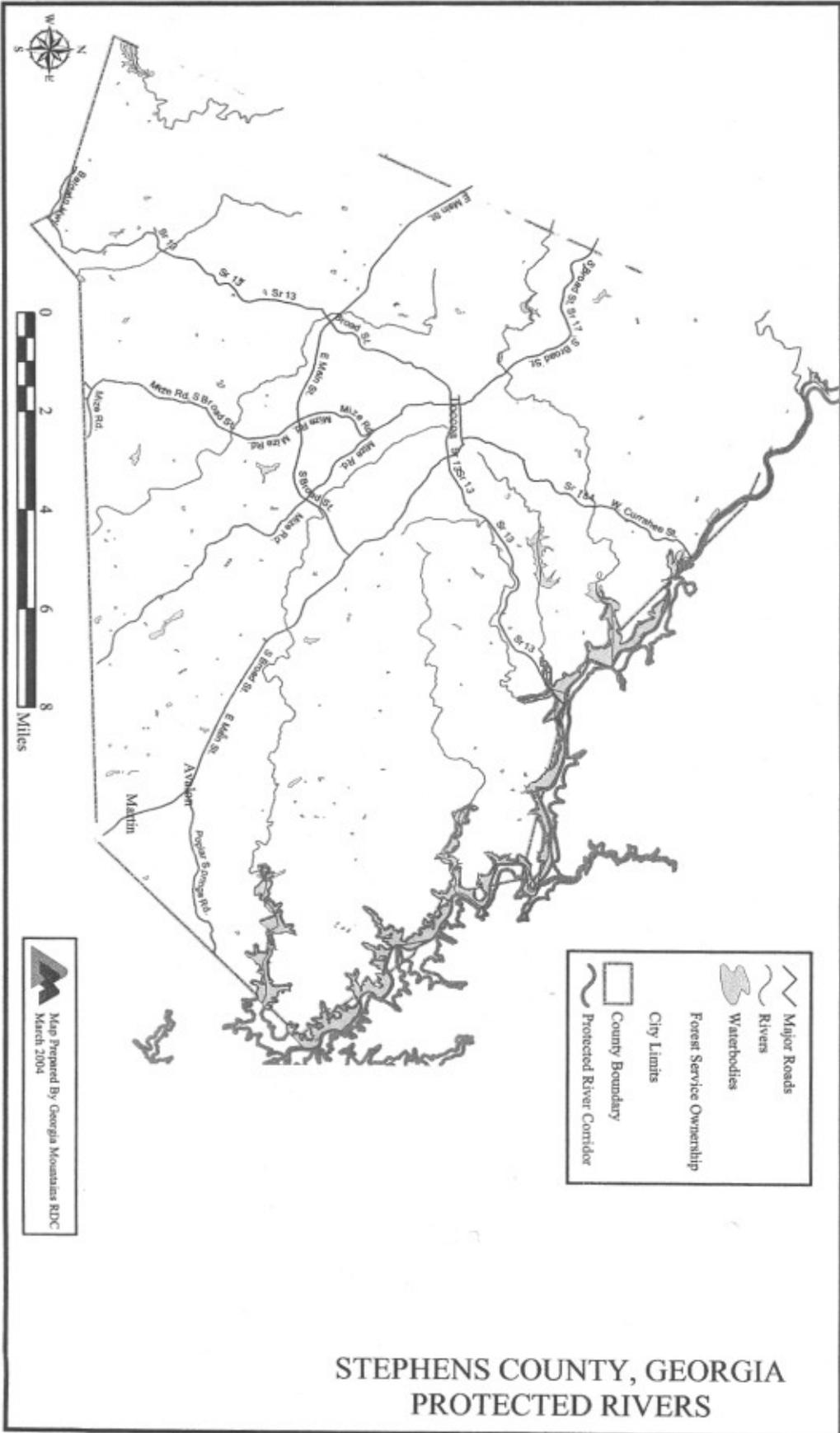
- Limit development densities
- Address septic tank permitting and location
- Regulate design of storm water infiltration basins
- Require special procedures for handling of hazardous materials

Wetlands.

Freshwater wetlands are regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which requires that a permit be obtained to dredge or fill in waters of the United States. The Section 404 permitting program is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with oversight by US EPA. In 1989 the Georgia DNR adopted rules requiring local governments to identify wetlands in the Comprehensive Plan process, pursuant to O.C.G.A. §12-2-8. Wetlands are areas that are seasonally flooded or saturated by ground water, such as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Typically, they support certain types of vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. Wetlands soils also have certain characteristics caused by low oxygen levels from saturated conditions. Wetlands have been the subject of a great deal of attention (and sometimes controversy) in recent years. They are valuable in that they provide fish and wildlife habitat, water quality benefits, flood attenuation, shoreline stabilization and protection, and groundwater recharge.

The Comprehensive Plan guidelines require that local governments identify wetlands mapped by Georgia DNR in its statewide mapping program. Fortunately, Georgia DNR recognizes the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) as the official source for wetland mapping. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service performs the NWI. Accordingly, wetlands are depicted in the NWI mapped wetland areas in Stephens County.

Stephens County and the City of Toccoa have already incorporated wetlands mapping (at no less than a 5-acre minimum area) into their planning process, as required by law. Both jurisdictions have adopted approved wetlands protection ordinances.



STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA
PROTECTED RIVERS

Map Prepared By Georgia Mountains RDC
March 2004

Protected Mountains

The Comprehensive Planning Act was amended in 1991 to require Georgia DNR to promulgate criteria for mountain protection. As defined in O.C.G.A. §12-2-8, protected mountain areas must be at least 2,200 feet above mean sea level (msl). Because there are no areas in Stephens County above 2,200 feet, the criteria do not apply.

Protected Rivers

The Comprehensive Planning Act was amended in 1991 to also require Georgia DNR to promulgate criteria for protection of river corridors. As defined in O.C.G.A. § 12-2-8, protected river corridors are defined as adjacent to perennial streams or watercourses with at least 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) of flow, on an annual average. The only river in Stephens County with enough flow to qualify under this definition is the Tugaloo River on the Georgia-South Carolina border. The original river corridor is now mostly included in the pools of Hartwell, Yonah, and Tugaloo reservoirs. A short section of the Tugaloo River flows in its original channel below Yonah Dam to the Lake Hartwell headwaters, a distance of about 4.4 miles. However, up to half of this section of river is periodically inundated when Lake Hartwell rises above its normal pool elevation than a riverine environment. Conversations with Georgia DNR regulatory staff have indicated that the agency has not construed that perennial stream definition to apply to existing reservoir shorelines. Therefore, no protected river corridors exist in Stephens County.

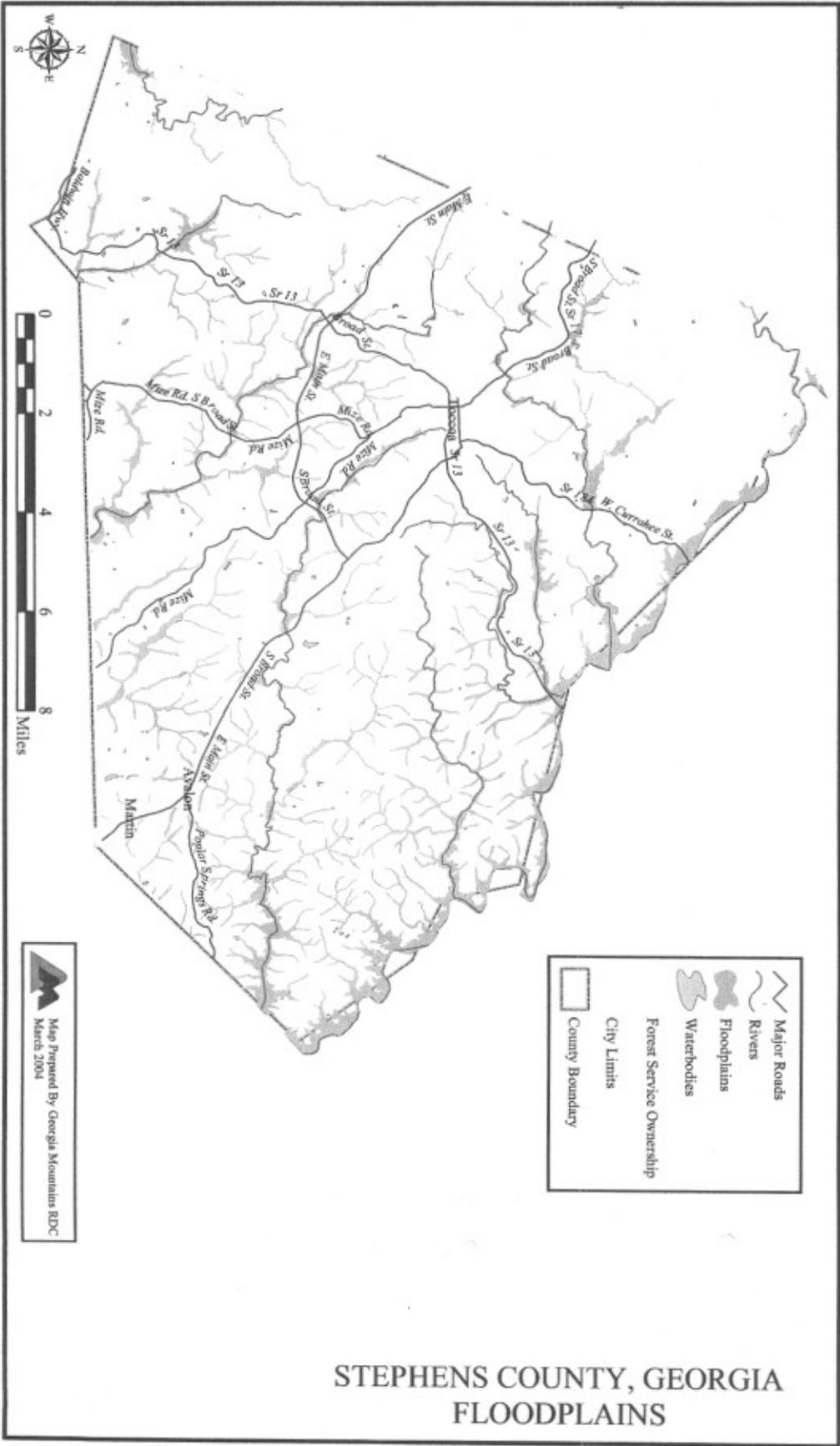
Coastal Resources

There are no coastal resources (beaches, coastal, or estuaries) in Stephens County.

Flood Plains

The Comprehensive Planning Act also requires that flood plains be considered in the local government planning process. As administratively defined, flood plains include land with a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year (100-year flood plain or base flood). Flood plain areas in Stephens County are depicted in the Flood Plain Map. The City of Toccoa and Stephens County have participated in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since 1984. To become eligible for the NFIP, local governments must adopt a flood plain management ordinance that is meant to decrease extreme financial and personal loss during and after flooding. The floodplain management ordinances also place certain restrictions on development in flood plain areas. To remain participating in the NFIP, local governments must also adhere to flood plain management practices like providing some planning assistance to developers who wish to build in known flood plains. In return, owners of buildings and homes located in flood plains, or Special Flood Hazard Areas (Zones A, AE, A1 –A30, AH, etc), are eligible for federally subsidized flood insurance and federal disaster assistance in the event of a major flood or a flash flood. The City of Martin and the City of Avalon are not currently in the NFIP and do not have flood data or flood maps. Both the City of Toccoa and the County have participated in the NFIP and had their flood plain areas mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) since 1984. The current official Stephens County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) is dated 1984, whereas the City of Toccoa's original 1984 map was updated in August 1991. Currently the City of Toccoa nor Stephens County participate in a Community Rating System (CRS) of the NFIP,

which could reduce insurance rates for owners of businesses and homes within known flood plain areas. As of 2004, Georgia DNR began re-mapping the entire state of Georgia under the Map Modernization program. Now would be a good time for the Town of Avalon and the City of Martin to enter the NFIP.



STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA
FLOODPLAINS

 Map Prepared By: Georgia Mountains EDC
March 2004

Soil Types

All of the soils in Stephens County are derived from crystalline parent material, because of the County's location in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge physiographic provinces. About 90 percent of the County's Piedmont area is underlain by biotite gneiss and schist, with the extreme northern tip of Stephens County being underlain by brevard schist.

Although an official U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Survey was completed for Stephens County (along with Banks County) in 1971, digital data has not yet been developed, which is needed for future planning. Personal conversations with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) suggest that official and detailed digital soils data for Stephens County will not be available until 2005. The USDA-NRCS classifies the soils in Stephens County into nine general groups, known as soil associations. A photocopied general soil map with the associations is provided in Soils Map. These general soil associations have distinctive proportional patterns of soils, usually with one or more major soil type and one minor soil type. There may be considerable variation in the soils of any particular association in slope, depth, stoniness, drainage, or other characteristics. The general soil associations are listed as follows:

- **Toccoa – Cartecay Association.** These are floodplain soils, well-drained to somewhat poorly drained. They typically are flooded with a frequency greater than once in five years, and are poorly suited to most intensive use. About 9 percent of the County's area is occupied by the Toccoa-Cartecay association.
- **Madison-Cecil-Grover Association.** These well-drained soils occupy ridge tops and gently sloping to sloping side slopes. The soils are well suited to development, but occupy less than one percent of the County area.
- **Cecil-Applying-Louisburg Association.** This soil association is typically found on broad ridge tops, and consists of well drained to somewhat excessively drained soils. Slopes are typically less than 10 percent in this group. It makes up about 4 percent of the County.
- **Cecil-Hiawassee-Madison Association.** This soil association occurs on ridge tops and side slopes in southeastern Stephens County. The component soils are generally well-suited to intensive uses.
- **Hiawassee-Musella-Wilkes Association.** This soils group occurs primarily on sloping ridges and side slopes, ranging in slope from 15 to 60 percent. Soils in the group are frequently stony, and are generally unsuitable for intensive uses. About 1 percent of the County is composed of this soil association.
- **Madison-Hiawassee-Pacolet Association.** Located mostly in the eastern Stephens County, this soil association accounts for about 23 percent of the land area of the County. It is composed of sloping soils on narrow ridges and steeply sloping soils on the sides of ridges. Much of this soil association was once

cultivated, but has now reverted to woodlands and pasture. It is generally unsuitable for intensive uses.

- **Pacolet-Wedowee-Chandler Association.** This soil association occurs primarily in mountainous areas of Stephens County, typically in areas from elevation 900 to 1700 (msl). Slopes are often very steep, with sharp break between other soil associations. In some places the soils are stony, and most areas of this association have never been cultivated. It occurs in about 6 percent of the County.
- **Pacolet-Louisburg-Apppling Association.** This soil association occupies about 6 percent of Stephens County, primarily in an area east of Toccoa. It occurs on mountain foothills, and is almost all forested. Wildlife and recreational uses are most suited to this association, which is generally unsuitable for more intensive development.
- **Madison-Pacolet-Gwinnett Association.** Soils in this association are typically highly patterned and eroded by dendritic drainage pathways. They make up about 11 percent of the County area, and are generally unsuitable for most uses except forest.

Soil Erosion

The County and all municipalities are aware of the 2003 amendments to the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975 (O.C.G.A. §12-7-1 et.seq., as amended) dealing with construction and development site soil erosion and sedimentation. In order for any local government to become or remain a certified local issuing authority for an erosion and sedimentation control permit (also known as a NPDES permit), local governments must first adopt an ordinance which demonstrates compliance with the provisions in Title 12, Chapter 7 of the Official Code of Georgia by July 2004.

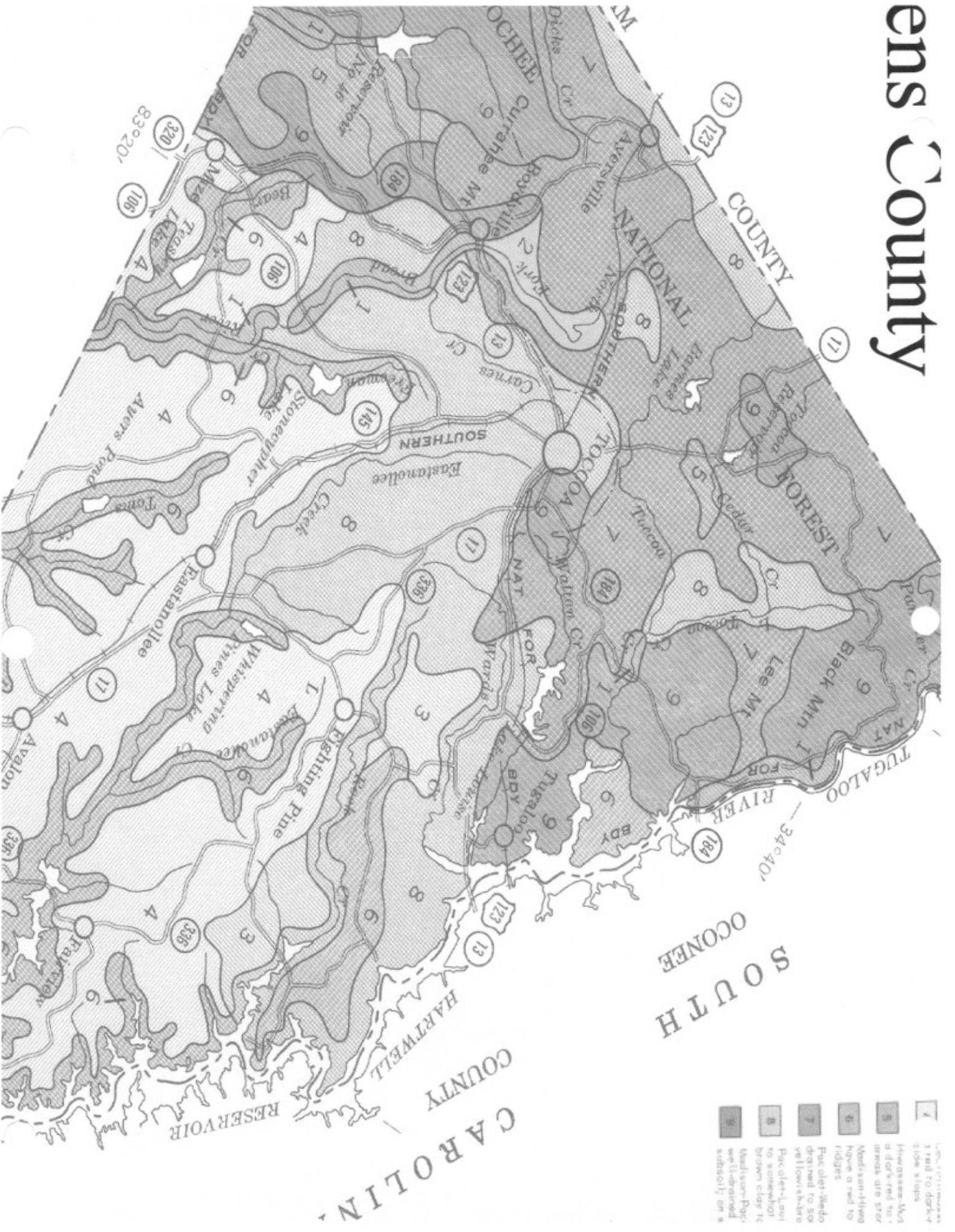
General Stormwater Permit

Pursuant to the 2003 Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act, all local issuing authorities certified to issue land disturbing activity permits or NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permits for construction activities larger than one acre, will be required to update their official erosion and sedimentation control ordinance by July 2004. Currently Stephens County issues these permits and performs site inspections, so their ordinance should be updated and submitted to Georgia DNR by July 2004.

On-Site Sewage Structures

Prior to the installation of new on-site sewage structures like septic tanks, a land owner/developer must obtain an On-Site Sewage Management System Construction Permit (O.C.G.A. §12-8-1, 31-2-2,31-2-4, 31-2-7). In order to obtain the permit, the County Board of Health shall approve such construction. In order for the Board to approve it, a certified soil scientist must provide on-site soil characteristics (including soil types and capabilities). Currently, these regulations adequately protect soil types, plus provide additional soil data. It is recommended that the official digital soil survey data be used, when available, during placement and planning of on-site sewage structures.

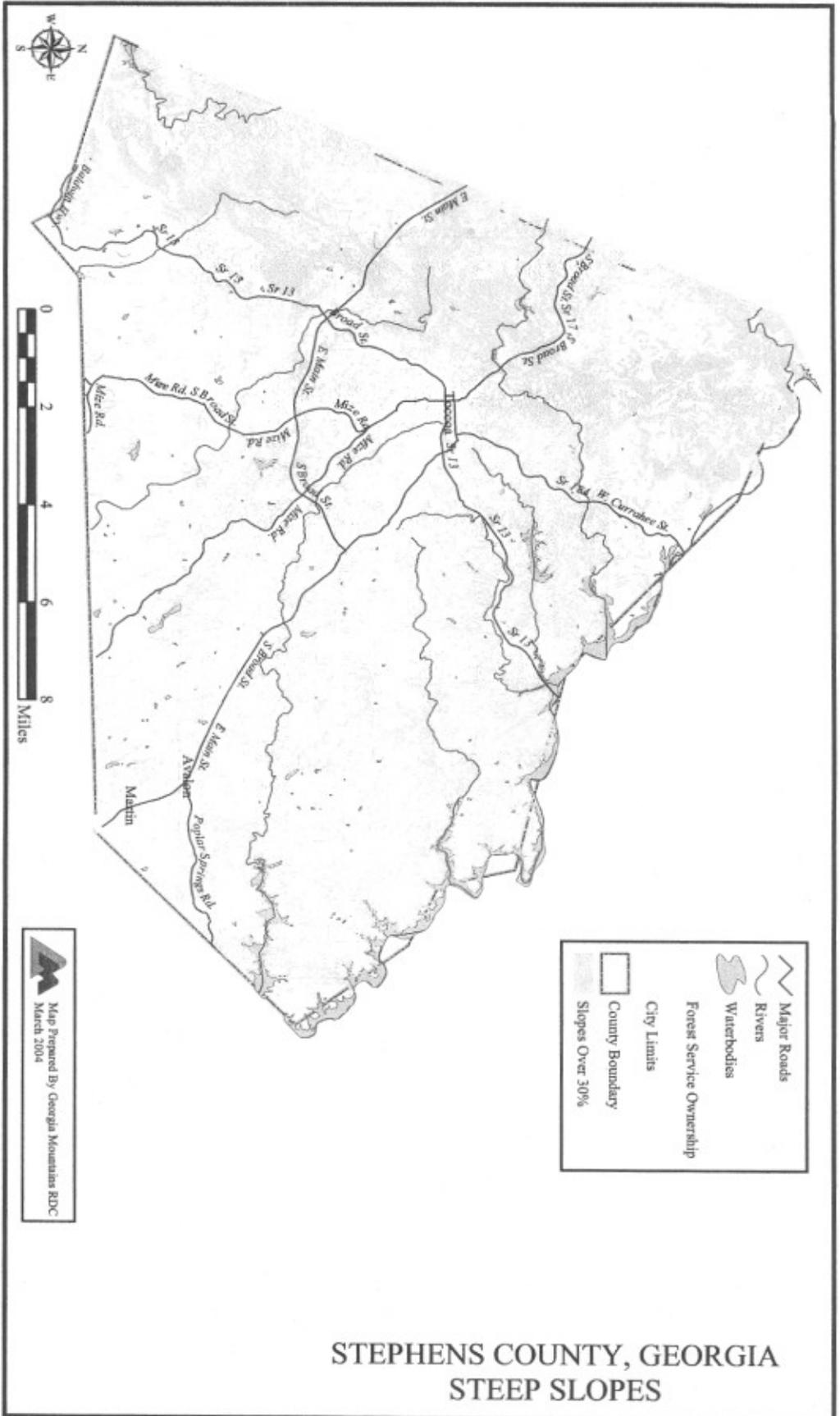
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Steep Slopes

Like most of the Northeast Georgia region, there are large areas with slopes exceeding 30% in Stephens County, particularly within the Chattahoochee National Forest. Most of these steeper areas are found in the north and northwest portions of Stephens County. The Steep Slopes Map shows areas of Stephens County with slopes generally in excess of 30%. The map shows areas of the County with slopes generally in excess of 45%. Because the majority of the steep areas lie within the Chattahoochee National Forest and will primarily be used for recreational purposes, existing management practices should be adequate to protect them. However, other steep slope areas may not be adequately protected. As mentioned in previous sections, the County and municipalities are aware of the amendments to the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act dealing with construction and development site erosion. Steep slopes and soil erosion are of concern in the Georgia Mountains region, but currently no specific erosion-due-to-steep-slopes regulations exist for just the Georgia Mountains region.



- Major Roads
- Rivers
- Waterbodies
- Forest Service Ownership
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- Slopes Over 30%

 Map Prepared By Georgia Mountains RDC
March 2004

STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA STEEP SLOPES

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

The USDA Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey for Stephens County places only one soil type, the Toccoa sandy loam, local alluvium in capability class I; as having few restrictions for agricultural use. The general soil association to which this type belongs (Toccoa-Cartecay Association) comprises only 9 percent of the area of Stephens County. Therefore, it is probably conservative to assume that less than 5 percent of the land area in Stephens County could be classified as prime agricultural land. Much of that area is alluvial floodplains with localized wetlands. Often, many of these alluvial fields have been artificially drained to improve their agricultural productivity and to minimize the duration and impact of floods. By combining the Toccoa-Cartecay Association coverage with the current land use map for Stephens County, Prime Agricultural and Forest Land are depicted in Existing Land Use Map.

In the near future, conservation or preservation of these prime agricultural and forest lands (greenspace) will be addressed by the Georgia DNR. The Advisory Council for Georgia's Land Conservation Partnership was created by a Governor's Executive Order on December 30, 2003. The Council is charged with overseeing the development of the state's first comprehensive, statewide land conservation plan.

NOTE
Start from the
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Plant and Animal Habitats *

Stephens County is rich in plant and animal diversity, owing to the variety of habitats. In their Tipularia article, "Tugaloo Mosaic: A Unique Area," John Garst and James Sullivan write, "The density of habitats and diversity of plant life in the Tugaloo Mosaic is a consequence of its geologic, climatologic, hydrologic, and biologic history," (Tipularia August 1993, Georgia Botanical Society). Stephens County encompasses much of what they describe as the Tugaloo Mosaic. Therefore, in the plant and animal habitat section of this Comprehensive Plan, we must consider the underlying geology, hydrology, and climate to understand what shaped these habitats and what will teach us about preserving these habitats as much as possible. That will provide the context for explaining the richness of the flora and fauna of the county. It also may provide an impetus for protecting those habitats that exist, as they are a result of a long and complicated natural history that is not likely to be repeated.

The geological history of the area spans hundreds of millions of years. The repeated collisions and separations of the North American and African plates forced uplift and folding of rock layers. The metamorphic rock in the county is a product of the Permian and Triassic Periods. After the uplifting of the Appalachian mountain range, there was a long period of weathering, whereby wind and water wore away the once mighty mountains. The sediment that was carried by wind and streams down hill built up what was to become the piedmont and coastal plains of Georgia.

Climatically, Stephens County is wet. The 50-70 inches of annual rainfall is just short of the rainfall levels in the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest. Warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico rises up over the mountains and drops abundant rains on the county as it cools. This rain both carved the land into a rich topography of north and south facing slopes, and provided sufficient moisture to support abundant plant life.

The county is situated in the Brevard Fault zone, which has brought with it the hydrology that we know today. The myriad streams and rivers have carved the land into the deep gorges and dry ridges that make up the north part of Stephens County. As the streams down cut into the underlying rock strata, much of the ancient weathered and folded rocks were exposed. This provided the raw materials for a rich variety of soils, which, in conjunction with the climate and topography, make our rich plant diversity possible.

This biological (plant and animal) diversity was also aided by the ice ages. As temperatures cooled, more northerly plant and animal species thrived in this area. When the glaciers receded from the northern states and the local temperatures rose, many of the northerly species were again out-competed by southern species, except in the deep ravines and cool northern slopes. In this way, as Garst and Sullivan point out, "The Tugaloo Mosaic is rich in sites offering refuge to a variety of northern and southern plants." Table 6-1 shows mostly plants known to be located in certain types of environments in Stephens County.

* The Plant and Animal Habitat section of the Comprehensive Plan was written in part by John DiDiego (Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center) with assistance by Tiffannie C. Hill (GMRDC).

Table 6-1. Plant and Animal Habitats in Stephens County.

Name of Environment	Known Locations	Significant Flora	Significant Fauna	Values and Impacts
Rock outcrops w/ mafic soils	Currahee Mt., Lee Mt.	Smooth purple coneflower, Curly-heads		
Sphagnum bogs	Lee Mt.	Monkey-faced Orchid		
Deciduous forest	Chattahoochee NF, Lake Russell WMA	Hemlock, Beech, Hickory, Tulip Poplar, Rattlesnake Plantain		
Deciduous Coves	Panther Creek	Buckeye, Beech, Basswood, Red Oak, Yellowwood, Black Walnut, rare ferns, Ginseng	Salamander spp	Rare plant species
Chestnut Oak-Ridge Forest	Chattahoochee National Forest	Chestnut Oaks, S. and N. Red Oak, Fringetree, <i>Simplocos tinctoria</i> , Serviceberry		
Wet Cliffs	Cedar Creek	S. Maidenhair Fern, Peter's filmy fern, walking fern, Lily-leaved Twayblade		
Glades	Areas maintained by disturbance – Lake Russell WMA			
Rock Outcrops	Lake Russell WMA	Winged Elm, Little Bluestem		unusual plant communities
Riparian Zones	Panther Creek, Cedar Creek, Middle Fork, Broad River, Nancy Town Creek	<i>Nestronia umbellula</i> , Leatherwood, Grass-of-Parnassus, Pink Lady's Slipper		Secondary Trout Streams, sensitive to sedimentation

Source: Stephens County –Avalon – Martin – Toccoa Natural Resources – Historic Resources Comprehensive Plan Committee 2003-2004. (Currently being updated 2004)

The purpose of protecting plant and animal habitats is to ensure that endangered, threatened, rare, etc. species are not exterminated forever. Many “special concern” animals and plants species occur in Stephens County. Some of these species are protected by either State or federal law. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division-Georgia Natural Heritage Program was contacted for information on “special concern” (i.e. rare) species in Stephens County. With information obtained by the official website of the Wildlife Resources Division of Georgia DNR, Table 6-2 identifies potential special concern species in Stephens County.

Swallow-tailed Kite	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>
Eastern Cougar	<i>Felis concolor cougar</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Flaco peregrinus</i>
Southern Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Indiana Bat	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>
Gray Bat	<i>Myotis grisescens</i>
Round-tailed Muskrat	<i>Neofiber alleni</i>
New England Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus transitionalis</i>
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Bachman's Warbler	<i>Vermivora bachmanii</i>
Alligator Snapping Turtle	<i>Macrolemys temminckii</i>

Special Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
Schwerin Indigy Bush	<i>Amorpha schwerinii</i>
Georgia Aster	<i>Aster georgianus</i>
Radford Sedge	<i>Carex radfordii</i>
American Chestnut	<i>Castanea dentate</i>
Carolina Thistle	<i>Cirsium carolinianum</i>
Curly-heads	<i>Clematis ochroleuca</i>
Pink Ladyslipper	<i>Cypripedium acaule</i>
Smooth Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea laevigata</i>
Smith Sunflower	<i>Helianthus smithii</i>
Fraser Loosestrife	<i>Lysimachia fraseri</i>
Broadleaf Bunchflower	<i>Melanthium latifolium</i>
Indian Olive	<i>Nestronia umbellula</i>
American Ginseng	<i>Panax quinquefolius</i>
Mountain Wavy-leaf Moss	<i>Plagiomnium carolinianum</i>
Monky-Face Orchid	<i>Platanthera integrilabia</i>
Bay Star-Vine	<i>Schisandra glabra</i>
Mountain Camellia	<i>Stewartia ovata</i>
Epling's Hedge-nettle	<i>Stachys eplingii</i>
Dwarf Filmy Fern	<i>Trichomanes petersii</i>
Pale Yellow Trillium	<i>Trillium discolor</i>
Persisten Trillium	<i>Trillium persistens</i>
American Dog-Violet	<i>Viola conspersa</i>
Piedmont Barren-Strawberry	<i>Waldsteinia lobata</i>

Any major proposed facility would need to be given a site-specific inspection to determine that these protected species are not present. If species were found, appropriate protection or mitigation methods would need to be employed.

Major Park, Recreation and Conservation Areas

The Chattahoochee National Forest is the largest and most significant Park, Recreation and Conservation area in Stephens County. Extending along the County's western boundary from north to south, the National Forest parcels, not all of which are contiguous, comprise about 22,319 acres, or 19 percent of the total land area of the County.

The National Forest areas in Stephens County provide all three aspects of Park, Recreation and Conservation use. The northern portion of the National Forest surrounds Panther Creek, a popular portion of the National Forest, where Outdoor Recreational Vehicles are permitted. The southern block of the National Forest is part of the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area that extends westward into Habersham County. The latter is managed for wildlife by Georgia Department of Natural Resources under a lease agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. The National Forest provides valuable benefits to all the residents of Stephens County in the form of water quality protection, scenic and recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat and timber production.

Other areas with a significant park, recreation or conservation component are generally located along the Tugaloo River and reservoir shoreline. They are listed as follows:

- Yonah Lake Access Area
- Walker Creek Recreation Area
- Stephens County Recreation Area
- Spring Branch Recreation Area
- Bruce Creek Recreation Area

Numerous other parks and recreation facilities are located in Stephens County, but most of these are intended primarily for active recreational use or are associated with schools. They are addressed in detail in the Community Facilities and Services Element of this Comprehensive Plan. The Recreation Map shows the locations of the above-mentioned parks and recreation facilities in Stephens County.

An unused narrow gauge railroad bed called the Dinky Trail in the northeastern part of the county, near Lake Yonah and the Tugaloo River, remains dormant. The national transportation program known as Rails-to-Trails could be used to convert this and other abandoned or unused railway beds into a system of walking trails.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

Prime agricultural land has not yet been mapped. With the exception of the Chattahoochee National Forest's Chattooga Ranger District areas, prime forestland has not yet been mapped for Stephens County. The USFS Chattahoochee – Oconee National Forests office recently developed a forest-wide Land and Resources Management Plan for the Chattahoochee National Forest and should provide protection for USFS land only. The County and the cities, however, should advocate and encourage alternatives to residents who wish to preserve their farmland or forest land instead of selling their farmland or forest land to developers. Currently (2004), Georgia DNR and the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership are addressing this issue and should set forth a policy in the near future.

Plant and Animal Habitats

Plant and animal habitats protection policies are the US Endangered Species Act, the USFS forest-wide Land and Resources Management Plan, and the current state wildlife management area plans.

Comprehensive Plan Objectives

- Support and expand programs like Keep Toccoa Stephens County Beautiful (KTSCB) to help provide educational and enjoyable opportunities for citizens and tourists to experience the natural resources in Stephens County and cities,
- To establish emphasis for the protection of sensitive and/or impaired watersheds, natural resources, and conservation areas.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Historic Background

In the Comprehensive Plan context, historic resources are considered very broadly. They include not only historic residential, commercial, industrial and institutional districts and buildings, but also rural resources and cultural sites as well. Rural resources may include historic landscapes, farm complexes, crossroads communities, bridges, roadways, barns, plantations and similar sites. Cultural sites not include historic cemeteries, ruins, battlefields, etc., but prehistoric archaeological sites as well.

Stephens County was fortunate to be selected as one of nine counties included in Georgia's Living Places project. This project was intended to identify significant historic and cultural resources and to give emphasis to their landscape setting. Also, town planning history, agricultural and industrial history and transportation history were given special emphasis. William Chapman of Chapman and Associates conducted the project in 1989 and 1990. In all, the survey identified some 1168 sites and structures. Of that total, 533 were located in Toccoa and the 587 are located in unincorporated Stephens County. Avalon and Martin were surveyed and have 18 and 30 sites and structures respectively. The following map provides location of identified sites. Also included are maps illustrating historic resources within the Toccoa urbanized area and within the downtown area. The following historical overview is excerpted from Chapman.

Stephens County Developmental History

Prehistory

Creek and Cherokee Indians inhabited the area now encompassing Stephens County at the time of European contact. Previously the Catawba peoples occupied the area. Numerous Indian villages were located along the Tugaloo River at the time of contact (according to 18th century maps.) Mounds and settlement remains have been identified to as early as 500 A.D. A major ceremonial area along the Tugaloo River dates to 1200 A.D. At the time of early contact, c. 1715, a large village was located at the confluence of the Tugaloo and Broad Rivers, which later grew as a trading post. The area remained in Indian Territory until 1764, when the county was opened up for white settlement.

The County's Indian heritage is now mostly revealed in place-names: Tugaloo (rough waters), Toccoa (beautiful areas), Currache (alone in the land), etc. Extensive excavations took place in the 1970s, prior to the flooding of Lake Hartwell. The Georgia Historical Commission and University of Georgia conducted them. Far more needs to be known about the pre-contact settlement of the area.

Settlement Period

Final appropriation of lands occurred after the Treaty of Augusta (1783), which recognized the rights of European settlers. Franklin County was one of eight counties created out of earlier parishes. The area comprising what is Stephens County was originally settled primarily as part of Franklin County beginning in 1784. The Tuagloo River had become an important trading area prior to this and had paddle steamers traversing the river until the 1920s. A gradual penetration of European settlement from coastal South Carolina and Savannah occurred throughout the 18th century. The Unicoi Turnpike further encouraged settlement.

Two forts were constructed in what is now Stephens County to facilitate settlement and protect earlier settlers, Ward's fort and Wofford's station, along with several private trading posts. The county went into somewhat of a decline during the 190s as other, richer lands in the west opened up. Still many original settlers, such as the Woffords, Browns, Blanchwells, Williamsons and Terrells established themselves in the County. After 1800, an increase in development was provided in part by roads and trails leading through the County. Inns were established; such as the Traveller's Rest, located at the beginning of the Unicoi Turnpike, or Red Hollow House, originally in Martin near the beginning of the Red Hollow Trail.

Most early settlers were subsistence farmers. Feral pigs, whisky production and small-scale farming were typical pursuits. After 1836, the removal of the Cherokees from the area provided a greater incentive for settlement. During the early part of the 19th century, up-county cotton began only to replace other crops as the area's economic mainstay.

Politically, the present area of Stephens County was divided when Habersham County was formed out of Franklin (1814). The northern half of present Stephens County was in Habersham (1820), the south in the remainder of Franklin. The division would remain this way until 1906 when the present Stephens County was formed.

Agricultural activities in the county were supplemented by primitive industries. Saw milling, grist mills, silk mills and cotton gins were established along the county waterways. John Stonecypher is credited with the early mill on Eastanollee Creek in 1790.

The main settlement period occurred after 1820. By this period the Cherokee threat (soon to be eliminated entirely) has lessened. An 1820 lottery awarded lands in Habersham County, and a new influx of mainly Scotch-Irish settlers worked their way down from North Carolina and over from north Georgia and South Carolina. Again, most of the new settlers were small-time farmers and, in fact, there was little consolidation of farmlands for plantations. Pigs and salt curing, along with whiskey production, were major agricultural pursuits. Sherwood's Gazetteer of 1829 said, "Little cotton is cultivated," though this was to change substantially in the next two decades as up-county cotton became more important to the local economy. Mills continued to flourish and several potteries were established. There was some settlement of "summer people", and some speculation in lands for gold mines during the 1820s.

As of 1845, the total population was 8,411, of which 7,216 were listed as white and 1,195 as black. Town life focused on small settlements such as Toccoa Falls or Walton's Ford (both in present day Stephen's County)

The Civil War

The Civil War had a principally indirect impact on the areas comprising present-day Stephens County. Many young men in the area enlisted in the Confederate Army. Scavenging Northern troops caused some Damage; but generally, little was destroyed in the county.

Reconstruction

The years between 1865 and 1905 were a period of slow economic growth for the county, at least in terms of agriculture. Recovery after the Civil War was slow, and there was little influx either of new settlers or new capital into Habersham or Franklin Counties. Farmers continued to produce cotton and hogs, generally on a small scale. There was virtually no return to large-scale, labor-supported farming.

Toccoa itself began to grow, largely as a result of becoming a transportation center. Located 92 miles from Atlanta, Toccoa (laid out in 1873) became a regional hub for the growing railroad networks shortly after the Civil War. In fact, the Atlanta and Richmond Air Line Company was connected to Toccoa in 1863. The Atlanta and Richmond was completed as the Georgia Airline Railroad and the track was completed in 1869. After 1870, a further amalgamation with South Carolina companies took place, eventually forming the Piedmont Airline Railroad.

As a result, Toccoa became an increasingly prosperous and industrialized town. By the 1870s, the town could claim a total population of 900, approximately 600 of whom were listed as White and 300 as Black. There were 125 privet residences, 2 hotels, 5 churches, and 3 schools with 100 students, 24 stores, 3 physicians, 3 lawyers and a weekly newspaper, The Northeast Georgia Herald. A note in the Atlanta Constitution of 1873 explained that, " number of houses are being put up in Toccoa City, giving the place a town-like appearance already."

Due to the railroad, Toccoa became an important shipping and wholesaling center, and also an increasingly important manufacturing center. Several saw mills and millwork shops were operating in the city by the 1870s, depending both on water and, increasingly, steam power. There were also specialized planing mills and several tanneries. A canning plant also was established, producing 3,000 canned goods daily in 1893.

Toccoa also became an important stopping-off point both for commercial travelers and tourists. Following the tradition of the Travellers Rest, the Toccoa Inn was built near the railroad. The Chamber of Commerce, as early as 1889, advertised the city as a, "summer and health resort". In 1898 a local businessman, John Haddock, sishing to capitalize on the dramatic Toccoa Falls built the Haddock Inn with 58 rooms. The building burned in 1911. In the early 20th century, the larger Albermarle Hotel was built at the corner of Alexander and Tugalo Streets.

One of the main new industries in Toccoa of the late 19th century was cotton processing. The railroad of the late 19th century promoted cotton gins and cotton distribution, and local cotton goods manufacturing expanded inevitably. The present Coats and Clarks mill was built in the 1890s, was Hartwell Mill (formerly the Toccoa Cotton Mill), for which a new building was constructed in 1897. The Toccoa Shuttle and Bobbin Works on Currahee Street were associated industries.

Furniture manufacturing occurred alongside cotton and piece goods factories. The J.B. Simmons factory was built in the 1890s, and the Toccoa Furniture Company on Elberton Street was constructed in 1907. Trogdon Furniture was established in 1920. Several foundries, quarries and stone crushing also operated in and around Toccoa.

Numerous new businesses sprang up, especially in Toccoa, to serve growing populations. Four major banks were established in the by 1911: the First National, the Farmer and Merchants, the Toccoa Banking Co. and the Bank of Toccoa. In 1895, the Toccoa Herald was formed from the Northeast Georgia Herald; the Toccoa News appeared in 1895, followed by the Toccoa Record. City directories indicate numerous merchandise stores, including grocery stores, department stores and undertakers.

While the fire of 1883 destroyed many of the earliest commercial buildings in town, new building of brick and stone soon replaced these. Shelters were built over wood sidewalks. In 1883, streetlights were introduced. In 1889, the City Charter of 1873 was revised.

Similar, though smaller in scale, development occurred elsewhere in the county. The Airline Railroad established a station at Martin in 1877 and at Avalon in 1882. Commercial rows were soon established in Martin, along with warehouses and larger houses for merchants. Martin was separately incorporated in 1891; Avalon in 1909.

By 1890 the population of Habersham County (of which Toccoa was a part) was 6,322. Of these, 5373 were listed as White and 949 were listed as Black. It was estimated that 30% of the tillable land had been cleared; 10% was considered too mountainous for farming. There was some mining of gold, iron and asbestos. In 1898, Toccoa was considered a fast-growing and progressive city, one of the most progressive in Northeast Georgia.

Formation of Stephens County and Early 20th Century Development

Stephens County, named after Alexander Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederacy, was founded in 1905. Toccoa, not surprisingly, was made the County Seat. The county totaled 163 square miles; 71 taken from Franklin and 92 from Habersham. The population was 9,000, with the taxable value of property estimated at \$1,650,000.

Despite Stephens County's high level of industrial development, early 20th century Stephens County was strikingly rural. Of the 9,728 people of 1910, approximately 6,559 lived on a total of 1,186 farms. Cotton was planted on over 12,000 acres, yielding a total of 5,000 to 6,000 bales

annually. A farmer's union was formed in 1906. Due in part to high cotton prices during World War I, the number of farms increased to 1,348 by 1920. The average value was placed at \$4,098.

The last decade of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th marked the great periods of building development in the county. Older farmhouses were replaced with a variety of pyramid cottages (usually with a Georgian Plan), gable ell cottages, and Queen Anne cottages. I-houses and massed-plan, two-story houses also proliferated in county areas. In Toccoa, especially in more affluent areas along Tugalo, West Doyle and Savannah Streets, many fine houses were built in a variety of architectural styles. These included Queen Anne houses and cottages, numerous extremely high-style Craftsman-inspired cottages and houses and, especially after 1920, a number of Colonial Revival homes. Newspaper descriptions refer to Toccoa as a beautiful hilltop city, with numerous beautiful dwellings. The population of the town reached 3,500 in 1910.

Most of the business in downtown Toccoa had been established by the 1890s, but new construction continued to occur and of Colonial Revival and Beaux Arts style buildings were finished. The courthouse itself was built between 1905 and 1907. A new school was built in the late 1890s and expanded in the 1920s. New commercial stores included auto sales showrooms and filling service stations, all of which proliferated in the 1920s.

It was during the early 20th century that Toccoa became an increasingly important center for Bible training and church camps. Building upon earlier successes as a resort, Toccoa began to attract summer church retreats.

Recession and Depression

The first signs of a business recession occurred in 1920, when the boll weevil began to affect the cotton crop. The recession was compounded by the post-war recession and eventually the depression of 1929. Farmers initially responded by converting to poultry production and dairy farming. During the 1930s, much of the land was converted to pine trees, as the federal government began to purchase land for the Chattahoochee National Forest. A variety of farm support programs sprang up to aid ailing farmers. The Civilian Conservation Corps erected a dormitory near Toccoa Falls to house CCC workers. The Rural Electrification Administration introduced power to untouched rural areas.

Largely through governmental programs, a number of new buildings were constructed. A hospital was built in 1936, as well as a new post office in 1932. New Schools followed in the 1940s. Many businesses in Toccoa, Martin, and Avalon and throughout the county folded during the depression era. It was generally a bad time for the County, as well as the rest of Georgia, and a return to prosperity would be a long time coming.

The Second World War and Post War Developments

The Second World War had a significant impact on the County and the outcome of World War II. The County became a training area for paratroopers. A camp was established at Currahee

Mountain, called Camp Robert Tombs. This was later changed to Camp Toccoa and was one of the main training areas for the 101st Airborne.

Toccoa and the rest of the county began to recover in the post-war era. An experimental food processing plant was established at Toccoa in 1946. by around 1950, the County had moved away from agriculture toward a more industrial and service-oriented economy. Most farmers continued to depend on poultry, along with some dairy farming. There was an increasing loss of rural population with a total county population of 7,300 in 1954. However, greater commercial and residential growth occurred in Toccoa itself. Smaller communities, such as Martin and Avalon, never fully recovered. Many areas, such as Hayes Crossing, Currahee, Ayersville and others declined entirely.

Urban renewal projects of the 1960s and 1970s had a major impact on the downtown, virtually masking the historic character of the late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings. Nonetheless, private houses, especially the larger, finer houses in Toccoa, have generally remained well maintained and appreciated.

Historic Resource Identification

As mentioned in the previous section, the Chapman and Associates survey (1989 and 1990) identified some 1120 sites and structures of historic interest in Stephens County. The methodology and general findings of Chapman's survey are described below.

Most of the survey work in the County was conducted by car, with a high concentrations of buildings handled on foot. Nearly all Toccoa itself was covered by foot, as were the smaller communities of Avalon and Martin. The Preliminary Area Analysis, prepped by Scott Butler, provided basic background on Stephen County's resources and communities, but neither that analysis nor the state estimates fully prepare surveyors for the actual number of properties involved.

The initial survey work centered on the county areas; taking 90 days to complete. The county survey was followed by a building-by building survey of Toccoa. A total of 533 field forms were completed on Toccoa properties. Forms were completed and photograph(s) taken of each building. Typological classifications were assigned to each property, although some later revision was achieved. Every building meeting the pre-1940 cutoff date, as well as exceptional late 1940s and 1950s buildings, was recorded. Abandoned properties were especially noted to confirm plan types, etc. Many local residents provided information.

The basic method used in selecting buildings to record was to include every building that met the 50-year rule. Newer buildings were recorded if they were of exceptional note. Some properties were deleted to threats to integrity, i.e. "abusive alterations." However, most alterations were relatively superficial in character, the most common changes being addition of aluminum or vinyl siding and changes to porch posts or to windows. The basic test in each case when selecting a property was whether or not it would be given a Part 1 approval for a Tax Act project, if in a historic district.

In addition to older buildings, some sites of historic significance were recorded. Seven archaeological sites, one dam, one bridge and one historic cemetery were recorded. There was some opportunity to record landscape features, especially those associated with military training camp; but because no structures associated with the training camps remained, and these were deleted. Clearly, both the County and the city of Toccoa possess numerous archaeological sites associated with early settlement (or later industrial developments) and with aboriginal habitation. The survey was necessarily limited in scope; no substantial amount of archaeological survey was conducted, though it is highly recommended.

Rural cemeteries, like cultural resources, require more investigation and recording. Numerous families, church or community graveyards are found throughout the county. Some are clearly historic and not actively used; others represent a succession of graves, from early examples through recent monuments. All of these cemeteries deserve degree of assessment and recognition.

Only a few mid-20th century buildings have been recorded. These include gas stations and commercial buildings. There are also mid-20th century fronts on the commercial properties in Toccoa. A number of simple vernacular building types, especially the front and side gable bungalows, may date from a slightly later period than the cutoff date. These are very traditional house forms, and instances of later examples do occur in other counties. Resident information, however, generally confirmed dates from the 1930s; although, it is possible that some of the buildings actually recorded may date as late as the 1940s.

The survey was conducted as thoroughly as possible. Every accessible road in the county was traversed, often requiring many miles of driving or hiking, to discover either a single vernacular building or no building remains. It was clear from the beginning of the survey that greater selectivity could only be applied once the survey was completed. A comprehensive survey seemed necessary in order to identify types, the most significant examples of types, etc. Also, buildings with the greatest design integrity were often those with the poorest prognosis for survival. This was especially true with abandoned rural properties, some of which were exceptional examples of vernacular house types. It seemed essential that these properties be recorded, if only for the historical record.

Longer forms were completed and more in-depth information was gathered for larger, occasional high-styled houses and other buildings. Nearly every church or commercial building was entered to provide more accurate information. Floor plans were "sketched" for larger houses, beginning with the numerous mass-plan cottages, often Georgian or Queen Anne (usually with Georgian Plans) cottages, in the county. All two-story houses were recorded in depth, as were outstanding examples of vernacular architecture.

Historical research was limited to background research in the Georgia Room of the University of Georgia Library and interviews with local residents. There is much general published material on the county. The Stephens County Historical Society was an indispensable reference. Much of the materials are undigested but still useful for understanding historic resources in the county. Sanborn maps for Toccoa were not consulted; although, any follow-through survey should make

reference to them. County USGS maps were consulted though with limited results. These do, however, provide indications of earlier settlement patterns and extant properties.

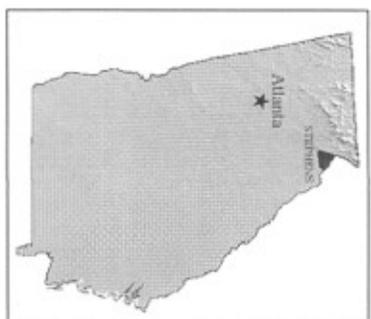
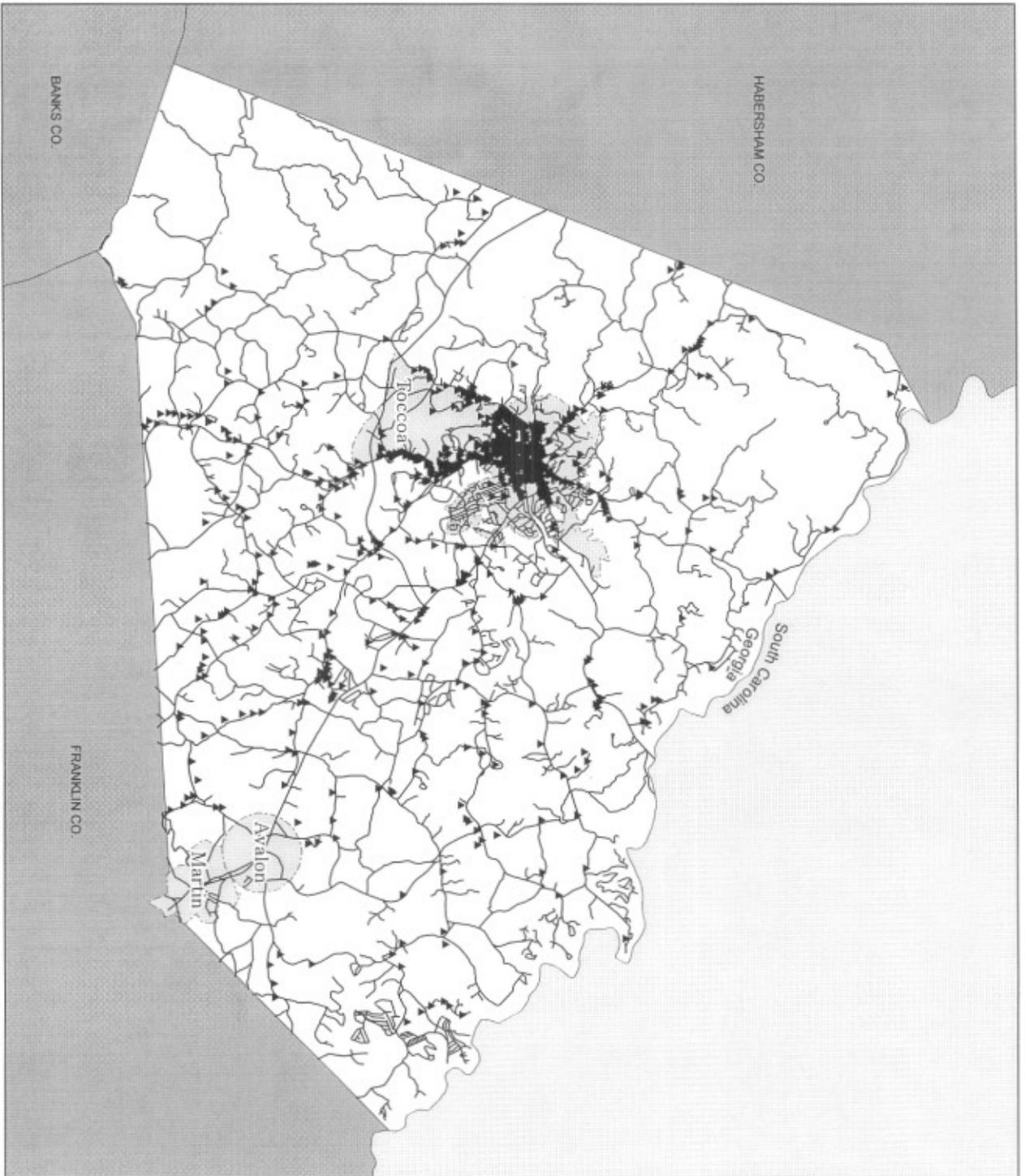
Follow-up at the University of Georgia consisted of examinations of historic maps and aerial background materials. Both were useful in the development of contexts for the county and to underline the development history.

Typological analysis consisted of grouping field forms by building resource type or sometimes by its style, and then determining which structures deserved full survey forms. Photographs were referenced on appropriate forms, with descriptions and site plans acting as a check on usually one or two number differences in film roll sequences. Final typologies were determined, both for Toccoa and county areas, after the fieldwork process was completed. Forms were typologically organized, generally with the better examples near the beginning of each series. Renumbering, both on forms and on maps, completed the process for properties in County areas.

Overall, typological classification proved a useful tool for grouping properties, especially for reducing the number of types forms. However, the surveyors found the typology system to be more an analytical tool than one useful for saving time in the field. Field assignments of typological categories would have probably have led to some erroneous calls; in fact, final typologies were revised after the survey was completed.

Historic Sites

STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA



Produced By Georgia
Mountains RDC
June 28, 2004



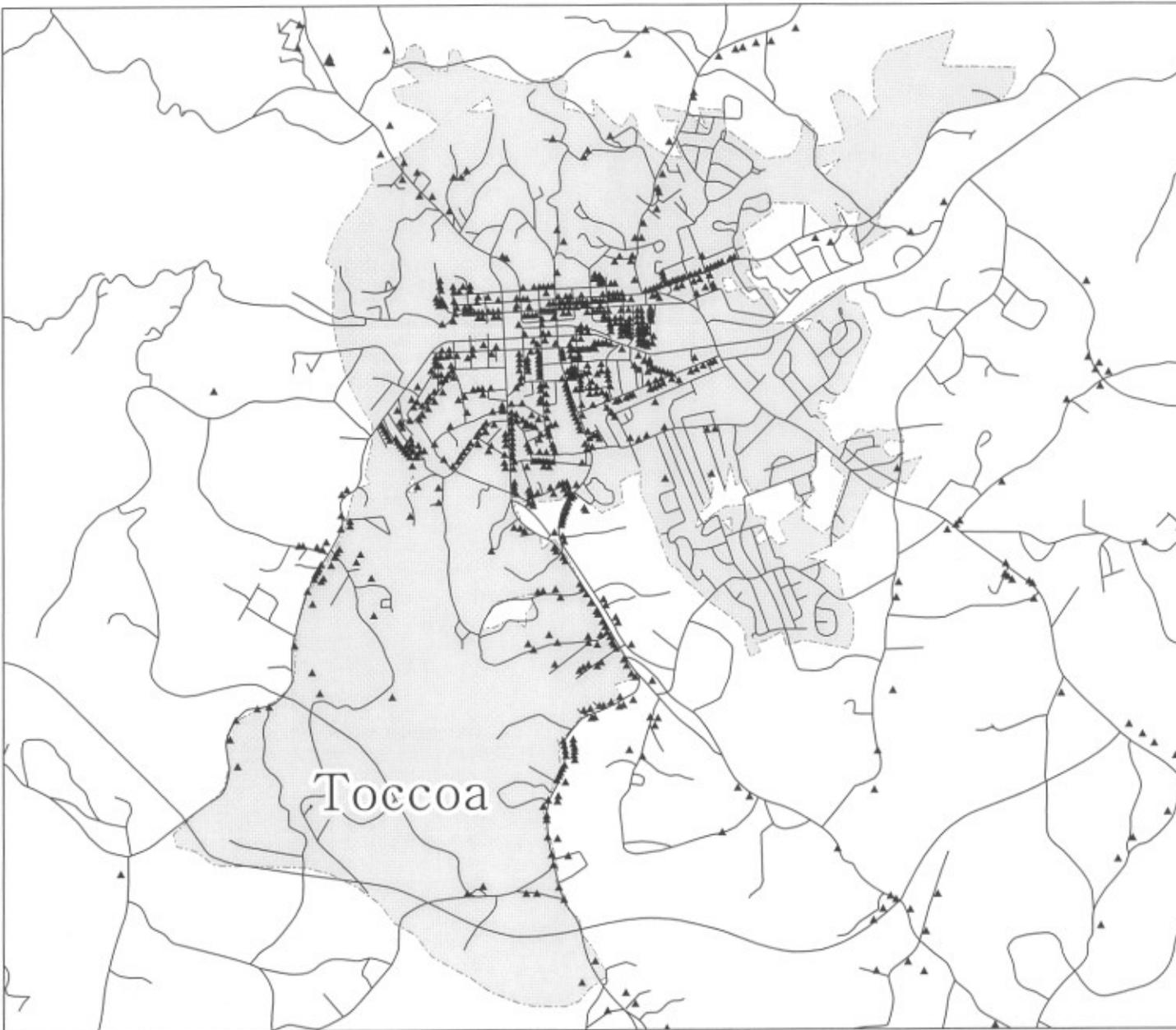
Scale 1:116,000
0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles

Legend

- ▲ Historic Sites
- City Limits

Historic Sites

TOCCOA, GEORGIA



Produced By Georgia
Mountains RDC
June 28, 2004



Scale 1:31,000



Legend

- ▲ Historic Sites
- City Limits

Assessment of Current and Future Needs

As in many other Georgia counties, historic resources in Stephens County are threatened mainly by neglect, abandonment or unsympathetic new development. Some agriculture remains, but much of the agricultural economy that formerly supported many small farmsteads (and tenant houses) has now disappeared. I-85 cuts through near the southeast sector of the county with the usual commercial spillover. Route 17 especially, leading from I-85 to Toccoa through the historic hamlets of Avalon and Martin, could become a single uninterrupted commercial strip.

Commercial developments generally threaten Toccoa, but in different ways. Approaches to the city are nearly all dominated by strip development. This, in turn, has had the effect of drawing commercial life out of the town center. An urban renewal project of the late 1960s virtually transformed the town center. Two rows of commercial buildings were destroyed to provide parking, and a continuous concrete arcade was introduced in the town center. Many storefronts have been rebuilt or covered in new materials. Traditional relationships to the street have been changed altogether.

Residential areas of the City preserve much of their historic and original character. This particularly true along East Doyle Street and east Tugalo Street, which contain many fine, relatively high-style houses. Similar areas exist West Doyle Street and South of Currahee Street, especially along higher elevations. Commercial corridors such as Currahee Street or Broad Street have carved unsympathetic swatches through the city, symbolically and effectively dividing it up.

Buildings in the rural county areas suffer mainly from neglect, loss of landscape context, encroaching commercial activity and unsympathetic changes. A large percentage of buildings (20%) are either neglected or abandoned. Many secondary buildings, especially those relating to farming activities, have been lost. The County overall is in transition from an agricultural and industrial economy to a service industry economy. The fate of historic resources, other than perhaps "outstanding examples" is tenuous.

Using the Chapman report and its local knowledge, the Natural and Historic Resources Committee examined the long list of historic resources in Stephens County. In concert with the intent of the Comprehensive Planning process, the Committee identified those resources believed to be most significant to the local community. Identifying these resources is the first step in developing the shared understanding that the community needs to protect these resources. The committee's findings on the historic resources are discussed in the following section. The findings on the natural resources are discussed, at length, in a separate chapter.

The vast majority of the findings are presented in map form. Because presenting all the historic information on a single map would be rather overwhelming, the following list is of the most significant and is represented on the following map.

Significant Historic Resources

- Tugalo Indian Mound
- Unicoi Turnpike
- Estatoee Indian Village
- Stephens County Courthouse (Doyle Street)
- Riverside (Prather Mansion: Prather Bridge Rd.)
- Simmons-Bond House (130 W. Tugalo St.)
- Walters-David House (429 E. Tugalo St.)
- Travellers Rest State Historic Site (Riverdale Rd.)
- Simpson Power Company (Toccoa Falls)
- Railroad Depot (Alexander and Foreacre Streets)
- Liberty Lodge (Riverdale Rd.)
- Old Hospital (N. Blvd. and Tuglo St.)
- Yow's Mill (a.k.a. Davis Mill: Old Mill Bridge Rd. in Eastanollee)
- North Broad Viaduct (Railroad trestle: off Hwy. 123 S.)
- Avalon/Martin Historic Districts (Hwy. 17 S.)
- Habersham Manor House (326 W. Doyle St.)
- Tuagalo Street Area
- West Doyle Street Area
- Buck Creek Mill (Currahee St.)
- Eastanollee Auditorium (Eastanollee School Rd.)
- Friendship Baptist Church (Corner of Sage & Sautee St.)
- Tugalo Baptist Church (E. Silver Shoals Rd; near Spring Branch Park)
- Currahee Church (Ayersville Rd.)
- Head House (Hwy. 123 and Red Rock Rd.)
- Dr. Edge/Collins Home (Owl Swamp Rd., which is off of Riverdale Rd.)
- Stephens County Historical Society HQ and Museum (313 Pond St.)
- City of Martin National Register District

These historic resources are to be given special consideration to that they may be protected for future generations.

Additionally, the Committee identified the following issues as having a high priority:

- The Stephens County Courthouse should be preserved. The County should rehabilitate the building for continued use even if additional space is needed elsewhere.
- The Toccoa railroad depot needs to be preserved. The city of Toccoa was founded because of the railroad, and the depot serves as focal point for this connection
- Several areas in Toccoa should be considered for designation as a historic district, are a National Register Historic District or a locally designated historic district. Toccoa has already lost too many of its important historic structures. These districts will ensure that the existing structures are protected.
- The Russell Wildlife Management Area contains numerous, fragile resources (archaeological and above ground) that will need special attention and protection.

- The Committee wants to assist Stephens County Foundation, Inc. in the preservation and promotion of both natural and historic resources in the Tugaloo Corridor

Goals, Policies and Objectives

Goals

- To identify and recognize the important historic resources of Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin and Avalon
- To increase the public's awareness, knowledge and enjoyment of the historic resources in Stephens County and its cities
- To protect, conserve and manage the significant historic resources in Stephens County and its cities

Policy and Objectives

- Assist organizations in identifying significant historic resources
- Consider designation of areas within Toccoa, Martin and Avalon that are eligible either as individual National Register Nominations and or as a local historic district or National Register District
- Abide by State and Federal regulations concerning historic and archaeological resources
- Rehabilitate and utilize the Stephens County Courthouse
- Rehabilitate, renovate and utilize Toccoa railroad depot
- Assist the Stephens County Foundation, Inc. in the preservation and promotion of the historic in the Tugaloo Corridor
- Promote the economic benefits historic and cultural heritage of Stephens County and its cities through heritage tourism

Implementation

- Update the current county wide historic resources survey that was completed in 1990
- Consider designation of areas within Toccoa, Martin and Avalon that are eligible either as individual National Register Nominations and or as a local historic district or National Register District.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Transportation Overview

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census Data, Stephens County has an estimated population of 25,435 and is comprised of some 179 square miles. The density per square mile for this area is approximately 142.1 persons and 65.1 housing units. The City of Toccoa, likewise, has a total population of 9,323 persons with a total square mileage of 8.3 miles. The density per square mile for Toccoa is 1,123.25 persons and 528.4 housing units. The estimated work-eligible population (16 years and over) for Stephens County is 20,117 persons; of those individuals 11,795 persons are in the labor force.

In evaluating the transportation network of a community it is important to evaluate certain economic and social patterns that impact such infrastructure. For this reason, a list of relevant employment and commuting census data is listed in the tables below. These tables provide the reader with an understanding about the uses of Stephens County's transportation network and the factors, which impact this network.

Table 8.1 provides a comparison between Stephens County and statewide statistics for place of work for workers. It is important to recognize that the majority of Stephens County's work population (77%) remained inside the county while 20% worked outside the county. Finally, three percent (3%) of the total eligible workers traveled outside of the state for work. By knowing where people are working transportation planners are able to better understand traffic patterns.

Table 8.1

**P26. PLACE OF WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER--STATE AND COUNTY LEVEL
[5] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

	Georgia	Stephens County	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa
Total:	3,832,803	11,795	102	179	3,824
Worked in state of residence:	3,737,030	11,432	100	170	3,745
Worked in county of residence	2,240,758	9,045	84	123	3,157
Worked outside county of residence	1,496,272	2,387	16	47	588
Worked outside state of residence	95,773	363	2	9	79

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

Furthermore, *Table 8.2* helps to define how people chose to travel to work. This table reflects the commute travel modes for Stephens County. Not surprisingly, 95% of all working residents traveled to work by vehicle in 2000. Of those traveling to work by vehicle, 86.5 % chose to drive alone while 13.5% chose to carpool, 2.47 % chose to walk

or ride a bike to work, 0.42% chose other means, and 1.74% worked from home. Public transportation consisted of only 0.16% of the traveling population. Of these individuals, 47.4% chose to ride the bus and 52.6% chose to use a taxicab.

Table 8.2

P30. MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [16] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over

	Georgia	Stephens County	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa
Total:	3,832,803	11,795	102	179	3,824
Car, truck, or van:	3,525,972	11,218	93	170	3,606
Drove alone	2,968,910	9,708	80	148	3,083
Carpooled	557,062	1,510	13	22	523
Public transportation:	90,030	19	0	2	7
Bus or trolley bus	59,355	9	0	2	7
Streetcar or trolley car (publico in Puerto Rico)	843	0	0	0	0
Subway or elevated	20,116	0	0	0	0
Railroad	1,762	0	0	0	0
Ferryboat	382	0	0	0	0
Taxicab	7,572	10	0	0	0
Motorcycle	3,055	12	0	0	0
Bicycle	5,588	20	0	0	15
Walked	65,776	272	6	5	76
Other means	33,396	49	0	2	23
Worked at home	108,986	205	3	0	97

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

Table 8.3 further defines the vehicle occupancy types for workers who chose to carpool. The average carpool for Stephens County was 2-persons per vehicle. The data reveals that 77.2% were 2 person carpools, 15.8% were 3 person carpools, 3.8% were 4 person carpools, 2.7% were 5 to 6 person carpools, and 0.5% were 7 or more person carpools.

Table 8.3

P35. PRIVATE VEHICLE OCCUPANCY FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [10] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over

	Georgia	Stephens County	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa
Total:	3,832,803	11,795	102	179	3,824
Car, truck, or van:	3,525,972	11,218	93	170	3,606
Drove alone	2,968,910	9,708	80	148	3,083
Carpooled:	557,062	1,510	13	22	523
In 2-person carpool	406,954	1,167	11	20	443
In 3-person carpool	87,725	239	0	2	49
In 4-person carpool	34,505	57	0	0	21
In 5- or 6-person carpool	18,718	40	2	0	3
In 7-or-more-person carpool	9,160	7	0	0	7
Other means (including those who worked at home)	306,831	577	9	9	218

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

Tables 8.4 and 8.5 provide a better understanding about the average trip length (time) for workers in Stephens County. Table 8.4 reveals that the average travel time for workers was somewhere between 10-20 minutes in length for those who didn't work at home.

The maximum travel time was 90 minutes or more, which comprised only 2.8% of the working population.

Table 8.4

P31. TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [15] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over

	Georgia	Stephens County	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa
Total:	3,832,803	11,795	102	179	3,824
Did not work at home:	3,723,817	11,509	99	179	3,727
Less than 5 minutes:	93,446	613	19	0	310
5 to 9 minutes:	334,403	1,801	7	15	1,087
10 to 14 minutes:	511,628	2,721	14	41	969
15 to 19 minutes:	583,820	2,415	31	26	592
20 to 24 minutes:	519,875	1,298	4	42	170
25 to 29 minutes:	209,374	440	0	5	79
30 to 34 minutes:	535,531	821	9	22	167
35 to 39 minutes:	108,867	153	5	1	41
40 to 44 minutes:	132,121	97	1	0	27
45 to 59 minutes:	347,610	477	7	14	112
60 to 89 minutes:	234,588	427	0	7	111
90 or more minutes:	112,554	327	2	6	62
Worked at home:	108,986	205	3	0	97

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

Table 8.5 breaks the travel time down further by observing the types of transportation utilized along with travel lengths. Some 80.1% of workers traveling by non-public transportation means, and spent less than 30 minutes traveling to work. Additionally, 9.2% traveled 30-44 minutes, with the remaining population traveling 45 or more minutes.

Table 8.5

P32. TRAVEL TIME TO WORK BY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER WHO DID NOT WORK AT HOME [13] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over who did not work at home

	Georgia	Stephens County	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa
Total:	3,723,817	11,590	99	179	3,727
Less than 30 minutes:	2,252,546	9,288	75	129	3,207
Public transportation:	25,868	17	0	0	7
Other means:	2,226,678	9,271	75	129	3,200
30 to 44 minutes:	776,519	1,071	15	23	235
Public transportation:	20,442	0	0	0	0
Other means:	756,077	1,071	15	23	235
45 to 59 minutes:	347,610	477	7	14	112
Public transportation:	13,742	2	0	2	0
Other means:	333,868	475	7	12	112
60 or more minutes:	347,142	754	2	13	173
Public transportation:	29,978	0	0	0	0
Other means:	317,164	754	2	13	173

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

Table 8.6 shows the various times workers leave their homes to travel to work. According to the data, the majority of workers left home between 6:30 and 8:30 A.M. in order to reach work on time. Therefore, the average weekday peak hours of travel would be between 6-9 o'clock in the morning.

Table 8.6

**P34. TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [17] -
Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

	Georgia	Stephens County	Avalon	Martin	Toccoa
Total:	3,832,803	11,795	102	179	3,824
Did not work at home:	3,723,817	11,590	99	179	3,727
12:00 a.m. to 4:59 a.m.	108,019	405	2	3	130
5:00 a.m. to 5:29 a.m.	102,302	198	3	12	64
5:30 a.m. to 5:59 a.m.	156,682	381	4	10	97
6:00 a.m. to 6:29 a.m.	343,349	970	2	16	199
6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	422,728	1,614	7	18	494
7:00 a.m. to 7:29 a.m.	608,777	1,581	15	24	448
7:30 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.	610,869	2,481	29	31	855
8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	391,849	1,153	23	26	341
8:30 a.m. to 8:59 a.m.	187,692	379	2	0	129
9:00 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.	204,205	470	0	0	220
10:00 a.m. to 10:59 a.m.	79,927	185	0	6	55
11:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	34,761	71	1	0	54
12:00 p.m. to 3:59 p.m.	219,434	731	2	19	196
4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.	253,223	971	9	14	445
Worked at home	108,986	205	3	0	97

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

Land Use and Transportation

The high reliance on vehicle use for mobility is to a large extent the result of the separation of land uses. Single-family subdivisions are located in the county in areas distant from employment and activity centers, leading to a greater reliance on vehicles and an increase in vehicle miles traveled, as has been noted in the previous section. Likewise, current housing opportunities within Stephens County are not often located within a convenient walking distance to employment/activity centers, thus requiring vehicle use when public transit is not readily available. Working at home (i.e., home occupations) helps to reduce vehicle travel. Offering opportunities to walk to destinations also reduces vehicle dependency. The density and patterns of land usage has a major bearing on the modes and distances of travel.

Stephens County recognizes the intrinsic relationship between Land use patterns/densities and travel patterns/behaviors. As a result, the county's comprehensive plan supports mixed uses in the downtown central business district, and the mixing of office and commercial uses so that daily lunchtime trips are shortened, reduced, or completely eliminated.

A. Inventory & Needs Assessments

According to the University of Georgia's annual publication of *The Georgia County Guide 2002, 21st Edition*, Stephens County has approximately 514.08 miles of roadway. There is 70.43 miles of state route, 503.85 miles of county roads, and 68.15 miles of city streets that comprises Stephens County's roadway network. The report indicates that these numbers represent a 4.1% increase since 1992. Of the total road mileage, 413.03 miles or 80.3 % is paved and 101.05 miles or 19.7 % is unpaved. This is an increase of 9.1 % in the amount of paved mileage for the county since 1992. The GCG data further reveals that there are 25,876 registered vehicles and 20,327 licensed drivers in Stephens County. These local drivers along with the countless number of visitors and tourists, who come to Stephens County annually, traveled some 825,638 daily vehicle miles. There is one airport and a rail system that provides both passenger and freight service. There is no navigable waterway system or rural transit program for Stephens County. Currently, sidewalks are only available within the City of Toccoa.

Roadways

In order to determine the adequacy of a roadway system, it is necessary to inventory all road facilities according to how they fulfill two purposes: (1) movement of traffic, and (2) access to property. By evaluating the degree to which a particular roadway serves each of the two basic functions, a functional classification can be determined.

Functional Classification

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a roadway network. Functional classification is routinely used for planning roadway system development, determining the jurisdictional responsibility for particular systems, and fiscal planning. Therefore, understanding the function of a road is critical to the transportation planning process. The parameters established by a road systems function will greatly impact the need for future improvements to the system.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have identified 11 different types of Functional Classifications in the United States. Each individual State's designated Transportation Agency is responsible for the classification of all roads in the public road system. In Georgia, this responsibility belongs to the Department of Transportation (GDOT). *Table 8.7*, shown below, identifies the different types of classifications used for roadways in Georgia.

Table 8.7
Types of Functional Classifications

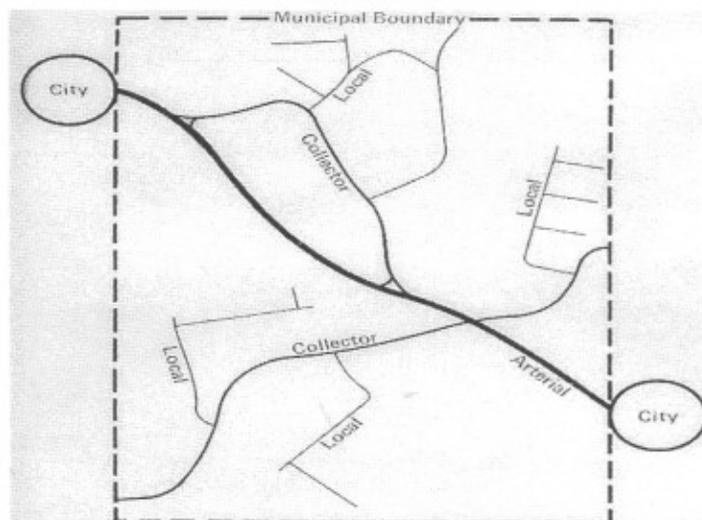
Key For Functional Classification	Stands For
IPA	Interstate Principal Arterial
PAR	Principal Arterial- Rural
MAR	Minor Arterial- Rural
MCR	Major Collector- Rural
NMC	Minor Collector- Rural
LOC	Local- Rural
UFY	Freeway- Urban
UPA	Principal Arterial- Urban
MAS	Minor Arterial- Urban
CST	Collector Street- Urban
LOU	Local- Urban

Source: GDOT, Office of Transportation Data

(Note: For the purpose of this document, only rural classifications are relevant to Stephens County.)

Generally, most roadways fall into one of four broader categories-- *principal arterial, minor arterials, collector roads, and local roads*. **Arterials** provide longer through travel between major trip generators (larger cities, recreational areas, etc.); and **collector** roads collect traffic from the local roads and also connect smaller cities and towns with each other and to the arterials; finally, **local** roads provide access to private property or low volume public facilities. *Figure 8.1* below, shows a diagram map of these four categories.

Figure 8.1: *Illustrates Functional Classification Categories*



Arterial Roadways

Generally, the primary function of an arterial roadway is to move traffic thru a defined region or corridor. The most common rural arterial systems are Interstate facilities. These roadways typically provide limited access to the facility and carry large volumes of traffic at higher speeds. Within municipal boundaries and in some rural non-municipal areas, these systems may provide limited access to cross streets and driveways to private property. There are two different types of arterial roadways: principal (major) arterials and minor arterials.

Principal (major) arterials serve major activity centers and major corridors within a community or defined area and typically have the highest traffic volumes. These roadways carry a large proportion of trips with origins and destinations within the surrounding region. They also serve to move thru-traffic into and out of the region or area by connecting them to other communities. These roadways may provide access to private property or be a controlled access facility. Typically, these facilities have 100 to 200 feet right-of-way, four or more lanes, and may be divided by a median or some type of barrier. Speeds are generally high- ranging from 45 mph to 70 mph. Interstates and freeways are the best example of such road systems.

Minor arterials are often classified as streets and highways (non-interstate or freeways) that interconnect with and compliment the principal (major) arterials. These roadways serve trips of moderate length and emphasize more land access than major arterial roads. Minor arterials usually have 80 to 120 feet of right-of-way and have wide intersections with turn lanes. These roadways may have up to five lanes of traffic. However, most facilities in rural areas are two lanes. Speed limits are moderately high- ranging between 45-65 mph. Most State Routes typically fall into this category. The rural minor arterial road system should, in conjunction with the principal arterial system, form a rural network having the following characteristics:

- Link cities and towns (and other traffic generators, such as major resort areas, that are capable of attracting travel over similarly long distances) and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service.
- Be spaced at such intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas of the State are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway.
- Provide (because of the two characteristics defined immediately above) service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those predominantly served by rural collector or local systems. Minor arterials therefore constitute routes whose design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to thru movement.

Figure 8.2:
*Illustrates
Arterial Road
Characteristics*

Characteristics of Arterial Highways Summary

- 1. Long Distance**
- 2. Higher Speeds**
- 3. Higher Volumes of traffic – Multilane Facilities**
- 4. Interstate Travel - Interstate System**
- 5. Links Major Cities**
- 6. Statewide and Inter-county Travel**
- 7. Area Service Coverage**

According to the most recent data available for Stephens County, there are twenty-four roadways that classify as arterial roads. Five are classified as Rural Principal Arterial (PARs) roadways: Portions of *SR 17*, *SR 17 ALT*, *SR 63*, *SR 184*, and *SR 365*. The remaining nineteen are classified as minor arterials. They are *SR 17 ALT(portion)*, *SR 63(portion)*, *SR 106*, *SR 145*, *SR 184(portion)*, *SR 320*, *SR 365(portion)*, *CR 104*, *CR 185*, *CR 239*, *CR 278*, *CR 422*, *CS 508*, *CS 509*, *CS 510*, *CS 644*, *CS 724*, *CS 734*, and *CS 736*.

Collector Roadways

The primary purpose of a collector road is to collect traffic from other roadways in commercial and residential areas and then distribute that traffic onto arterial road systems. Some collector roads serve thru-traffic as well as local traffic, which accesses nearby destinations. Essentially, collectors are designed to provide a greater balance between mobility and land access within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. The makeup of a collector facility is largely dependent upon the density, size, and type of abutting developments. Additionally, due to the emphasis on balancing between mobility and access, a collector facility is better designed to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity while still serving the needs of the motoring public.

Collectors typically have 60-100 feet right-of-ways and two to four travel lanes. Collectors intersect with cross-streets and driveways more frequently than arterial systems. Speeds and traffic volumes along these roadways are moderate. Posted speed limits are generally between 30-55 mph.

There are two types of Collectors: major collectors and minor collectors- although there are only slight differences between the two.

Major Collector routes should: (1) Provide service to any county seat not on an arterial route, to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance, such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, important mining and agricultural areas, etc.; (2) link these places

with nearby larger towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification; and (3) serve the more important intra-county travel corridors. There are fifteen Rural Major Collector Roads (MCRs) in Stephens County: *SR 17(portion), SR 63(portion), SR 105, SR 106(portion), SR 145(portion), SR 184(portion), County Road (CR) 2, CR 226, CR 227, CR 234, CR 236, CR 238, CR 341, CR 415, and CR 524.*

Minor Collector routes should: (1) Be spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; (2) provide service to the remaining smaller communities; and (3) link the locally important traffic generators.

There are nine Minor Collector Roads (NMCs) in Stephens County: *CR 6, CR 16, CR 43, CR 56, CR 57, CR 146, CR 206 CR 418, and CR 419.*

In addition to these two general classifications, Georgia also has a separate classification for Collector Streets (CST) in urbanized areas. The City of Toccoa, being a small urban area has 27 roads that are classified as Collector Streets: *CR 77, CR 83, CR 104, Cr 184, CR 231, CR 354, CS 500, CS 506, CS 507, CS 508, CS 511, CS 527, CS 528, CS 529, CS 530, CS 533, CS 538, CS 550, CS 551, CS 560, CS 566, CS 567, CS 568, CS 581, CS 602, CS 662, CS 733.*

Figure 8.3:
*Illustrates
Collector Road
Characteristics*

Characteristics of Collector Highways Summary

- 1. Shorter Trips**
- 2. Moderate Speeds**
- 3. Lower Volumes of Traffic - Two Lane Facilities**
- 4. Intra-county Travel**
- 5. Serves:**
 - a. County Seats**
 - b. Larger Towns not on Higher System**
 - c. Consolidated Schools**
 - d. Shipping Points**
 - e. Larger Manufacturing Areas**

Local Roadways

Local roadways, because of their design features, are influenced less by traffic volumes and are tailored to provide more local access and community livability. Mobility on local facilities is typically incidental and involves relatively short trips at lower speeds to and from collector facilities. They are designed for neighborhood environments. This

"neighborhood" nature requires travel speeds to be generally lower than collectors and arterials. Posted speed limits on local city streets generally range between 15 and 35 mph, depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses. Local county roads are generally posted between 30-55 mph. Traffic volumes on local streets are generally less than 5,000 vehicles per day, and often vary depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety and aesthetics are generally high priorities on local road systems in and around residential and commercial areas. Wider travel lanes and broader turning radii, to accommodate larger vehicle sizes, are major considerations on local streets in industrial/commercial areas.

The rural local road system should have the following characteristics: (1) Serve primarily to provide access to adjacent land; and (2) provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher systems. Local roads will, of course, constitute the rural mileage not classified as part of the principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector systems.

Figure 8.3:
Illustrates
Local Road
Characteristics

Characteristics of Local Highways Summary

- 1. Adjacent Land is Primary Function**
- 2. Shortest distances**
- 3. Low Speeds**
- 4. Low Volumes**
- 5. Roads not Falling in Higher Systems**

Road System Inventory

The majority of all roadways in Stephens County are functionally classified as rural local roads. Stephens County's remaining roadways are classified respectively as follows: major collectors- rural; minor collectors- rural; and principal arterials- rural. These roadway classifications can be further analyzed using the Georgia Department of Transportation's 400-Series Reports. *Table 8.8* provides a more detailed breakdown of the various functional classes for Stephens County roadways by mileage, route type, and road system.

Table 8.8
Mileage By Route Type and Road System
Stephens County
12/31/2002

<i>Type Road System</i>	STATE ROUTE		COUNTY ROAD		CITY STREET		TOTALS	
	<i>Mileage</i>	<i>VMT</i>	<i>Mileage</i>	<i>VMT</i>	<i>Mileage</i>	<i>VMT</i>	<i>Mileage</i>	<i>VMT</i>
RURAL PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL	15.49	136836.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15.49	136836.01
RURAL MINOR ARTERIAL	9.90	43443.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.90	43443.00
RURAL MAJOR COLLECTOR	25.15	70203.00	27.67	43050.00	0.22	132.00	53.04	113385.00
RURAL MINOR COLLECTOR	0.00	0.00	25.30	67992.00	0.00	0.00	25.30	67992.00
RURAL LOCAL	0.00	0.00	277.06	160795.00	5.90	3783.60	282.96	164578.60
RURAL TOTAL	50.54	250482.01	330.03	271837.00	6.12	3915.60	386.69	526234.61
SMALL URBAN PRIN. ART.	10.10	112208.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.10	112208.00
SMALL URBAN MINOR ART.	9.79	54277.99	7.87	22592.00	6.74	15788.60	24.40	92658.59
SMALL URBAN COLLECTOR	0.00	0.00	2.88	5872.40	9.48	7163.80	12.36	13036.20
SMALL URBAN LOCAL	0.00	0.00	32.31	26751.20	65.98	54749.30	98.29	81500.50
SMALL URBAN TOTAL	19.89	166485.99	43.06	55215.60	82.20	77701.70	145.15	299403.29
TOTALS	70.43	416968.00	373.09	327052.60	88.32	81617.30	531.84	825637.90

Source: GDOT 400 Series Reports # 445.

Furthermore, *Table 8.9* indicates the major road inventory for Stephens County with corresponding classifications, number of lanes, and agency jurisdiction/responsibility.

Table 8.9
Major Road Inventory By Functional Classification,
Number of Lanes, and Jurisdiction-
Stephens County

Road Number	Functional Classification	Number of Lanes	Jurisdiction
SR 17	PAR/MCR	2-4	State
SR 17 ALT	PAR/UPA/MAS	2-4	State
SR 63	UPA/MAR/MCR	2-4	State
SR 105	MCR	2	State
SR 106	MAR/MCR	2	State
SR 145	MAS/MCR	2	State
SR 184	UPA/MAR/MAS/MCR	2-4	State
SR 320	MAR	2	State
SR 328	MCR	2	State
SR 365	PAR/UPA/MAR	2-24	State
CR 6	NMC	2	Local
CR 16	NMC	2	Local
CR 26	MCR	2	Local

CR 43	NMC	2	Local
CR 56	NMC	2	Local
CR 57	NMC	2	Local
CR 77	CST	2	Local
CR 83	CST	2	Local
CR 84	MAS	2	Local
CR 104	MAS/CST	2-3	Local
CR 146	NMC	2	Local
CR 184	CST	2	Local
CR 185	MAS	2	Local
CR 198	MCR	2	Local
CR 206	NMC	2	Local
CR 231	CST	2	Local
CR 239	MAS	2	Local
CR 278	MAS	2	Local
CR 354	CST	2	Local
CR 418	NMC	2	Local
CR 419	NMC	2	Local
CR 420	MCR	2	Local
CR 421	MCR	2	Local
CR 422	MAS	2	Local
CR 538	MCR	2	Local
CR 540	MCR	2	Local
CR 569	MCR	2	Local
CS 500	CST	2	Local
CS 506	CST	2	Local
CS 507	CST	2	Local
CS 508	MAS/CST	2	Local
CS 509	MAS	2	Local
CS 510	MAS	2	Local
CS 511	CST	2	Local
CS 527	CST	2	Local
CS 528	CST	2	Local
CS 529	CST	2	Local
CS 530	CST	2	Local
CS 533	CST	2	Local
CS 538	CST	2	Local
CS 550	CST	2	Local
CS 551	CST	2	Local
CS 560	CST	2	Local
CS 566	CST	2	Local
CS 567	CST	2	Local
CS 568	CST	2	Local
CS 581	CST	2	Local
CS 602	CST	2	Local
CS 644	MAS	2	Local
CS 662	CST	2	Local
CS 724	MAS/MCR	2	Local
CS 733	CST	2	Local
CS 734	MAS	2	Local
CS 736	MAS	2-3	Local

Source: Compiled by Georgia Mountains RDC based on data from GDOT, 2003.

Traffic Counts

Table 8.10 provides the most current traffic counts available for Stephens County. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is the total volume on a roadway segment for one year divided by the number of days in the year. The AADT estimates are shown on the AADT MAP. All traffic count data is provide by the Georgia Department of Transportation and generated using data elements contained in the MTPT evaluation conducted during this study. For further details refer to *Appendix A*.

Table 8.10
2002 Traffic Counts
Major Roads in Stephens County

Road Number	F.C.	Highest AADT
SR 17	PAR/MCR	10,800
SR 17 ALT	PAR/UPA/ MAS	24,300
SR 63	UPA/MAR/ MCR	9,600
SR 105	MCR	400
SR 106	MAR/MCR	2300
SR 145	MAS/MCR	6,100
SR 184	UPA/MAR/ MAS/MCR	10,200
SR 320	MAR	1,100
SR 328	MCR	2,600
SR 365	PAR/UPA/ MAR	4,200
CR 6	NMC	880
CR 16	NMC	880
CR 26	MCR	1,800
CR 43	NMC	880
CR 56	NMC	880

CR 57	NMC	880
CR 77	CST	1,550
CR 83	CST	1,550
CR 84	MAS	3,000
CR 104	MAS/CST	6,600
CR 146	NMC	880
CR 184	CST	1,300
CR 185	MAS	6,200
CR 198	MCR	880
CR 206	NMC	880
CR 231	CST	1,600
CR 239	MAS	800
CR 278	MAS	700
CR 354	CST	400
CR 418	NMC	880
CR 419	NMC	1,200
CR 420	MCR	700
CR 421	MCR	2,200
CR 422	MAS	4,200
CR 538	MCR	4,100
CR 540	MCR	600
CR 569	MCR	2,100

CS 500	CST	1,550
CS 506	CST	1,550
CS 507	CST	1,550
CS 508	MAS/CST	4,500
CS 509	MAS	1,100
CS 510	MAS	6,000
CS 511	CST	4,200
CS 527	CST	2,000
CS 528	CST	2,200
CS 529	CST	1,550
CS 530	CST	1,550
CS 533	CST	1,550
CS 538	CST	1,200
CS 550	CST	1,550
CS 551	CST	1,300
CS 560	CST	1,550
CS 566	CST	1,550
CS 567	CST	1,550
CS 568	CST	1,550
CS 581	CST	500
CS 602	CST	400
CS 644	MAS	7,000

CS 662	CST	1,550
CS 724	MAS/MCR	1,600
CS 733	CST	1,550
CS 734	MAS	7,070
CS 736	MAS	7,070

Source: Compiled by Georgia Mountains RDC based on Data from GDOT.

When comparing AADT data it must be understood that traffic counts vary considerably from day to day, season to season, and year to year. Certain environmental factors and social patterns such as days of the week, different seasons of the year, weather, special events, and other anomalies can all have an impact on the raw data that is collected and the averages, which result for them. For the reason, FHWA and GDOT have established control factors, which help to account for and “factor-out” these anomalies. Thus, GDOT is able to reduce the probability of generating faulty data.

Levels of Service

The Florida Department of Transportation’s Quality/Level of Service Handbook, 2002 Edition best defines Level of Service (LOS) as “a quantitative stratification of the quality of service” for a segment of or an entire roadway. Quality of Service (QOS), likewise, is defined as “a traveler-based perception of how well a transportation service or facility operates.” In more simple terms, Level of Service (LOS) is a measurement of how well a roadway segment or intersection operates. There are six levels involved in such evaluations. These quantitative stratifications are represented as alphabet characters and range from A (best) to F (worst), and each letter represents a capacity of service based upon established characteristics and average travel speeds (ATS). Florida’s Q/LOS Handbook’s Rural Undeveloped and Rural Developed characteristics best describe the typical roadways in Stephens County. Thus, these were applied during the evaluation process for the purpose of this document. *Table 8.10*, provides a listing of the LOS thresholds, which were used for the evaluation of services. The more uniform, 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 2000) characteristics are more applicable to Urbanized area and do not take into account the rural factors which impact Stephens County, and thus were not utilized for this analysis.

Table 8.11
Rural Levels of Service (LOS) Thresholds

<i>LOS</i>	<i>2-lane Hwy (ru) v/c</i>	<i>2-lane Hwy (rd) % FFS</i>	<i>Multilane Hwy (ru) v/c</i>	<i>Multilane Hwy (rd) v/c</i>	<i>Arterials ATS</i>	<i>Intersections/ Non-State Signalized Control Delay</i>
<i>A</i>	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	> 42 mph	≤ 5 sec
<i>B</i>	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	> 34 mph	≤ 10 sec
<i>C</i>	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	> 27 mph	≤ 20 sec
<i>D</i>	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	> 21 mph	≤ 30 sec
<i>E</i>	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	> 16 mph	≤ 40 sec
<i>F</i>	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 0.34	≤ 16 mph	> 40 sec

Source: Florida Department of Transportation's 2002 Quality/Level of Service Handbook

v/c = Demand Capacity Ratio % FFS = Percent Free Flow Speed
 ATS = Average Travel Speed ru = rural undeveloped rd = rural developed

Stephens County desires to maintain an overall level of service (LOS) of "D" or better for all major roadways within the system, with an optimal LOS of "C" or better. An analysis of the network reveals that most roadways exceed this standard, however, there are a few that fall below the desired LOS. Table 8.12, below, provides an overview of the LOS Analysis and recommendations for action for the major roadways inventoried under this plan. For a detailed analysis for these facilities, as well as for all local roadways evaluated for Stephens County, please refer to Appendix A.

Table 8.12
Lowest Levels of Service and Required Actions
for Major Roads in Stephens County

Road Number	F.C.	Current LOS	10 Yr LOS	20 Yr LOS	Action Required
SR 17	PAR/MCR	E	~	~	IMMEDIATE
SR 17 ALT	PAR/UPA/MAS	F	~	~	IMMEDIATE
SR 63	UPA/MAR/MCR	E	~	~	IMMEDIATE
SR 105	MCR	A	A	A	X
SR 106	MAR/MCR	B	C	D	LONG TERM
SR 145	MAS/MCR	D	~	~	NEAR TERM
SR 184	UPA/MAR/MAS/MCR	E	~	~	IMMEDIATE
SR 320	MAR	A	B	D	LONG TERM
SR 328	MCR	B	C	E	LONG TERM
SR 365	PAR/UPA/MAR	E	~	~	IMMEDIATE
CR 6	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 16	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 26	MCR	B	B	D	LONG TERM
CR 43	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 56	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 57	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 77	CST	A	B	D	LONG TERM
CR 83	CST	A	B	C	X
CR 84	MAS	B	C	D	LONG TERM
CR 104	MAS/CST	A	B	C	X

CR 146	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 184	CST	A	A	C	X
CR 185	MAS	D	~	~	NEAR TERM
CR 198	MCR	A	A	B	X
CR 206	NMC	A	A	B	X
CR 231	CST	A	B	C	X
CR 239	MAS	A	A	B	X
CR 278	MAS	A	A	B	X
CR 354	CST	A	A	A	X
CR 418	NMC	A	A	C	X
CR 419	NMC	A	B	C	X
CR 420	MCR	A	A	B	X
CR 421	MCR	B	C	D	LONG TERM
CR 422	MAS	C	D	~	MEDIUM
CR 538	MCR	C	D	~	MEDIUM
CR 540	MCR	A	A	A	X
CR 569	MCR	B	C	D	LONG TERM
CS 500	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 506	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 507	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 508	MAS/CST	C	D	~	MEDIUM
CS 509	MAS	A	A	C	X
CS 510	MAS	C	D	~	LONG TERM
CS 511	CST	C	D	~	LONG TERM
CS 527	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 528	CST	B	B	D	LONG TERM
CS 529	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 530	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 533	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 538	CST	A	A	B	X
CS 550	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 551	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 560	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 566	CST	A	B	D	LONG TERM
CS 567	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 568	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 581	CST	A	A	A	X
CS 602	CST	A	A	A	X
CS 644	MAS	D	~	~	NEAR TERM
CS 662	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 724	MAS/MCR	A	B	D	LONG TERM
CS 733	CST	A	B	C	X
CS 734	MAS	D	~	~	NEAR TERM
CS 736	MAS	D	~	~	NEAR TERM

Source: Compiled by Georgia Mountains RDC based on data from GDOT, 2003.

Action Key: X= No Action; I= Immediate Action; N= Near Term; M= Medium Term; and L= Long Term

System Deficiencies

As discussed in the previous Levels of Service section, a number of roadways were identified as exceeding the thresholds for LOS. There are numerous road segments that are currently failing or will be failing in the very near future (LOS “E”, “F”, or “~”). Most of these roadways exist within or near the City of Toccoa and are primarily State Route systems. Additionally, there are several road segments that on the borderline of

the thresholds or will be breaching the thresholds over the period covered under this document. The majority of these roadways are a part of the local system (either county roads or city streets). For further details please refer to Current, 10-year, and 20-year Level of Service maps.

Note: In addition to this document, the reader should consult GDOT's Multi-modal Transportation Study Final Report conducted for Habersham, Rabun, Stephens, and White Counties prepared by the Day-Wilburn Associates, Inc. in July 2003.

Roadway Improvements

As previously mentioned under *Table 8.12*, the system analysis for Stephens County evaluated the road network for needed improvements and identified several roadways, which required either minor or major improvements. These recommended improvements were listed as being needed immediately or in the near, medium, or long term range in order to meet the established Level of Service goals for the county. Minor improvements are defined as facility improvements such as road widening of the average lane width up to 12-feet and shoulder widths up to 6 feet. Major improvements are defined as facility improvements with additions of: (1) a passing lane for two-lane facilities; and/or (2) one or more additional lane(s) in each direction (total of two more lanes) if a multilane or freeway facility.

Both major and minor improvements were identified as being needed for the following roadways:

- ✓ SR 17
- ✓ SR 17/ALT
- ✓ SR 63
- ✓ SR 106
- ✓ SR 145
- ✓ SR 184
- ✓ SR 320
- ✓ SR 328
- ✓ SR 365
- ✓ CR 26
- ✓ CR 77
- ✓ CR 84
- ✓ CR 185
- ✓ CR 421
- ✓ CR 422
- ✓ CR 538
- ✓ CR 569
- ✓ CS 508
- ✓ CS 510
- ✓ CS 511
- ✓ CS 528
- ✓ CS 566

- ✓ CS 644
- ✓ CS 724
- ✓ CS 734
- ✓ CS 736

For a complete list of recommendations and associated costs please refer to *Appendix A* of this document.

Bridges and Major Culverts

GDOT maintains a management system on every bridge and major culvert in the state. These Inventory Data Listings include the following relevant information:

- Location
- Sufficiency rating
- Facility carried
- Features intersected
- Year constructed
- Year reconstructed (if applicable)
- Date of last inspection
- Design load
- Structure and foundation type
- Appurtenances information
- Work programming data
- Hydraulic data
- Number of lanes
- Length, width and clearance
- Posting data

The structures are graded by a sufficiency rating, which is used to determine scheduling for rehabilitation or reconstruction of the facility. With adequate maintenance, any structure with a rating above 75 should still be in acceptable condition 20 years from its rating date. Those structures with a rating between 65 and 75 are more marginal, and those with a sufficiency rating below 65 are likely to require major rehabilitation or reconstruction within the next 20 years.

Stephens County currently has seventy-two (72) locally owned structures that meet the state qualification to be classified as bridge/culvert structures. It must be noted that more bridge/culvert structures exist throughout Stephens County. There are numerous privately owned structures and other structures that may be considered bridges/culverts. However, these structures do not meet the established criteria to be classified under the state law of what is considered to be a “bridge structure,” therefore they are excluded from consideration. Additionally, there are several bridges that are owned and maintained exclusively by the state. These structures are also being excluded from consideration in this document. All routine inspections are conducted on a two-year schedule and performed by certified bridge inspectors of the Georgia Department of Transportation. Stephens County receives a report from GDOT at the end of each

cycle, which details the status of each structure. Stephens County and GDOT work cooperatively to ensure that necessary bridge repairs are conducted. These work projects are scheduled into the Georgia Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. This program establishes funds to cover the expenses for federal aid and state aid projects. The table below summarizes the total number of bridges with a sufficiency rating below the recommended 65 under the most recent Bridge Report conducted for Stephens County. Appendix B provides the detailed report.

Table 8.13
Bridge and Major Culvert Locations
with Sufficiency Ratings below 65

Roadway Type Carried by Structure			
State Route	County Road	City Street	Total
2	13	3	18

*Source: Georgia Department of Transportation
Stephens County Bridge Report, 2002*

Currently, there are no officially designated evacuation routes for Stephens County. Stephens County has, however, identified SR 17, SR 63, SR 184, and SR 365 as potential or likely evacuation routes in the event of some catastrophic event. Therefore only bridges located along these routes would be considered under this document. At this time all of these bridges appear to be in sufficient condition to serve the evacuation needs of the community.

Signal Warrants and Traffic Control

Currently there are twenty-two (22) traffic signals located within the planning area. The majority of these signals are located within the city limits of Toccoa. Nineteen (19) exist within the city and three (3) are located in the county. Seventeen of these traffic signals are owned and operated by the Georgia Department of Transportation and five (5) are owned and operated by the City of Toccoa. The following is a list of locally owned traffic signals:

- ❖ Tugalo Street at its intersection with N. Alexander Street.
- ❖ West Doyle Street at its intersection with North Sage Street.
- ❖ West Doyle Street at its intersection with North Pond Street.
- ❖ Savannah Street at its intersection with North Pond Street.
- ❖ Savannah Street at its intersection with North Alexander Street

All traffic signals at intersection with state routes are owned and maintained by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Traffic controls are generally required to conform to the standards and guidelines established under the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. Any future additions in traffic signals, which may become necessary during the planning horizon (determined by a signal warrant), will most likely occur at intersections of state routes and local roads, thereby becoming GDOT's responsibility.

Roadway Signage

All road signs are erected in accordance with the Georgia Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. Requirements for signage depend on whether they are erected on conventional roads, expressways, or freeways. The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for signage in the rights-of-ways of all state routes. The location and composition of Stephens County's and the 's signage meet applicable specifications.

Public Transit

Currently, Stephens County does not currently operate a 5311-Rural Public Transit Service Program, however the county had up until recently had such a service in operation. These services were originally established in the late 1990's as demand-response system with a typical 24-hour advance service request. Operational hours were from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday with some after-hours, special events, & emergency trip demand services. The program operated two buses within the county and ran an average of 6 to 11 trips per day. However, due to a lack of funding and participation the program was discontinued in 2002. There are no other services provided by the local governments, nor is it anticipated that services will be re-established during the planning period covered under this document

Airports and Air Transportation

The R.G. LeTourneau Airport is located in Stephens County in northern Georgia approximately 41 miles northeast of Gainesville and 52 miles north of Athens. Highway access to the airport from the west and northeast is via U.S. Highway 123/Georgia Highway 17, and Georgia Highway 365. The airport, situated on 269 acres, is owned and operated by the Toccoa-Stephens County Airport Authority. The airport is served by a variety of aviation related activities that include recreational flying, police/law enforcement, experimental aircraft, and agricultural spraying.

Existing Facilities

The R.G. LeTourneau Airport is currently classified as a General Aviation Airport. It has two runways. Runway 02/20 is the airports primary runway and is 4,003 feet long by 75 feet wide with medium-intensity runway lighting (MIRL), precision approach path identifiers (PAPI), runway end identifier lights (REIL) on Runway 20, and has a partial parallel taxiway. Runway 09/27 is the secondary runway. It is 2,951 feet long by 50 feet wide. The airport has a rotating beacon, segmented circle, and wind cone. It also has a VOR/DME and GPS approach to Runway 02 and VOR or GPS approach to Runway 27.

Current landside facilities and services include a full-service FBO with limited maintenance services, a fuel concession that provides AvGas fuel and Jet A fuels, and a

16,000 square foot terminal/administration building. The airport has 34 hangar spaces, 40 apron spaces, and 50 auto parking spaces and a rental car service is available.

In the Summer 2003, the Georgia Department of Transportation completed its yearlong update to the *Georgia Aviation System Plan*. Under this plan, GDOT established certain criteria and set forth certain policies, which re-classify R.G. LeTourneau Airport as a Level II- Business Airport of Local Impact. These airports are defined as air carrier airports and general aviation airports that have a local business impact. They should be capable of accommodating all business and personal use single and twin-engine general aviation aircraft and a broad range of the corporate/business jet fleet. Types of aircraft that Level II airports should be able to accommodate include Gulfstream I-III and the Cessna Citation. The minimum runway length objective is 5,000 feet with non-precision approach. Local needs may support a runway length in excess of the 5,000-foot minimum. The typical service area for a Level II airport is 30 minutes.

Current and Forecast Demand

A review of the airport’s historic demand levels shows that based aircraft increased from 39 in 1990 to a current level of 57. By 2021, the airport’s based aircraft are expected to reach 70. The airport has approximately 30,000 annual aircraft takeoffs and landings divided between local and itinerant operations. This figure is projected to increase to 40,941 by 2021. By the end of the planning period, the airport is expected to reach 32% of its available annual operating capacity, as shown in *Table 8.14*.

Table 8.14
Current and Forecast Demands
R.G. LeTourneau Airport- Stephens County, Georgia

Blairsville Airport	Current	2006	2011	2021
Based Aircraft	57	60	63	70
Operations	30,000	32,030	34,761	40,941
Local	12,000	12,812	13,904	16,377
Itinerant	18,000	19,218	20,856	24,565
Enplanement	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Demand Capacity Ratio	23%	25%	27%	32%

Georgia Department of Transportation
Aviation System Plan Update 2002

Airport Facility and Service Needs

The R.G. LeTourneau Airport has been classified a needed Level II airport and should provide appropriate facilities and services commensurate with its system role. Airport improvements identified in the System Plan include:

- ❑ Extend Runway 02/20 to 5,000 total feet
- ❑ Widen runway 25 feet
- ❑ Extend taxiway
- ❑ Install AWOS or ASOS
- ❑ Phase I: 2 additional hangar spaces are needed; Phase II: 2 additional hangar spaces are needed; Phase III: 4 additional hangar space is needed
- ❑ Phase III: 2 additional apron parking spaces needed
- ❑ Phase I: 40 additional auto parking spaces are needed; Phase II: 5 additional auto parking spaces are needed; Phase III: 11 additional auto parking spaces are needed
- ❑ Have rental cars available

The following table summarizes current facilities and services, the airport's facility and service objectives, and actions/projects that are needed for the R.G. LeTourneau Airport to meet these objectives.

Table 8.15
Facility and Service Objectives Level II
Toccoa- R.G. Letourneau Airport-TOC

	EXISTING	SYSTEM OBJECTIVE	RECOMMENDED
Airside Facilities			
Runway Length	4,003 feet	5,000 feet or greater	Extend 997 feet
Runway Width	75 feet	100 feet	Widen 25 feet
Taxiway Length	Partial	Full Parallel	Full Parallel
Approach	Non-precision	Precision	None
Lighting- Runway	MIRL	HIRL for precision approaches; MIRL for non-precision	None
Lighting- Taxiway	MITL	MITL	None
NAVAIDS	Rotating Beacon	Rotating Beacon	None
NAVAIDS	Segmented Circle	Segmented Circle	None
NAVAIDS	Wind Cone	Wind Cone	None
NAVAIDS	PAPI	PAPI	None
NAVAIDS	None	Other NAVAIDS as required for non-precision approach	None
Weather	None	AWOS/ASOS	AWOS/ASOS
Ground Communications	Phone	GCO/Phone	None
General Aviation Landside Facilities			
Hangared Aircraft Storage	34 spaces	60% of base fleet	Phase I: 2 add'l spaces needed Phase II: 2 add'l spaces needed Phase III: 4 add'l space needed
Apron Parking/Storage	40 spaces	40% based aircraft plus additional 50% for transient aircraft	Phase III: 2 add'l spaces needed
Terminal/Administrative	16,000 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft. minimum amenities	None

Aviation Auto Parking	50 spaces	One space for each based aircraft, plus 50% for visitors/employees	Phase I: 40 add'l spaces needed Phase II: 5 add'l spaces needed Phase III: 11 add'l spaces needed
Services			
FBO	Full Service	Full Service	None
Maintenance	Limited/ Full Service	Limited/Full Service	None
Fuel	AvGas	AvGas	None
Fuel	Jet Fuel	Jet Fuel	None
Rental Cars	None	Available	Available

Source: GDOT – Georgia Aviation System Plan Update 2002

Other Recommendations

Additionally, the Georgia Aviation Systems Plan calls for the R.G. LeTourneau Airport to meet Level II performance objectives by completing the following actions/projects:

- Update the Airport Master Plan/ALP in Phase II (2007) and Phase II (2017)
- Adopt Land Use/Zoning Controls to protect the airport and neighboring land owners
- Correct the Runway Safety Area (RSA) deficiency of 100 feet in length on Runway 20. The RSA for this category airport is 300 x 150 (L x W).
- Replace taxiway and construct new parallel taxiway to correct runway – taxiway separation deficiency of 65 feet. (The distance from the runway centerline to the taxiway centerline should be 240 feet.)

Development Costs

According to GDOT's Georgia Aviation System Plan 2002 Update, the estimated total costs for completing each of the GASP's recommendations is \$4,485,375. Phase I projects are expected to cost \$4,153,175. Phase II costs are estimated at \$112,500 and Phase III is estimated to be \$219,700.

For a detailed layout of the capital improvements and associated cost estimates for each of the recommendations and phases that have been proposed for the airport, please refer to GDOT's Georgia Aviation System Plan.

Additional planned improvements are included in the Airport Authority's five year plan. See attached.

Pedestrian Pathways: Sidewalks and Recreational Trails

Currently, the only public owned and maintained sidewalks, which exist in Stephens County, are located within the City of Toccoa. Toccoa has an extensive network of sidewalks that provides pedestrians access throughout the downtown area and into its outlying neighborhoods. Sidewalks typically exist along both side of the roadway within the city limits. Toccoa maintains an ongoing program to replace and/or repair deteriorating sidewalks and construct new sidewalks whenever possible.

For further details please refer to the Existing Sidewalks Map on the following page. Other sidewalks may exist within Stephens County and its municipalities, however, they are privately owned and maintained, and therefore, they are outside the scope of this documents evaluation.

Pedestrian Facility Recommendations

Whether performing improvements to existing sidewalks or designing new pedestrian facilities, efforts should be made to create a pleasant and safe walking experience for all users. The following recommendations are made to help in achieving this goal.

Existing Sidewalks

Sidewalks throughout the planning area should be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Adequate curb cuts and railings (if necessary) should be installed. Repairs to cracked and deteriorating concrete should be made on a regular basis. Children and older adults are often the largest users of sidewalks. This group of pedestrians may have mobility issues that would be made more difficult by uneven pavement. For safety, sidewalks should be in good condition.

In making repairs to existing sidewalks, care should be taken if historic paving materials are present. Many of the communities within the Georgia Mountains region have sidewalks built with hexagonal pavers. These pavers may be a character-defining element of a historic district and should be carefully repaired and preserved in place. Historic commercial buildings often have small ceramic tiles at the recessed entrances of stores that abut the sidewalk. When repairing or replacing sidewalks, these historic tile entrances should not be disturbed.

When existing sidewalks are in need of major repair or where a road project requires sidewalk reconstruction, every attempt should be made to improve sidewalks with a planting strip between the road and sidewalk. Planting strips that separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic are widely accepted as a way of helping pedestrians feel safer and more comfortable. The design of planting strips depends largely on the volume and speeds of traffic and whether or not on-street parking exists. GDOT has several recommendations for planting strip designs and should be consulted when the time comes to make improvements to sidewalks.

New Sidewalks

Building new sidewalks is the second, but equally important, priority for pedestrian facility enhancements. When making recommendations for new sidewalks, first priority is to link existing sidewalk sections with new sidewalks. This creates a continuous sidewalk path and reduces the need for pedestrians to cross the street or walk on roadways. In general, this is necessary in city centers where sidewalks may have been built in stages or as part of the construction of a building site.

New sidewalks should extend existing sidewalks to local schools, parks, recreation centers, institutions, and commercial activity nodes. GDOT recommends that, whenever possible, sidewalks should be located on both sides of the street. Where sidewalks have not previously existed, constructing sidewalks on one side of the street is acceptable for the short-term. As with improvements to existing sidewalks, new sidewalks should be ADA accessible and have a planting strip.

It is recommended that subdivision regulations for sidewalks meet the same standards as city and county sidewalks to include planting strips and ADA compatibility. In addition, subdivision sidewalks should link to public sidewalks to provide a continuous path.

When building new sidewalks in listed or eligible historic districts, a preservation professional should be consulted to identify significant landscape elements that should not be altered. New sidewalks are compatible with historic districts when done sensitively. Planners may want to recommend incorporating appropriate historic paving materials into the design of a new sidewalk.

Pedestrian amenities such as street furniture and lighting improve the quality of the pedestrian experience. Street furniture includes benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and newspaper boxes. The installation of these items should be carefully planned to allow for the uninterrupted flow of traffic. Too much street furniture creates clutter and maintenance issues that can be a nuisance for the pedestrian. It is recommended that street furniture be clustered in areas that receive at least a moderate amount of foot traffic and out of the path of pedestrians. National standards have been established for the minimum space requirements for street furnishings. These standards should be consulted when planning new streetscapes. GDOT can also assist local governments in this regard.

Proper lighting for pedestrians is an important safety consideration. Most urban areas have adequate lighting in place. For pedestrian purposes it is recommended that lighting fixtures be shorter than typical street lighting. Generally, lighting fixtures for pedestrians should not exceed 15-feet. Care should also be taken to choose lighting fixture styles that are appropriate to the character of the neighborhood. Overly stylistic lights would not typically be appropriate for historic rural communities such as Stephens County and the City of Toccoa. Simple contemporary fixtures are often more compatible. Lighting fixtures should be directed toward the sidewalk area and not upward. Light that is pointed at the sky creates a glow that can hamper the vision of pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, it becomes necessary to add more lighting, which raises the cost. It is

recommended that light fixtures be positioned for maximum effectiveness, thereby increasing the quality of the pedestrian experience and decreasing the cost to the community and the negative impacts of environmental or light pollution.

Other Alternate Mode Recommendations

Some types of facilities, such as multi-use trails and scenic highways, encourage use by more than one mode of travel. Because multi-modal use creates the need for some additional considerations, some further recommendations are mentioned below.

Multi-use Trails and Paths

Multi-use trails are off-road paved (either pervious or impervious) trails that are shared by pedestrians and cyclists and used for other activities such as horseback riding. These trails are usually considered to be recreational, but people also use short segments for daily activities when they are located near commercial activity centers. GDOT recommends that multi-use shared paths be 10-feet in width, at a minimum. However, a 12-foot or more width offers greater comfort for users. These trails are popular with both locals and tourists. As an example, the Silver Comet Trail in Georgia currently has 38 miles of shared trails with plans for a total of 51 miles. Eventually the trail will connect with the Chief Ladiga Trail in Alabama to cover 101 miles from Atlanta to Anniston, Alabama.

Bicycle Travel

Bicycle users have various levels of expertise, which makes different types of facilities more desirable. Cyclists are typically separated into three groups: Type A, Type B and Type C. These types are described in the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities as follows:

- Type A Cyclists: Advanced or experienced riders who generally use their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle.
- Type B Cyclists: Basic or less confident adult riders who may also be using their bicycles for transportation purposes, e.g. to get to the store or visit friends, but prefer to avoid roads with fast or busy motor vehicle traffic unless there is ample roadway width to allow easy overtaking by the faster traveling motor vehicle.
- Type C Cyclists: Children, riding on their own or with parents, who may not travel as fast as their adult counterparts but still require access to key destinations in their community, such as schools, convenience stores and recreation facilities.

Cyclists desire safe routes to go to work and school, complete errands, and ride for health and recreational reasons. Cyclists are also discouraged from riding on sidewalks, which can create safety hazards for pedestrians. In order to provide safe and attractive routes for cyclists, bike routes should be recommended for local designation. There are several acceptable ways to delineate a bikeway. These different types depend greatly on the volume and speed of traffic and are typically chosen during the design phase of the bikeway project.

For the purposes of future guidance for appropriate bikeway selection, the types of bikeways will be discussed. Bicycle facilities have four basic types (three on-road facilities and one off-road facility) that are described in more detail below. In addition, recommendations from a study for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center completed in August 2002 titled "Bicycle Facility Selection: A Comparison of Approaches" will be summarized. For further information on bicycle facilities, the following sources can be consulted:

- Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Georgia Department of Transportation;
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center;
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

The simplest type of bikeway is a paved shoulder. Especially in rural areas, AASHTO suggests that paved shoulders of a four-foot width minimum can act as a bicycle facility. GDOT has guidelines available for signing a bike route. It is recommended that all routes, whether they are a paved shoulder or striped bike lane, be signed. Type A cyclists are typically comfortable with this type of bikeway, but Type B and Type C cyclists may not prefer it.

The next level of bikeway is a wide outside lane or shared lane. As the name suggests, bicyclists share the outside lane of traffic with motorists. Generally the minimum width of an outside lane must be 14-feet and should not include the gutter pan. It is acceptable to reduce the width of an interior lane of traffic in order to provide for a wider outside lane according to AASHTO. This allows for safer bicycle travel without widening the roadway.

The final on-road bikeway is the bike lane. A bike lane is a striped separate lane designated solely for bicycles. A minimum four-foot wide lane is acceptable for lanes with no curb, gutter or parking. A minimum of five-feet is necessary for lanes that are adjacent to parking. In some situations where bicyclists must share the lane with parallel parking areas, a minimum of 11-feet is necessary for lanes with no curb and 12-feet for lanes with a curb face. Bike lanes require a solid white line stripe to separate it from vehicular traffic.

An additional off-road bikeway is a separated lane. This lane is located adjacent to a road and may have a planting strip or cement wall between the lane and road. The less-experienced Type B and Type C cyclists favor the security of this type of bikeway.

These are used most often for recreational use in Georgia and none are recommended in this plan.

For cyclists to be able to use their bikes for daily activities, it is necessary to provide bike racks in public areas such as schools, government buildings, parks, and commercial activity centers. Bike racks should support a bicycle in two places and prevent the wheel from tipping. All racks should be anchored so that they cannot be stolen. Racks should be located near the entrances of buildings and under cover, if possible.

Stephens County has very limited bike facilities. State Bike Route 85/The Savannah River Run is currently the only officially designated route for bike riders in Stephens County. This route is an extended route that stretches 314.9 miles from the North Carolina state line in Rabun County to Savannah, Georgia. The Stephens County portion of the route covers the entire length of SR 17 from the Franklin County line in the south to the Habersham County line in the north. There are no other facilities that exist in the county except the multi-use facilities located with the city and county parks.

Although, there are currently no other solid plans to develop future bike facilities or create new “designated” bike routes, it is the goal of the community to expand existing facilities and develop new facilities where physically and financially possible.

8.3 Community Goals and Strategies

The Comprehensive Plan’s Transportation Element for Stephens County and its municipalities represent an effort to define a set of transportation programs and projects that address existing and future transportation needs within the county. The plan’s recommendations will guide future transportation investments and provide mobility solutions to accommodate population and employment growth in this area.

Thoughtful goals and effective performance measures ensure a long-range, needs-based perspective that assists in effectively identifying and implementing appropriate transportation initiatives for Stephens County and its municipalities. The goals and performance measures must be compatible in order to develop a transportation network that also addresses regional needs.

Performance measures are necessary tools in needs-based plan development because they can track performance over time and assist in identifying improvements. They provide accountability and link strategic planning to resource allocation. By defining specific performance measures, Stephens County will be able to measure the effectiveness of selected projects and programs in meeting goals. Performance measures as a package indicate the extent to which the current and recommended programs help achieve established goals.

The federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) emphasizes that transportation infrastructure investment should be driven by the need for improvement. The goals and performance measures established for Stephens County and its

municipalities were designed to meet the area’s specific transportation needs, while simultaneously incorporating sensitivity to the transportation efforts of the region’s multiple planning partners. The goals and performance measures for the area, provided in *Table 8.16* consider the objectives outlined in the GMRDC’s Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Goals and Performance Measures

Four Transportation planning goals have been established for Stephens County. The first goal is to improve accessibility and mobility of people and goods. The accomplishment of this goal will be measured by establishing a threshold for 2025 roadway LOS C or better and monitoring performance roadway levels of congestion. The number of alternative roadway connections with capacity for high volume flows will also serve as a measure of transportation access and mobility.

Table 8.16
Goals and Performance Measures

Goals	Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility and mobility of people and goods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTPT 2025 roadway LOS C or better. • Provides alternative roadway connections with capacity for high volume flows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will reduce accident occurrences. • Locations with significant numbers of correctable vehicle crashes. • Provides additional improvements to pedestrian facilities for activity centers. • Provides additional bike lanes or separated bike paths along corridors with high vehicle/bike friction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve and improve the existing system, environment, and quality of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present serviceability ratings (PSR) of 3.0 or above. • Bridge sufficiency ratings above 75. • Number of actively protected wetlands and historic areas protected from encroachment from transportation projects. • Burdens or benefits to environmental justice communities. • Number of pedestrian facilities for activity centers. • Connectivity of bike facilities to regional network. • Percent of area served by transit. • Number of design features that encourage transit patronage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure multi-jurisdictional coordination to facilitate interregional connectivity and foster regional economic development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing communication between regional jurisdictions. • Number of alternative roadway connections between jurisdictions with capacity for high volume flows.

The second goal is to enhance safety. The achievement of this goal will be measured by: (1) monitoring and reducing accident rates, and (2) monitoring and reducing the number of locations with correctable vehicle crashes. Other performance measures for this goal include increasing the number of pedestrian facilities for activity centers, and the number of miles of bike lanes, or separated bike paths along corridors with high vehicle/bike friction.

Thirdly, Stephens County and its municipalities will preserve and improve the existing system, environment and quality of life by monitoring performance measures such as present serviceability ratings for pavement, bridge sufficiency ratings, the number of wetlands and historic areas protected from encroachment from transportation projects, and burdens on and benefits to environmental justice communities. This goal will also be measured by the number of pedestrian facilities for activity centers, connectivity of bike facilities to the regional network, the percent of area served by transit, and the number of design features that encourage transit patronage.

Finally, the fourth goal is to ensure multi-jurisdictional coordination to facilitate interregional connectivity and foster regional economic development. Achievement of this goal will be measured by the level of ongoing communication between regional jurisdictions and the number of alternative roadway connections with capacity for high volume flows.

Ensuring that the goals for Stephens County and its municipalities are achieved requires an accurate inventory of the existing transportation infrastructure and a detailed analysis of the operating conditions and services for inventoried facilities. Both of these were conducted early in the planning process and are outlined in previous sections.

Future growth forecasts are essential for developing long-range transportation plans to determine overall needs and the level of transportation strategies required to meet those needs. Transportation planning is an ongoing process where planning factors, such as growth and the assessment of needs, are periodically monitored and reevaluated. The rapid growth in this area requires an effective monitoring and update function of the planning process. Planning assumptions and transportation strategies must be evaluated periodically, as needed.

Decision Context

As the planning process entered the project development phase, a “decision context” within which strategies would be recommended was developed. To ensure that the overall goals for Stephens County are achieved, recommended programs and projects should work to achieve established goals. Whether or not the goals are successfully achieved is assessed objectively by comparing existing and future conditions, using the defined set of performance measures and thresholds.

Four primary “decision context” questions were used to examine potential projects before developing the preferred program of projects:

1. Do the strategies meet the plan’s goals and objectives?

The recommended program should demonstrate, through specific performance measures, that the plan’s goals and objectives have been met.

2. Are the strategies appropriate and proportional to needs?

Specific performance measures are useful tools for evaluating plans, but may not tell the whole story. Strategies must not only be effective, but also appropriate and proportional to needs.

3. Are strategies cost-effective?

Federal law requires transportation plans to be fiscally constrained. Nevertheless, detailed scrutiny is required to ensure the best possible use of financial resources.

4. Are other options viable?

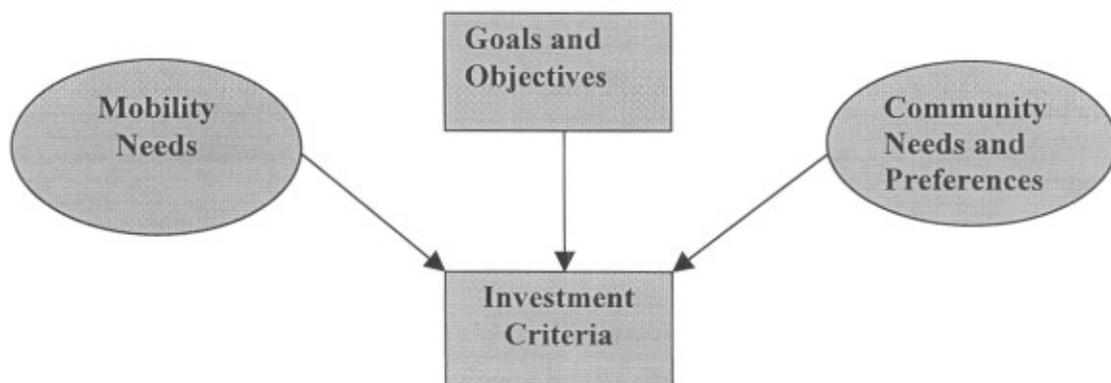
All viable options must be considered. Population and employment densities determine cost-effectiveness. System optimization improvements, such as improving intersection Geometrics and signal timing are low-cost options to alleviate localized congestion.

Investment Criteria

Investment criteria guide the transportation planning process and provide a framework for the development of programs and projects. Within the decision context, financial effectiveness analysis is conducted based on identified established investment criteria. Investment criteria ensure that the counties gain the most cost-effective improvements when developing a program of projects.

Community needs and preferences were defined through a series of discussions with community stakeholders and other public involvement efforts. Mobility needs were identified through technical analysis.

**Figure 39
Development of Investment Criteria**



Goals and objectives, mobility needs, and community preferences combine to define a series of six primary investment criteria:

**Investment
Criteria:**

- *Efficiency improvements*
- *Mobility options*
- *Congestion relief*
- *Accessibility to interstates and major highways*
- *East-west connectivity*
- *North-south connectivity*

Using previously described investment criteria; potential improvement strategies were initially identified and applied to the transportation system. Lower-cost improvements addressing system efficiency or travel demand were considered prior to more costly strategies. Where less expensive measures do not provide adequate improvement, increased system capacity solutions were considered. Finally, the package of improvements in each program category (such as roadway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian) is evaluated to ensure that transportation improvements work together to define a fully integrated multi-modal transportation system.

Coordination with Regional Planning

The Georgia Planning Act was adopted by the General Assembly in 1989 as a means to encourage better management of growth in the booming areas of the state, while encouraging the less prosperous parts to avail themselves of opportunities for growth. The Planning Act established a coordinated planning program for the State of Georgia, which provides local governments with opportunities to plan for their future and to improve communication with their neighboring governments. The Act established a "bottom-up," comprehensive planning approach initially to be conducted at the local government level, and then at the regional and state levels. The Planning Act also assigns local governments certain minimum responsibilities to maintain "Qualified Local Government" (QLG) status, and thus, be eligible to receive certain state funding.

The cornerstone of the coordinated planning program is the preparation of a long-range comprehensive plan by each local government in the state. This plan is intended to highlight community goals and objectives as well as determine how the government proposes to achieve those goals and objectives. Municipal and county plans are then used as the basis for a regional development plan.

Regional Development Centers (RDC) are charged with the responsibility of promoting the establishment, implementation, and performance of coordinated and comprehensive planning by municipal and county governments. The RDC is expected to plan for conformity with minimum standards and procedures established by the Planning Act. As the designated RDC for the Georgia Mountains area, the Georgia Mountains Regional

Development Center addresses regional issues and mobility needs through planning efforts that culminate in the development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Stephens County and its municipalities should continue to work closely with each other, the RDC, and other municipalities and local governments in surrounding counties to ensure regional coordination in the development of these plans.

To address regional transportation planning impacts, Stephens County and its municipal governments must work closely with the GDOT Office of Planning and the GDOT District One Office in Gainesville, Georgia. GDOT's Office of Planning assigns specific planning resources to ensure a regional and statewide perspective in planning for Stephens County. The GDOT District One Office also offers personnel and other resources to bring regional and local perspective to the transportation planning process. Transportation solutions are identified for Stephens County and other counties through the development of improvement projects included in the six-year GDOT Construction Work Program (CWP) and the three-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Transportation Investment Strategies

An inventory of potential strategies was evaluated for the purpose of developing this document. These strategies have the potential to reduce congestion, increase capacity, and improve the quality of life for Stephens County in the future. Programs and projects to address identified needs in Stephens County were drawn from the three classifications presented below.

- Growth Management
- Safety and Operations
 - Traffic System Operations Optimization
 - Intersections and Interchanges
- Infrastructure Enhancements
 - Roadway Projects
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

Growth Management

Despite the population growth projected for Stephens County over the next 30 years, reduced traffic congestion and improved quality of life can be achieved by managing the type and location of growth. Planning the location of community activities and services closer to neighborhoods and one another could substantially reduce vehicle trips. Mixed land use planning on a regional, community, and activity center level will improve accessibility to major destinations. By clustering or mixing uses in a small area, community residents have access to most of their daily needs within a short multi-purpose drive, bicycle ride, or walk from home. Schools, shopping centers, and places of employment are popular destinations and should be developed in locations providing maximum accessibility by the residents of the community or region.

An essential tool in controlling transportation demand, land use regulations such as zoning or subdivision development codes can enable growth, while reducing traffic congestion throughout Stephens County. Traffic congestion will decrease as vehicle trips shorten and transit, bicycling and walking become viable travel options as strong growth management efforts are pursued.

Safety and Operations

Non-capacity adding projects, such as safety and operational projects, can address specific location or community needs. These improvements address the need to maximize the efficiency and safety of the existing roadway network as a foundation for providing an overall transportation system that meets future demands. Safety and operational projects normally address issues such as sight distance limitations, sharp turning radii, intersection angles, and signage placement. The projects are essential to meeting the transportation needs of the community without adding roadway capacity. The safety and operations category is a key element of the recommended program of projects.

Traffic System Operations Optimization

Small-scale improvements can be incorporated into the existing roadway network to improve the flow of traffic, and they usually have a relatively short completion schedule and lower cost than roadway widening or new construction. Whenever possible, traffic operation improvements should be considered before determining the need for a widening or new construction project. Traffic operations can be optimized in many ways, including providing inter-parcel access, adding medians, closing curb cuts (driveways), adding turn, acceleration or deceleration lanes, or installing or upgrading traffic signals. Coordinated signal timing plans link together the operations of a series of traffic signals located close enough together to impact traffic conditions along an entire corridor. Developed to vary by time of day and day of week, coordinated signal timing plans improve the efficiency of signal operations along congested corridors, increasing the corridor's effective capacity by ten to fifteen percent.

Intersections and Interchanges

Another transportation improvement strategy that addresses safe and efficient travel on the roadway network is the improvement of intersections and interchanges. Many transportation conflicts resulting in congestion and safety issues are found at intersections and interchanges. Their improvement is vital to the safety and efficiency of the transportation network and builds a foundation for a network that meets future demands.

Intersection improvements can correct roadway deficiencies, increase safety, and result in increased capacity without the need to widen or make additional improvements to the roadway. Intersections with high crash rates or severe congestion should be considered for improvements. In addition to intersection improvements, the conversion of critical

intersections on high volume roads into interchanges provides effective capacity increases along corridors.

Infrastructure Enhancements

The need to maximize the effectiveness of existing roadway infrastructure is critical in maintaining an efficient transportation network. Potential infrastructure improvements include transit systems, roadway projects, bike and pedestrian facilities, and other strategies requiring capital investment.

Roadway Projects

Roadway improvements identified through the roadway analysis and public involvement process are the central feature of the long-term planning effort. Additional roadway projects that increase levels of service, reduce congestion, and improve safety become the foundation for meeting transportation needs over the planning period, but may be subjected to air quality emissions testing conducted region-wide.

Stephens County and its municipalities are actively pursuing the development and maintenance of a road network that accommodates continuing growth. A list of current and future projects was discussed in earlier sections and in the sections: Improvement Projects and Potential Funding Sources listed below. You may also refer to Appendix A for further details.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

Used for recreation as well as transportation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities serve as an integral element of a multi-modal transportation network. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are vital for providing links to transit, accommodating short trips between neighborhoods and community facilities, and providing circulation between land uses in denser activity centers. The connection of neighborhoods to activity centers, such as employment centers, community facilities, and retail opportunities, by way of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, will improve resident accessibility to these locations. Demand for bicycle and pedestrian facilities have grown substantially since the inception of ISTEA and TEA-21, which have provided more funding for these modes.

Georgia's Statewide Bicycle Plan, created by GDOT, proposes a statewide network of 14 named and numbered routes totaling 2,943 miles that are or will be particularly well-suited for bicycle use. As previously stated, there is only one State Bike Route located within the planning area: SBR 85. There are currently no plans to establish new bike routes, however, discussion have occurred during this planning effort which indicates a desire to explore further biking opportunities within Stephens County.

Road Improvement Projects

All transportation improvement projects within Stephens County are funded through the Georgia Department of Transportation. All projects for the county and city are planned and programmed as part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This document details the projects identified by the state through the planning process and are prioritized according to their importance and the availability of funds through the Congressional balancing process. The STIP includes Highway, Bridge, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transportation Enhancement activities, and Public Transportation (transit) projects. Projects in the STIP emphasize the maintenance, safety, and improvement of existing transportation facilities and public transportation systems. Project related costs, such as Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right of Way (ROW), and Construction are identified for highways, and Capital and Operating costs for public transit projects. The STIP must be fiscally balanced, and include only those projects with funding available or that have a reasonable expectation of obtaining funds. The STIP covers projects to be developed over a three-year period and is updated on an annual basis. There are 3 major funding categories for Road Improvement projects under the STIP:

- Federal Aid
- State Funds
- Local Funds

The Georgia Department of Transportation has begun work for the newest STIP (draft) update, which includes projects for FY 2004, 2005, and 2006. This draft includes projects, which are a continuation of Project numbers: 0000848, 132180, and M002312. No further projects have been identified for Stephens County and the next STIP update is not planned until FY 2005. Furthermore, GDOT's 6-year Construction Work Program (CWP) identifies following long-range projects, which have a completion date beyond FY 2006:

- Project No. 121360 – SR 17 @ Oggs Branch – Bridge widening (CWP/STIP)
- Project No. 122110 – SR 17 from south of the Martin city limits to northwest of CR 13/Rumsey Rd. – Widening from 2 to 4 lanes (CWP/STIP)
- Project No. 122260 – SR 17 from northwest of CR 13/Rumsey Rd. to Memorial Dr. – Widening from 2 to 4 lanes (CWP/STIP)
- Project No. 122670 – SR 17 from SR 184/365 southeast of Toccoa east to SR 17 Alt. – Widening from 2 to 4 lanes (CWP/STIP)
- Project No. 132440 – SR 365/Toccoa Bypass Ext. @ SR 17 northeast on new location to SR 365@CR 311 – New construction from 0 to 4 lanes
- Project No. 162480 – CR 223/Buena Vista Rd. at Norfolk Southern Railroad – Crossing improvements (CWP/STIP)
- Project No. 132730 – Widening of SR 17 Alt. from Memorial Drive to existing 5-lane near Brookhaven
- Project No. 0000143 – Downtown Toccoa Streetscape Project Phase III (CWP/STIP)

- Project No. 0001579 – SR 365/US 23 median turn lanes from SR 384 to SR 184/Stephens
- Project 0002360 – Enhancement of Toccoa Train Museum (CWP/STIP)
- Project 0004588 – Upgrade traffic signals at several locations on SR 17 Alt. (CWP/STIP)
- Project T001015 – Miscellaneous improvements at Toccoa Airport (CWP/STIP)

For a complete list of details regarding these projects for Stephens County please refer to GDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and Construction Work Program documents.

Potential Funding Sources

The most likely funding sources are identified for each project, based largely on the location of the project and responsible agencies. In some situations, it may be possible for the county or local agencies to accelerate the process of upgrading facilities by increasing local funding participation. The most likely funding sources for Stephens County are listed as follows:

- General Funds
- Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST)
- Local Options Sales Tax (LOST)
- FHWA, Transportation Enhancement Activities funds
- FTA, Rural Public Transportation funds
- State Aid, County / City contracts
- Federal Lands Program, Scenic Byways

Other options, considered less likely for Stephens County specifically, include:

- Appalachian Regional Commission program grants
- Transit fare-box revenues
- Public/private partnerships, such as Community Improvement Districts (CIDs)
- Development impact fees

Stephens County will continue to seek out other funding opportunities where available and will pursue all efforts to reasonably secure federal, state, and local funds, in an effort to maintain and improve the transportation network for the its citizens. However, it must be mentioned that Stephens County's ability to obtain such funding hinges on favorable economic conditions and the highly competitive nature of the demands on transportation funding for such projects within the Congressional District, which serves the area and surrounding communities.

Project Phasing

Although a large number of transportation projects have been recommended, it is not practical or feasible to implement all improvements simultaneously. A phasing plan was therefore developed to provide a starting point to use in prioritizing the recommended projects for further evaluation, funding, and implementation. The prioritization was based on the level of deficiency to be mitigated or eliminated by the project, the estimated cost and the difficulty of implementation from a planning or design perspective. The three time periods used were as follows:

- Short-range period: 2004 through 2007
- Medium-range period: 2008 through 2014
- Long-range period: 2015 through 2025

The specific phase recommended for each improvement was previously outlined in earlier discussions under Table 8.12. Also see Appendix A.

Project Implementation

In order to enhance the potential of success for this proposed plan, the following implementation guidelines are offered:

- ❖ Continue public outreach efforts for project-specific details as part of studying the project feasibility.
- ❖ Secure funding for each short-range project.
- ❖ Identify ways to utilize resources to accelerate the planning, design and construction process for the recommended projects.
- ❖ Undertake study to determine more detailed cost and design elements for the recommended projects.

Conclusions

Stephens County has had a steady growth in its population and it has seen an increase in tourist activity due to a multitude of scenic attractions in the county and surrounding communities in the region. The associated traffic generates difficult transportation planning challenges for the area. Improvements were selected that can be implemented without changing the fundamental character of the study area. The purpose of this element was to provide information and transportation recommendations for Stephens County in order to address their transportation needs. It is highly recommended that Stephens County and its municipalities jointly invest in the long-range transportation planning process as established by the Multi-modal Transportation Study completed by Day-Wilburn and Associates in July 2003. It is very important that the community complete the recommendations as outlined in that document and where possible expanded upon its efforts by engaging the following practices:

- ✓ Complete a Corridor Transportation Management Study for SR 17, SR 63/106 & US 123/SR 365.
- ✓ Complete a Corridor Transportation Management Study for downtown Toccoa.
- ✓ Engage in Pedestrian and Bike Planning for Toccoa and Stephens County. Complete a comprehensive pedestrian and bike community plan, if possible.
- ✓ Develop an effective implementation strategy for needed road projects.

CHAPTER NINE

LAND USE ELEMENT

This chapter is devoted to a description of the existing land use in Stephens County, including all the municipalities. This inventory and analysis of land use patterns and trends shall serve as a basis for discussion of present and anticipated land use problems and issues. The result of the analysis will be recommendations regarding future land use and the establishment of a set of policies to guide the physical development or conservation of land.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF EXISTING LAND USES

The minimum planning standards enacted pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 established a minimum classification scheme for land use plans to follow. This scheme includes nine minimum classifications: residential; commercial; industrial; public/institutional; transportation/communications/utilities; park/recreation/conservation; agriculture; and, vacant.

Residential

The predominant use of land within the residential category is single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.

Commercial

This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building. Local governments may elect to separate office uses from other commercial uses, such as retail, service, or entertainment facilities.

Industrial

This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses, organized into general categories of intensity.

Public/Institutional

This classification includes certain federal, state, or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government buildings complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. Facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category, should not be included in this category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities should be placed in the Park/Recreation/Conservation category; landfills should fall under the Industrial category; and, general office buildings containing government offices should be placed in the Commercial classification.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities

This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

Conservation/Park/Recreation

This classification is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, land placed in a conservation protection program or similar uses.

Agriculture

This category is for land dedicated to agriculture, farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, poultry and livestock production, etc.) or other similar rural uses such as pasture lands not in commercial use.

Forest

This classification is for land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting or other similar rural uses such as woodlands not in commercial uses.

Vacant/Undeveloped

This category includes lands which do not contain any improved land uses as mentioned in the previous existing land use categories or land that has been abandoned from a previous use or improvement.

Forest Service Ownership

This category includes land owned by the federal government, U. S. Forest Service.

EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

The existing land inventory was developed using GIS and database technology. The GIS layers were actual tax parcel data and parcel identification code attached to each parcel in the tax digest. The parcel codes were converted to the land uses required by the Minimum Planning Standards and overlaid on top the tax parcels.

The land use inventory from the previous comprehensive plan developed a land use inventory through a windshield survey. This type of inventory is subject to numerous errors from incorrect analysis and properties that are not accessible because of private roads, easements and driveways.

Due to the differences in inventory methodology there is a vast difference in the existing land use inventory from 1992 to 2004.

Tabulation of the 2004 existing land use inventory are presented in the following tables. The data is also presented on the Generalized Existing Land Map for Stephens County and all cities.

Stephens County Acres by Existing Land Use		
<i>**acreage figures do not include cities</i>		
Existing Land Use Classification	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture	14,309	13%
Commercial	1,499	1%
Forest	1,809	2%
Forest Service Ownership	24,046	22%
Industrial	2,384	2%
Public / Institutional	3,820	4%
Residential	47,416	44%
Transportation / Communication / Utility	259	0%
Conservation Use	12,752	12%
Vacant	567	1%
TOTAL	108,862	

Existing Land Use in Stephens County

The primary land use in Stephens County, outside of the U.S. Forest Service property, is residential land use. In 2004 approximately 47,416 acres were designated as residential lands. Residential land use claims 44% of all the land in Stephens County. Residential development is scattered in very low densities throughout the county. Due to the affordability of land in Stephens County, most of the residential land is held in large acreage tracts with one housing unit placed on it. In recent years, the attractiveness of Lake Hartwell and the Chattahoochee National Forest have increased residential development in the north and east portions of the county.

Commercial land use in the county occupies almost 1,500 acres. This amount is about one percent of the total land use in Stephens County. Most of the commercial land uses in the county occur along major transportation routes that lead into and out of the City of Toccoa. Big A Road/Hwy 17 in particular is where a large amount of commercial development is located.

Industrial land use in Stephens County claims 2,384 acres of land. Most of the industrial land use in the county is occurring in the industrial parks and along the main transportation routes in the southeast portion of the county. The exception to this is the Milliken plant located near the west boundary of the county.

Agriculture is still a primary industry in Stephens County. The amount of land presented as agricultural land use is a testament to this fact. The inventory identified that there are 14,309 acres of land dedicated to agricultural practices. This amount is 13% of the total amount of land in the county. This type of land use is mainly concentrated in the southern portion of the county, however there are a number of farms located throughout the rest of the county. In the past decade, some agricultural land was lost to other land uses for residential, commercial and industrial development.

Public/Institutional land uses occupy 3,820 acres or 4% of land in the county. There are several large tract associated with this type of land use that include the county schools, Toccoa Falls College, the Georgia Baptist Assembly, churches and associated facilities, as well as some federal, state and local government property and facilities.

About 12% or 12,752 acres of land in the county is identified as Conservation/Park/Recreation land uses. This type of land use is concentrated throughout the southern and eastern parts of the county. This type of land include land that may look vacant or agricultural from the eye, but was placed in the State Conservation Reserve Program or in other conservation easement programs. This type of land use also includes park and recreation land outside of the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Land use for Transportation/Communications/Utilities covers 259 acres in the county. This is less than one percent of the land use in Stephens County. Land dedicated to the Forest land use classification occupies 1,809 acres in the county. Actual vacant land in the county was only 567 acres which is only about one-half of one percent of the land use in the county.

More than one fifth of the land (22%) in Stephens County is considered to be publicly land owned by the federal government, U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service manages approximately 24,046 acres in Stephens County. This land provides much scenic beauty and for many recreational opportunities in the area. It provides neighboring private land owners protection from development. However, the ownership of so much public land reduces a local governments full ability to develop, thus intensifying land use and development on the remaining privately held land in the County. The County also loses a large amount of potential tax revenue from so much land being publicly held. The compensation Stephens County receives from the federal government for the loss of the local use of the land is insignificant when compared to the potential revenue that could be collected if the land was held privately. This loss of revenue places a tremendous tax burden on the existing property owners to fund County services and is a big loss of fund for local schools.

Existing Land Use in Avalon

The majority of land within the Town of Avalon is used for residential purposes. Residential land use makes up 55% of the total land use in the town.

The next largest land use in Avalon is classified as Conservation/Park/Recreation. Approximately 319 acres or 30% of the land in the town is in this category because these tracts were placed in the State Conservation Reserve Program and are more than likely used in agriculture or land that is not really used for any particular purpose.

Land use strictly dedicated for agriculture makes up 12% of the land use in Avalon. Commercial land use is less than 2% total land use and is mainly located along Highway 17.

Existing Land Use in Martin

Just like its neighbor to the north, the majority of land use in the Town of Martin is dedicated to residential land use. Residential land cover 437 acres or 51% of the total land use in town.

Conservation/Park/Recreation land use in Martin claims 228 acres of land or 26% of the total land use. The circumstances surrounding this land use are similar to Avalon in that the land is placed in a conservation reserve program.

Just over 15% of the land in Martin is dedicated to the Forest land use category. Only 4% of the land is strictly dedicated to agriculture, 2% of the land use is for Public/Institutional uses, and 1% for commercial.

Existing Land Use in Toccoa

It is not surprising that the vast majority of land use within the City of Toccoa is classified as residential land use. About 40% of the total county population lives within the Toccoa city limits. Land dedicated for residential land use includes 3,737 acres, which is 72% of the total land within the city. Toccoa has the highest population density in the county and accommodate most of the multi-family housing found in the county. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, all of the City of Toccoa is considered an "urbanized area" due to its overall population density.

Public/Institutional land uses make up 8% (412 acres) of the total land use within Toccoa. Much of this type of land use in the city is from local government facilities, schools and churches.

Commercial land use in Toccoa is occurring on 386 acres or 7% of the land within the city. The majority of commercial land is located in the downtown area and along Big A Road. Other smaller commercial uses are scattered along other transportation routes or at cross roads throughout the city.

There are 125 acres in Toccoa that are use for industrial purposes. Most of this type of land use is located on the west side of town and along the rail road lines. There is some industrial land uses located in the southern portion of the city.

There is still 306 acres of land in Toccoa that is used for agriculture, and 106 acres as Conservation/Park/Recreation. There is 129 acres of land in Toccoa that is considered vacant.

Cities Acres by Existing Land Use Classification			
City	Existing Land Use Classification	Acres	% of Total
AVALON			
	Agriculture	125	12%
	Commercial	24	2%
	Forest	2	0%
	Public / Institutional	19	2%
	Residential	592	55%
	Conservation Use	319	30%
	Total	1,081	
MARTIN			
	Agriculture	37	4%
	Commercial	9	1%
	Forest	132	15%
	Public / Institutional	19	2%
	Residential	437	51%
	Conservation Use	228	26%
	Total	863	
TOCCOA			
	Agriculture	304	6%
	Commercial	386	7%
	Forest	2	0%
	Industrial	125	2%
	Public / Institutional	412	8%
	Residential	3,737	72%
	TCU	24	0%
	Conservation Use	106	2%
	Vacant	129	2%
	Total	5,226	

EXISTING LAND USE ASSESSMENT

GENERAL

- A considerably large amount of Stephens County land is under the ownership and management of the United States Forest Service.
- Generally, the county consists of scattered rural residential and agricultural land uses.
- The largest concentrations of residential and other development occur in the City of Toccoa, or in close proximity to the city, or in the City's sewer service area.
- Outside of public lands, more than 25% of the total land in Stephens County and all the municipalities are agricultural lands or land placed in the State Conservation Reserve Program, which magnifies the importance of agriculture in the Stephens County economy.
- With the exception of a few urban land use conflicts in Toccoa, very few of the traditional land use problems and issues have surfaced in Stephens County.
- "Second" homes have been developed and are expected to continue developing around water amenities (lakes, rivers and streams) and on ridge lines and mountain tops where views are available and adjacent to the National Forest, and where homes are protected from surrounding development.
- Institutional land uses (schools, college, church and associated facilities) a higher than normal percentage of land in all of Stephens County, including the municipalities.
- The highest percentage of commercial land uses are located in Downtown Toccoa and along Big A Road. Many of these commercial enterprises left the downtown area to the Big A Road corridor for the consumer traffic and for newer facilities. The commercial land uses in the downtown area are smaller traditional businesses, offices and start-up businesses that need less expensive, less up to date facilities that don't rely on mass amount of consumer traffic.

HISTORICAL FACTORS AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Historically, land use in Stephens County has been heavily influenced by the topography. The topography in the north and west quadrants of the county are rugged with steep slopes interspersed with small rough surfaced plateaus and narrow winding valleys. The eastern and southern portions of the county are where the piedmont begin and are generally where any sizeable level areas are located.

Historically, the pattern of land use has been determined by the special qualities of the landscape and by the restrictions they place on the land. Through out Stephens County, Native Americans settled along valleys and in the high elevation coves. White settlement followed the same basic pattern locating in areas offering gentle slopes. Developed areas are found primarily in the valley like around the City of Toccoa or at cross roads along transportation routes where Avalon and Martin are located.

Land use, settlement patterns and economic development are clearly related to predominant physiographic features. Farming and pastures are located along gentle slopes or in the bottom lands where the soil is rich and the land level. Timber management and lumbering of woodlands have occurred in areas too poor to support farming. Mountain tops and steep slopes were maintained in a natural state because of their unsuitability for intensive use. Roads tend to follow narrow valleys, along ridge lines and streams. Since most of the valleys and ridges occur in a north-south alignment, most of the roads and rail follow the same direction.

In the past, rugged topography has limited access of people to jobs and educational opportunities, and low population densities prevented the formation of large, integrated economic units. This lack of access and the intrinsic unsuitability of the land for development have contributed to a local dependence on marginal and activities involving the removal of natural resources and subsistence farming.

Due to the establishment of the railroad, Toccoa began to grow and prosper becoming a major transportation and shipping outpost as well as an industrial center manufacturing a variety of products and goods. Most of these industries eventually turn to the use of commercial trucking to move their goods. Several of them have since located to areas and facilities that are more accessible by road or highway. There are now in Toccoa and in parts of Stephens County older vacant industrial parcels that have severely deteriorated over time.

The most recent decades have brought an influx of older people living in retirement homes and resort locations. In addition, much of the county contains a large, transient, second home or vacation lot population which swarms into the area during the summer months, weekends and holidays. Engineering technology improvements and affordable construction costs have encouraged development to take place on sites (steep slopes) that were once impossible to access and build upon. "Retiree" residential development is occurring along connecting collector roads scattered throughout the County. Vacation homes are primarily being located along the shores of Lake Hartwell, and various creeks and streams, and the high ridge-lines that provide scenic views. Homes are also being constructed in areas adjacent to the Chattahoochee National Forest. The National Forest brings a quality of life amenity to the

Stephens County area with it numerous recreational opportunities. Many retirees are interested in building homes that are either adjacent or in close proximity to the National Forest so that they can be protected or surrounded by permanent greenspace.

The establishment of the poultry industry in Northeast Georgia has helped Stephens County maintain a strong economic agricultural sector. The dynamic of the poultry industry have changed and had an impact on how local growers operate. Fifteen to twenty years ago there were many growers in the county with one or two poultry houses, even within close proximity to Toccoa. However, improvements in production have forced our small poultry farmers. Now poultry farmers have anywhere from five to twelve houses in operation. There are basically the same number of poultry houses in the area, but fewer farmers in operation. The provision of water county wide by Toccoa and Martin have made it possible for large poultry operations to exist.

Indigenous growth is now following transportation corridors, with the most intense urban-type development occurring along highway corridors and at highway intersections, primarily where supporting infrastructure is available. Georgia 365 was opened in 1986 and provided linkage and easy access to much of North Georgia, the City of Gainesville, and now Metropolitan Atlanta. The Toccoa By-pass, which opened in 1987 began to influence development in the southern portion of the county. Shortly after the by-pass was opened water and gas infrastructure followed.

Community and highway commercial developments are occurring in the vicinity of Big A Road.

LAND USE PATTERNS AND DENSITIES RELATED TO INFRASTRUCTURE

The area of the county with the highest density of land uses is within the City of Toccoa. The City serves as the economic center of activity for the county. The city also serves as the county seat. Almost all of the arterial transportation routes intersect in Toccoa. The city manages the largest public water system and operates the only public waste water treatment facility in the county. However, zoning density requirements are the primary guidance policy within the City of Toccoa not infrastructure.

Nearly all of the county, including cities, is served by public water. This increases the development possibilities throughout the county as well as providing an opportunity to develop at a higher density. The reason for such low density in the county is that the population base of the county is low and so is the rate of growth.

The transportation corridors and traffic patterns are dictating most of the recent growth in Stephens County. Big A Road and Highway 17 South is an area of the county where water and sewer infrastructure was planned prior to growth. However, the route links the county and cities to Interstate 85, in Franklin County, which is one of most traveled Interstates in the Southeastern United States. Traffic counts on the highway are currently above designed

capacity. Transportation impacts were not considered locally as development was permitted to take place in this corridor.

The expansion to provide water service around the lake has created significant residential growth in this area of the county.

Because they are located along Highway 17 South and are closer to Interstate 85, Avalon and Martin is a second area where development residential development is beginning to outpace local infrastructure improvements. Also, the provision of water into this area has generated a higher density of residential and commercial development.

AREAS BLIGHTED, TRANSITIONAL OR IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT

Generally blighted areas are located within the City of Toccoa. Some of these areas are along Pond Street, Avon Street, Edwards Street and Franklin Street. There are a number of small aging residential homes, many of which are used for rental purposes, that have not been well maintained over the years and are now dilapidated. Some could even be considered for demolition. Most of these houses do not meet even the most modest housing codes. Many of these homes were part of the housing attached to mills and factories decades ago, so there is some historic value attached to them.

Other blighted areas within Toccoa and in the County are where in the past industries located and made use of the rail lines in Toccoa. Most of these industries are long gone. The structures have been vacant for a long time and have deteriorated to where it is cost prohibitive for a new industry to move in. These areas and sites are in dire need of demolition and redevelopment.

The area along Doyle Street is a mixed use area that includes residences, public housing and a manufacturing plant. Much of the housing there is older and is transitioning from owner occupied units to rental units. However, a new development of low to moderate income single family housing was just constructed on a vacant tract in this areas.

Big A Road (Highway 17 South) continues to transition from vacant and residential to strip commercial and big box uses. Toccoa has placed water and sewer down this corridor, and the road has been widened by Georgia DOT, therefore development is following the placement of infrastructure. Traffic problems and appearance issues associated with strip commercial development are becoming a concern for the road.

Downtown Toccoa is experiencing a change in the type of commercial activity within its boundaries. The majority of the commercial retail has left downtown for the emerging strip commercial areas in the city and county. Fortunately, rather than vacant buildings in downtown professional offices and services are moving in and filling these spaces. The success of this type of replacement is due to the efforts of the DDA and Main Street Program.

The eastern portion of the county is experiencing a transition "up" so to speak where the Currahee Club is being developed. The area is seeing a change from large vacant tracts of timberland to upscale residential and golf community. Also included in the development is a conference center.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND OR RESOURCES

Because of the lack of regulations, there are several environmentally sensitive areas in the county and cities that are not protected and could be significantly impacted by future development. These resources are presented and discuss in detail in the Natural Resources Element of this plan. Some are worth mentioning in the land use portion of the plan.

The Town of Avalon and the Town of Martin are not participating in the National Flood Insurance Program. Neither are the floodplains mapped within their boundaries. Therefore, they are not protected within their jurisdiction.

There are soil types located throughout the county that either need protection or lend themselves to certain land uses. In the northern more mountainous parts of the county there are steep slopes with sensitive shallow soils. If development is not low in intensity and properly managed on site these soils are subject to extreme erosion problems. Also, because they are shallow problems can occur with excessive placement of household and community septic systems. The soils map presented in the Natural Resource Element identifies soil areas that are better suited for prime agricultural uses. These areas are not protected or tied to agricultural uses and are subject to other types of development. This is important because the loss of agricultural land in the county means a loss in an significant economic sector. There are four areas within Stephens County where the soils are associated with “significant groundwater recharges areas.”

There are critical habitat areas for plants and animals that need to be connected or remain connected to ensure the survival of these species.

PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The main problem with existing development patterns is there is no land use management guidance in the county. This lack of guidance has resulted in some growth problems.

Much of the commercial growth along Big A Road resembles unbridled strip commercial development. Other commercial activity stretched out over the arterial corridors that cross the county negatively impact the critical mass needed to maximize commercial trade. Some of these strip centers have become unattractive and have created dangerous traffic situations.

Much of the development in Stephens County is scattered and “leap frogs” out into the county. This has recently occurred on Highway 17 South where Caterpillar has located and the new North Georgia Technical College campus is under construction. Scattered and leap frog development also leads to many incompatible land uses. This type of development is a result of the lack of land use planning at the county level as well as coordination of infrastructure improvements by local utilities and other agencies.

INFILL OPPORTUNITIES TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

There are vacant properties and large undeveloped tracts of land within Stephens County, the City of Toccoa, and in Avalon and Martin, therefore, infill development is an issue that all local governments that will more than likely be faced with. Also, because of the higher density of land use within Toccoa , and easy access to goods and services, there is an opportunity to encourage traditional neighborhood design and development to occur.

Opportunities for infill do exist for the county, Avalon and Martin. Land use management regulations, incentives and tools could assist in keeping development in areas already developed with infrastructure capacity available. This would reduce some of the leap frog development that is occurring in the county. Transportation improvements and policies in areas already developed would also enhance their attractiveness for new development.

LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IMPACTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Currently there is no land use management or zoning in the Stephens County or in Avalon. Stephens County, Toccoa, Martin and Avalon are in need of a joint comprehensive land development program. This program should include adoption of a land use management ordinance of some kind for the county. There should be an effort for some compatibility of this ordinance with similar efforts in the cities. Existing county and city ordinances should be updated and revised to address current concerns and future growth and should encourage future development to occur in areas where infrastructure already exists. These ordinances should incorporate guidance and recommendations from the comprehensive plan, the future land use element in particular.

PROJECTION OF FUTURE LAND USE NEEDS

Projecting future land use needs in Stephens County, Avalon, Martin and Toccoa are based on the forecasts for population, housing and economic development (employment). Acreage estimates are present in the tables below and projections are also identified on the Generalized Future Land Use Map for Stephens County and its cities.

Stephens County Acres by Future Land Use <i>**acreage figures do not include cities</i>		
Future Land Use Classification	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture	13,728	13%
Commercial	1,667	2%
Forest	1,783	2%
Forest Service Ownership	23,904	22%
Industrial	2,831	3%
Public / Institutional	3,713	3%
Residential	48,486	45%
Transportation / Communication / Utility	260	0%
Conservation Use	11,926	11%
Vacant	566	1%
TOTAL	108,865	

In Stephens County based on population and housing projection there will be a need for an approximately 450 additional housing units by the year 2025. The housing units constructed in the County will more than likely require from 1.0 to 2.0 acres per unit due to health department standards with the use of on site septic systems for soils and slope requirements. This equates into around 675 to 900 additional acres needed to accommodate projected residential growth. It is also reasonable to assume that those moving into Stephens County will continue to be retirees with higher incomes and desire and can afford larger tracts of land of two to five acres. Therefore, there will need to be an additional 1,070 acres need for residential development in Stephens County. (The need for the this amount of additional residential land use could possibly change (decrease) as the county implements land development policies, regulations, incentives as well as the placement of water and sewer infrastructure in parts of the county, thus encouraging infill and traditional neighborhood development.)

Areas where residential development is most likely to take place are in the north, northwest sections of the county adjacent to the National Forest and close to Georgia 365, an in the eastern part of the county in the vicinity of Lake Hartwell.

Projected non-residential development, primarily commercial and industrial land uses, are based on the projected employment by economic sector and the type of businesses or industries that are expected to come or leave the County.

When converting national standards for space per employee, it is anticipated that an additional 168 acres will be needed for future commercial land uses. This includes acreage for retail, wholesale, office and other consumer services. This will more than likely occur along Big A Road and other transportation corridors or crossroads where new residential development is projected to take place, especially around where the Currahee Club is being developed.

About an additional 500 acres will be needed for industrial development in Stephens County by the year 2025. It is projected that industrial development will take place along the Highway 17 South corridor where sewer infrastructure already exists.

Agricultural land uses are projected to decrease by about 600 acres over the projected time frame of this plan. Much of this land will be converted to residential and commercial land uses.

Much of the conservation land in the county is projected to remain this type of use. The property owners are benefiting from tax relief offered by these programs. The county is not in great need of additional land for parks and recreation as well.

Public/Institutional lands actually projects a decrease in land use by about 100 acres. This is a result of the release or sale of old facilities or surplus land needed by public entities to the private sector for development or re-development.

There is basically no change in the amount of land use for T/C/U as most projected development will occur along the existing road network and with the increase in technology and efficiency of communication and the small parcels needed for utility facilities.

Those tracts that are considered vacant in Stephens County are projected to remain as they are.

City Acres by Future Land Use Classification			
City	Future Land Use Classification	Acres	% of Total
AVALON			
	Agriculture	86	8%
	Commercial	28	3%
	Forest	2	0%
	Public / Institutional	19	2%
	Residential	653	60%
	Conservation	293	27%
	Total	1,081	
MARTIN			
	Agriculture	37	4%
	Commercial	31	4%
	Forest	70	8%
	Public / Institutional	19	2%
	Residential	500	58%
	Conservation	206	24%
	Total	863	
TOCCOA			
	Agriculture	304	6%
	Commercial	428	8%
	Forest	2	0%
	Industrial	139	3%
	Public / Institutional	422	8%
	Residential	3,744	71%
	Transportation / Communication / Utilities	24	0%
	Conservation	106	2%
	Vacant	76	1%
	Total	5,247	

The primary land use changes that are projected in Avalon is the conversion of land from farms and pastures to residential development. Projected housing needs state that there will be an additional 50 units of housing in Avalon that will require an acre to an acre and a half for each unit. There will also be a very slight increase in community commercial land uses in Avalon.

The projected circumstance for the Town of Martin is similar to Avalon in that residential and community oriented commercial development will increase. However, the land that more than likely will be converted to residential land uses will come from land that is identified as forested.

Land use projections for the City of Toccoa actually show an overall very slight decrease in the percentage of land use in the city. This is not to say that new housing will not be constructed (actual acres of residential land use increases), but that the changes in non-residential land use are projected to increase due to the conversion of existing residential properties to commercial and other non-residential land uses.

Housing projections identify that Toccoa will need an additional 959 housing units by the year 2025. New residential units will occur in areas that are currently classified as vacant lots or tracts, and will occur on property that will be redeveloped. It is anticipated that the type of housing that will be developed in Toccoa will be a mix of higher density single family units of up to four to eight units per acre and multi-family developments.

Just over 40 additional acres will be needed to meet commercial demands. Most of this will occur on land that is being converted from residential land use along the primary transportation routes that lead into the City. It is also possible that Toccoa will have requests for annexation of property along these routes so that owners may receive their services.

Industrial land use is expected to increase slightly (by 14 acres) within Toccoa by 2025. It is projected that small start up industrial uses will occur on land that is adjacent to existing industrial land uses.

Public/Institutional land uses are expected to increase by 10 acres over the planning horizon. Additional space will be needed for local government as well as for expanding churches.

It is anticipated that other land uses will not change within the city throughout the twenty year projection.

FUTURE LAND USE PATTERNS

Residential

Residential land use patterns within Stephens County will only change slightly. Based on projection residential land use is expected to increase by slightly more than 1,000 acres over the next twenty years. An increasing percentage of residential development will include second or seasonal homes, which will most likely be constructed in and around Lake Hartwell, and in those areas that are adjacent to the National Forest.

Other areas of residential development in the county include the conversion of individual tracts agricultural land to single family residential through the placement of manufactured homes. This type of land use shall continue to be scattered in the southern and eastern portions of the county. This area of the county is where land will remain more affordable for low and moderate single family homes.

Future residential development in the City of Toccoa will occur through the redevelopment of some areas and may also come from infill development in the few vacant areas within the city. Toccoa will continue to be the area of the county where multi-family development is most likely to occur in the future because of the infrastructure.

Future residential development in Avalon and Martin is projected to come from the conversion of agricultural and forest land. The types of housing most likely to occur in these cities are moderate single family stick built housing and manufactured housing.

Commercial and Industrial

Most of the future commercial and industrial growth will occur along Highway 17 South (Big A Road). This corridor already has the necessary infrastructure (water, sewer, major roads and interstate access) for future development.

Commercial development will continue to move south on Highway 17 as new tracts are developed. Some future commercial development (or redevelopment) on Big A Road will occur on properties that were developed some time ago and have since deteriorated.

Another area that commercial development is projected to occur is along State Route 365/Highway 17 Bypass. Also, some the existing small commercial nodes around the county will expand to accommodate local traffic and growth, particularly where U.S. 123 Bypass will be extended to the South Carolina line and where the Currahee Club is being developed.

Future industrial development will take place in the industrial parks located along Highway 17 South. These parks are located in the same area as the North Georgia Technical College campus, which will work with future industry in providing skill workers. Some of the vacant industrial tracts in Toccoa are prime targets for redevelopment opportunities. Most have all utilities located to them as well as access to rail.

Agriculture will remain an important component in the Stephens County economy. Because of modest growth projections and designated areas of commercial and industrial development, relatively little agricultural lands will be lost to future development.

AREAS LIKELY TO BE ANNEXED

Areas in Stephens County that are most likely to be annexed into a municipality is where Big A Road (U.S. Highway 17) extends south from Toccoa towards Avalon, Martin and Interstate 85. This corridor already has the necessary infrastructure in place. Toccoa is more likely to annex areas due to the services that they provide.

TIMING OR SEQUENCING OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The majority of Stephens County is served by the City of Toccoa water system. A small part of the county is served by the City of Martin water system. Giving consideration to forecasted populations there is a sufficient water supply for at least the next ten years.

Sewer needs are more immediate in the form permitted increased treatment and plant capacity. The wastewater collection system is in place (along Highway 17 South) and is ready to take on a limited amount of commercial and industrial development in the immediate future. However, in the long term, development will not be able to take place without increased treatment capacity and associated permitting.

The conversion of dirt or gravel roads to paved roads creates improved access and attractiveness, and opens areas for increased development. Priority for road improvements is placed on those roads that have the most traffic.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

As stated in the existing land use assessment, the floodplains identified within Avalon and Martin are unprotected, since neither local government is participating in the flood insurance program. Floodplains serve an important purpose in the storage and retention of flood waters and as well as providing natural habitat for flora and fauna. Floodplains in these two communities are threatened by future development.

There are also sensitive soils slopes in the northern and northwest parts of Stephens County. These soils are shallow soils located on steep slopes. Much of these soils are protected from intense future development because they are located in the National Forest. However, those areas located on privately owned lands are threatened by future development because the county does not have an ordinance dealing specifically with construction on steep slopes. It is recommended that the county develop construction codes that are slope based.

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

There are numerous local historic and archeological resources that have been identified in the Historic and Cultural resources Element that are threatened by development, demolition and neglect.

There are several archeological sites dotted around the county and in the Tugaloo corridor that are significant and have no protection and are threatened by future development.

Significant historic resources exist within the City of Toccoa and the City of Martin that are in need of protection through the establishment of National Register Districts and development of preservation ordinances and other incentive programs.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

This type of development is most likely to take place within the City of Toccoa where supporting infrastructure already is in place. There are some vacant properties within Toccoa where traditional neighborhood design can or may occur. The potential also exist for this type of residential development in areas of the City where redevelopment is taking place. However, Toccoa does not have in place any mechanism that would encourage or require traditional neighborhood design for lands that are being developed within the city or annexed into the city.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT LAND USE TRANSITION

Because of the low to moderate growth that has been projected to take place in the county there are no areas of “significant land use transition.” Areas that are projected to change the most are along Highway 17 South as it develops commercially and industrially, and those areas where seasonal residential housing will continue to take place along Lake Hartwell and adjacent to the National Forest.

AREAS PROPOSED FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Most of the areas that are in need of redevelopment are the older, vacant industrial sites within the City of Toccoa as well as some of the older residential areas where the housing has been neglected to the point of where the structures are vacant and in need of being demolished.

The industrial sites are more valuable for their location due to utilities and rail access. The buildings on these sites are older and no longer suitable for industrial use. Therefore, demolition of these structures will need to be performed and the properties marketed as any other industrial site for future development.

There has already been some redevelopment of residential areas within the City of Toccoa where newer moderately priced single family housing has replaced the old housing. It is expected that this trend will modestly continue.

QUALITY AGRICULTURAL, RURAL AND FORESTED LANDS

Quality agricultural lands are located throughout the county. Some of them are located in river or stream bottoms or in flood prone areas that are restricted to development. Policies to protect significant agricultural land and to promote agricultural practices and products will help preserve the other parts of the county for continued agricultural uses. Some residential and commercial development has taken place on agricultural lands and some of these land are projected to be developed into other land uses in the future. However, as long as farmers are making a profit farming, and the value of the land does not rise the point where it is more

profitable to use the land for development, agricultural land uses will remain as a part of the future of Stephens County.

Forest land in Stephens County are expected to decrease slightly throughout the planning horizon. Logging practices have come to about a stand still due to regulatory requirements and public pressures. Plus, the future value of these land are from their development potential rather than from the timber itself. The only reason forest land is not expected to disappear at a higher rate is due to the slow growth projections for the future.

The land owned by the U.S. Forest Service is expected to remain the same in Stephens County.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GOAL:** County wide coordination, including cities, addressing land use and land development issues.
- Objective:** Revise and update existing ordinances and programs to ensure quality growth and development, including incentive mechanisms where needed.
- Objective:** Improve administration and enforcement of existing ordinances and programs.
- Objective:** Study and implement the need for new ordinances related to land use management and development.
-
- GOAL:** Coordinate future land use development with infrastructure improvements.
- Objective:** Allow cities, utilities, authorities and other city/county department or agencies to have input and comment on growth decisions and development project.
- Objective:** Focus future growth and development in areas that are sufficiently served by necessary infrastructure.
- Objective :** Include all local governments and department in the planning of infrastructure and utility improvements and expansion.
-
- GOAL:** Provide the necessary protection to significant environmental and cultural resources.
- Objective:** Develop necessary tools and programs to protect and enhance historic and archeological resources.
- Objective:** Work with the County Extension Service and other agencies to encourage the continuance and success of agricultural practices in the county.
-
- GOAL:** Encourage infill development and redevelopment opportunities.
- Objective:** Create a planning committee to assist business, industry and property owners to develop a program and plan the will encourage infill development opportunities, and assist in the redevelopment of dilapidate industrial, commercial, and residential areas.

CHAPTER TEN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

As stated in the minimum planning standards, the Intergovernmental Coordination Element provides Stephens County, Avalon, Martin and Toccoa an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes with other local governments and governmental entities that can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the comprehensive plan. This purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of each community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases involve multiple governmental entities.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS AND CONDITIONS

Stephens County is bordered by Habersham County, Banks County, Franklin County and the State of South Carolina. Located within the County are the municipal governments of Avalon, Martin and Toccoa. Coordination between the County and these cities is of course essential to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Under the state requirements of HB 489 (Service Delivery Strategy), Stephens County and cities within are required to coordinate actions and decisions relative to annexation and land use. Although not required, coordination with the surrounding counties does play an important role in comprehensive plan implementation.

Local Government Entities Boards, Authorities, and Programs.

Stephens County government operates on the commission/manager form of government. The County has a board of commissioners made up of 3 members serving staggered one year terms, each representing a district within the county. A chairman is elected annually from among the commissioners. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for hiring a county manager that provides general day-to-day operations of county government. The county government sets and approves the budget for all departments, sets the millage rate each year, and provides funds for operation of all county departments.

The City of Toccoa is governed by a five member city commission who employs a city manager that oversees day-to-day operations of city government. The mayor is elected from among the commission members and serves a one year term.

The Town of Avalon is governed by a council of four members and an elected mayor while the Town of Avalon has a five member council and an elected mayor

As mentioned earlier, coordination efforts between Stephens County and its municipalities are essential to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. All levels of staff and elected officials are involved in the coordination process which is outlined in the Service Delivery Strategy discussed in detail later in this Chapter. Implementation/Coordination is

achieved through various memoranda of understanding or other agreements between Stephens County, Avalon, Martin and Toccoa.

The Stephens County Board of Education is the governing body of the Stephens County School System. The primary role of the Board is the carry out overall policies of the system which are executed under the direction of a School Superintendent. Coordination among governments, agencies, other boards and the public is required in the siting of new schools, educational programs, and the joint use of certain facilities.

The Toccoa/Stephens County Airport Authority is a five member authority which oversees operation of the R.G. LeTourneau Field located at the northeast corner of Toccoa. The airport serves general aviation in the area with no commercial flights. Membership on the Authority consists of the Chairman of the County Commission, the Mayor of Toccoa, two at large appointees by the County and one at large appointee by the City of Toccoa. Basic funding of the Authority comes from a \$10,000/yr appropriation from the County and \$6,000/yr from the City for operating capital. Inter-governmental coordination occurs between the Airport Authority, Stephens County, Toccoa and agencies such as the Georgia DOT and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Another important authority operating in Stephens County is the Hospital Authority. This authority by law is a County funded activity. Large expenditures are made for indigent resident care (funded by 7/10 of a mill tax) and ambulance service which is operated through a contractual arrangement with the County for approximately \$440,000. The Hospital Board is made up of seven members, three appointed by the County ??

The Northeast Georgia Housing Authority (formerly the Toccoa Housing Authority) provides management and oversight for all public housing in Stephens County. The Authority is a consolidated housing authority also providing service to cities of Clarkesville, Cleveland, Homer and Toccoa. It operates under the current Georgia Housing Law and the original Cooperative Agreement signed by each city. In spite of its consolidation, the authority is a municipal corporation created by each city. The Northeast Georgia Housing Authority has a thirteen (13) member board of which five (5) members are appointed by the City of Toccoa representing the city's interests. The authority employs twenty seven (27) persons working in the four cities that it serves with the main office located in Toccoa.

Service Delivery Strategy

In accordance with the Service Delivery Act (HB 489), the Stephens County and City of Toccoa Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) was developed, submitted and approved in 1999. This state law requires that local government and related entities cooperate with the delivery of various community services as agreed upon by the local governments. The SDS identifies local community services, assigns service areas and responsibilities (including funding), and provides a methodology for the delivery of community services that include a variety of implementation tools such as ordinances and contracts.

In accordance with the SDS law, a local government's existing strategy must be updated concurrent with the local government's comprehensive plan. To ensure consistency between the comprehensive plan and service delivery strategy, the services to be provided by the local governments, as identified in the comprehensive plan, cannot exceed those identified in the SDS. Also, there must be consistency between the comprehensive plan and the SDS.

The following services are included in the SDS:

- Airport
- Ambulance Service
- Animal Control
- Building Inspector
- Building Permits
- Business Licenses
- Civil Defense
- Code Enforcement
- Courts
 - City
 - Coroner Inquest
 - Magistrate
 - Probate
 - State
 - Superior
- Court Services
 - Court Appointed Attorney
 - DA's Investigator
 - District Attorney Expense
 - Indigent Defense
 - Judge's Expenses
 - Jury Commission
 - Jury, Witness and Bailiffs
 - Legal Notices
 - Medical Exam (Coroner)
 - Recorder (Court Recording)
- Drug Task Force
- Economic Development

- Elections
- Emergency Management Agency
- EMS
- 911 Emergency
- Engineering
- Fire Protection
 - City
 - County
- Fleet Management (Shop)
 - City
 - County
- Health Service
 - General
 - Mental
- Jail
- Law Enforcement
 - Police
 - Sheriff
- Landfill
- Land Use
- Library
- Mapping
- Natural Gas Distribution
- Planning and Zoning
- Recreation and Parks
- Senior Center
- Tax Assessment
- Tax Collection
- Storm Water Collection
- Storm Water Treatment
- Solid Waste Collection
- Solid Waste Transfer
- Water Distribution
- Waste Water Collection
- Waste Water Treatment
- Water Treatment
- Roads and Streets
- Public Works
- Welfare
 - Child Welfare
 - DFACS
 - Food Stamps
 - General Assistance
 - Program for Aging
 - Pauper Burial

9th District Opportunity

- Cemetary
- Purchasing
- Central Purchasing
- Downtown Development Authority
- Litter Control
- Probation

All of these services are presented and discussed in other elements (Community Facilities and Services, Natural Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Transportation) within the comprehensive plan.

The SDA also includes an agreement between Stephens County and the City of Toccoa to implement a process for resolving land use disputes over annexations. Under the agreement between the City and the County prior notification of annexation activities will be given to the County by the City providing full information on the proposed land use or zoning classification and area to be annexed. The county will respond to the City within 15 working days of its agreement or objection to the proposal. In the event of disagreement between the City and County, the dispute will go through the agreed upon mediation process.

To ensure compatible and non-conflicting land use Stephens County and Toccoa provides land and water planning through ordinances for the following: Subdivision Regulation, Water Supply Watershed Protection, River Corridor Protection, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, Wetlands Protection, Floodplain Regulation, and through a resolution approving and adopting a comprehensive plan for the City of Toccoa and Stephens County. Expansion of water and sewer services and land use modifications must comply with these resolutions, ordinances, and the comprehensive plan.

There are additional departments or services identified in the SDS not addressed in this element, but are departments or units of local government, and are solely funded out of the county or city budget and are addressed and assessed in the community facilities element of this plan.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to reiterate strategies for the implementation of various goals, objectives, and policies established in the Comprehensive Plan. An implementation strategy is necessary to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is used by community leaders as a guide to decision-making. Also, it is the intent of the 1989 Georgia Planning Act that plans can be implemented and used in the local, regional, and state planning process. As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), it is the intent that this chapter can be separately copied as a "policy plan" component.

Minimum planning standards for local plans require the development of a Short Term Work Program, which consists of community programs and projects needed to meet the goals and objectives, public facilities necessary to meet the standard of living desired by the community for existing residents and the projected population five years into the future, and a general description of any land development regulations expected to be adopted or amended to help achieve the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan in the next five years. The local planning standards also require that the Short Term Work program be revised every five years, with annual updates encouraged.

LEGAL STATUS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan carries with it no weight of law, and the governing body is under no legal obligation to implement the comprehensive plan. However, the plan represents a broad based consensus on needed programs and improvements in the future.

CONFLICT BETWEEN POLICIES AND MAPS.

In the event that one or more goals, objectives, strategies, and/or policies, or any portion of the text conflict with the Future Land Use Plan 2025 Maps or any other maps, the provisions of the text shall prevail. This is the case because the Future Land Use Plan 2025 Map, while substantially detailed, is not intended to dictate the exact use of each parcel in the community. Rigid application of this map is not expected because it is intended to be applied generally, and because there will undoubtedly be justifiable departures from the design of the plan map. Implementation of the overall general policies is what is most important. However, substantial and/or successive departures from the plan map should result in an amendment to the plan text and map.

CONFLICT BETWEEN POLICY STATEMENTS

It is anticipated that instances will arise where certain goals and policies will conflict with other policy statements. For instance, the economic development strategy of promoting suitable job opportunities may conflict with the goal of preserving the rural character of the community. The goals, objectives, strategies and policies are all considered to be of equal value on their face. That is, such policy statements are not always ranked by order of

importance in the plan. In cases of conflicts, the Planning Commissions and/or Governing Bodies must decide, as individual instances arise, which of the conflicting policies will prevail.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Stephens County and Avalon do not have zoning regulations. The comprehensive plan does not specifically state that adoption of zoning regulations are immediately necessary to ensure implementation of the Future Land Use Plan 2025 for the county, but that the issue should be closely studied and addressed from the adoption of this plan update. The plan finds and recommends that the local governments move forward with some type of coordinated program to address growth and development issues.

Existing regulations improvements are drastically needed in all jurisdictions. Presently the county has some land development requirements, however, they are more than likely insufficient to address the growth issues facing the county.

Stephens County and Toccoa both have local flood damage prevention regulations and are participating in the National Flood Insurance Program. Martin and Avalon do not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. A flood ordinance is needed to prevent property damage resulting from floods and to protect these environmentally sensitive resources.

GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Once the inventory of existing conditions and the assessment of current and future needs have been completed, minimum planning standards require the development and articulation of immediate and long term goals, policies and objectives. These goals are based on the needs identified and provide guidance on how the community will address and attain them during the planning period.

At the end of each element is a comprehensive listing of recommended goals, policies, and objectives. The statements are provided and it is intended that a policy component can be extracted and consulted by interested individuals, without the need to review statistical details of the plan text.

SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM (STWP)

The Short Term Work Program (STWP) is the implementation part of the comprehensive plan that list specific actions and objectives to be undertaken annually by each local government over the upcoming five years to implement the approved comprehensive plan. Each item in the STWP refers to an element within the plan to justify the action; provides a description of the action to be taken; information on estimate costs; item responsibility; and, possible technical assistance and funding sources for the item.

A Short Term Work Program has been developed separately for each local government. Each local government is responsible for implementing its own STWP. At the end of the five years each local government is required to prepare a Report of Accomplishments reporting on

the items in the STWP. And, each local government must prepare a new STWP for the next five years to continue implementing the comprehensive plan goals and policies.

Stephens County STWP

Plan Element	Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Estimated Costs; Dept. Responsible	Department Funding & Assistance Sources
CF	Clean up Illegal Dumpsites	X	X	X	X	X	\$500 Marshal	General Fund
CF	Road Side Clean Up	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000 Marshal	General Fund
CF	Replace Dump Truck		X	X			\$85 K each, Public Works	General Fund
CF	Replace Lowboy Trailer		X				\$75K, Public Works	General Fund
CF	Replace Wood Bridge		X		X		\$275K each, Public Works	General Fund/ DOT
CF	Replace Pick-up Truck		X		X		\$20K each, Public Works	General Fund
CF	New Building Road Dept		X			X	\$100K each, Public Works	General Fund
CF	Pave 5 miles of dirt road each year	X	X	X	X	X	\$500K per year, Public Works	General Fund/DOT/SPLOST
CF	Implement E-911 System	X	X				\$1.8 Million, Emergency Communications	SPLOST
CF	Construct New Jail			X			\$7 Million, County Commission, Sheriff	SPLOST
CF	Restoration of Historic Courthouse					X	\$2.5 Million, Commission	SPLOST
CF	Replace Senior Center Van	X					\$20 K, Senior Center	General Fund
CF	Replace Meal on Wheel Vehicle	X					\$10K, Senior Center	General Fund
CF	Replace Ambulances	X	X	X	X	X	\$75K each, County Commission, EMS	SPLOST
CF	Replace Sheriff's Vehicle	X	X	X	X	X	\$10K each, County Commission, Sheriff	General Fund

CF	Replace Bleachers		X	X	X		\$3K each, Recreation Dept.	General Fund
CF	Develop Walking Trail	X					\$5K, Recreation Dept.	General Fund
CF	Acquire Live Scan Identification System	X					\$26K, Sheriff's Dept.	General Fund/Byrne Grant
CF	Update County Personnel System	X					\$30K, County Commission	General Fund
CF	Conduct a revaluation of the Tax Digest	X	X				\$300K total, Tax Assessors	General Fund
CF	Conduct audits for Personal Property Digest	X	X	X	X	X	\$80K first 2 years, \$10K after that: Tax Assessors	General Fund
CF	Yonah Dam Road Water Project			X			\$100K, County Commission	SPLOST
CF	Privitize Solid Waste Services	X					\$100K, County Commission	General Fund
Land Use/Natural & Historic Resources	Develop Land Management Policies		X				\$25K, County Commission, Community	General Fund
ED	Develop Strategic Plan		X				\$25K, SCDA, Community	General Fund
ED	Implement Entprenuarial Program	X					\$60K, SCDA	General Revenues

CITY OF TOCCOA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM
2004 - 2008

PLAN ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	ESTIMATED COST; DEPT. RESPONSIBLE	DEPARTMENT FUNDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES
Community Facilities	Repairs and remodeling to Doyle Street Fire Station.				X		\$50,000; Fire Department	General Fund
Community Facilities	Add three positions to complete staffing requirement for ISO Class 3.		X	X	X		\$150,000; Fire Department	General Fund
Community Facilities	Lower ISO rating to Class 3.					X	Same as above; Fire Department	General Fund
Community Facilities	Added police personnel based on call volume increases.	X	X	X	X	X	\$386,000; Police	General Fund
Community Facilities	Police vehicle purchase		X	X	X		\$671,000; Police	General Fund
Community Facilities	Police vehicle leases.		X	X	X	X	\$583,000; Police	General Fund
Community Facilities	Management Information System .	X					\$25,000; Police	Court Fees
Community Facilities	Training center updates and repair.	X	X	X	X	X	\$39,000; Police	General Fund
Community Facilities	Equipment replacement and upgrade.	X	X	X	X	X	\$13,000; Police	General Fund
Community Facilities	Computer and radio replacement.	X	X	X	X	X	\$21,000; Police	General Fund

CITY OF TOCCOA
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM
 2004 – 2008

PLAN ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	ESTIMATED COST; DEPT. RESPONSIBLE	DEPARTMENT FUNDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES
Community Facilities	Sedimentation basins upgrade.	X	X	X	X	X	\$710,00; Water Dept.	Utility revenue fund
Community Facilities	Filter replacement and upgrade.	X	X	X	X	X	\$600,000; Water Dept.	Utility revenue fund
Community Facilities	Update and repair chemical feed systems.	X	X	X	X	X	\$260,000; Water Dept.	Utility revenue fund
Community Facilities	Evaluate and upgrade the SCADA system.	X	X	X			\$140,000; Water Dept.	Utility revenue fund
Community Facilities	Airport facility improvements.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,545,000; Airport Authority	FAA, GDOT, County and City funds
Land Use	Adopt or enforce and improve codes as necessary, to remove junk, improve blighted conditions and beautify all major entryways into city.	X	X	X	X	X	No cost; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance.
Land Use	Update subdivision regulations.		X	X			No cost; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance.
Land Use	Review and update of city building ordinances, including the use of inspectors.	X	X	X	X	X	\$40,000; Planning	General fund
Land Use	Develop a plan to preserve recreation areas already heavily used by citizens.		X	X			No cost; Planning and Administration	General Fund
Land Use	Develop a tree preservation ordinance.			X	X		No cost; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance.
Land Use	Develop a landscape ordinance.			X	X		No cost; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance.
Land Use / Natural Resources	Develop a greenspace plan.				X	X	No costs; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance.

CITY OF TOCCOA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM
2004 – 2008

PLAN ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	ESTIMATED COST; DEPT. RESPONSIBLE	DEPARTMENT FUNDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES
Land Use	Develop a plan for protecting natural landmarks.				X	X	No cost; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance
Land Use/ Natural Resources	Develop and enforce a sign ordinance to protect mountain ridgelines and scenic byways.		X	X			No cost; Planning	GMRDC technical assistance
Historic Resources	Update the historic resources survey	X	X				\$10,000; Planning	GA DNR, SHPO grant
Transportation	Plan bike lanes or separated bike path along corridor with high vehicle/bike friction.				X	X	No Costs; Planning	Technical assistance from GA DOT, GMRDC
Transportation	Complete corridor transportation study for SR 17, SR 63/106, US123/365 and downtown Toccoa.	X	X				\$40,000; Planning	General funds; technical assistance from GA DOT, GMRDC
Transportation	Participate in pedestrian and bike planning for Toccoa and Stephens County.			X	X	X	No costs; Planning	Technical assistance from GA DOT, GMRDC
Community Facilities	Cemetery landscaping and irrigation system.		X	X			\$25,000; Planning	General fund
Community Facilities	Sewer relocation, drainage and street improvements for Davis Ave and Poplar St.	X	X	X	X	X	\$500,000; Planning	General fund, utility revenue fund
Community Facilities	Re-roof shelters and bridge at Henderson Falls Park.		X				\$20,000; Planning	General fund
Community Facilities	Rebuild tennis courts at Henderson Falls Park.			X	X		\$100,000; Planning	General fund
Community Facilities	Road entrance improvements at Henderson Falls Park.	X					\$7,000; Planning	General fund
Community Facilities	Nature trail repair and landscaping at Henderson Falls park.	X					\$5,000; Planning	General fund

CITY OF TOCCOA
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM
 2004 – 2008

PLAN ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	ESTIMATED COST; DEPT. RESPONSIBLE	DEPARTMENT FUNDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES
Economic Development	Adopt a façade grant program for property/business owners in downtown	X	X	X	X	X	\$100,000; Main Street	General fund
Economic Development	Continue and expand the financial incentive package for downtown business recruitment.	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000; Main Street	General fund
Economic Development	Explore funding alternatives to remove canopies and open Doyle Street.	X	X				No cost; Main Street	
Economic Development	Remove concrete covered walkways and open Doyle Street.			X	X		\$900,000; Main Street	General fund; GA DOT TEA, GA DNR SHPO, ARC, EDA
Economic Development	Develop strategic plan for attracting new retail/commercial businesses to the community.	X	X				No cost; Main Street, Chamber of Commerce	
Economic Development	Continue emphasis on seasonal events and festivals.	X	X	X	X	X	No Cost; Main Street, Chamber of Commerce	
Economic Development	Continue the redevelopment plans for the depot.	X	X	X			\$500,000; Main Street	GA DOT TEA
Economic Development	Collaborate with regional groups such as the Lake Hartwell Alliance, Great Lakes of GA, NE GA Mountains Travel Association.	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,500; Main Street	General fund
Natural Resource Economic Development	Design a green space corridor linking Lake Hartwell with Downtown Toccoa.		X	X	X		\$25,000; Main Street	General fund; DNR Recreation, GA DOT TEA
Land Use	Establish sections of Downtown Toccoa as locally designated and National Register Districts.	X	X	X			No cost; Main Street	Technical assistance from GMRDC and GA DNR SHPO
Economic Development	Market the sale of the former Captain Billy's building.	X	X	X	X	X	No cost; Main Street	
Community Facilities	Continue Phase III streetscape implementation.	X	X	X	X		\$310,000; Main Street	General fund; GA DOT TEA

City of Toccoa
Long-Term Work Program
2004-2008

Plan Element	Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Assistance Sources
Collection	Continue weekly curbside municipal waste collection	X	X	X	X	X	\$250,000./Yr	Solid Waste fees
	Continue weekly curbside recyclable collection	X	X	X	X	X	\$140,000./Yr	Sale of recycled materials; solid waste fees
	Continue weekly brush, trash, and leaf collection	X	X	X	X	X	\$90,000./Yr	Solid Waste Fees
	Purchase new/replacement dumpsters, roll-outs, and recycle baskets	X	X	X	X	X	\$17,000./Yr	Capital Budget, Solid Waste transfer
	Continue daily commercial dumpster collection	X	X	X	X	X	\$175,000./Yr	Solid Waste Fees
	Continue daily cardboard dumpster collection	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000./Yr	Sale of recycled material
	Purchase residential front-loading collection truck			X			\$175,000.	GMA Lease Pool Solid Waste transfer to CIP
	Purchase recycling truck					X	\$170,000.	GMA Lease Pool Solid Waste transfer to CIP
	Purchase commercial dumpster collection truck				X		\$170,000.	GMA Lease Pool Solid Waste transfer to CIP
	Replace cardboard collection with used commercial dumpster truck				X			Pass down used truck
	Maintain Braswell Street Public Works Facility	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,000/Yr	Street Department
	Residential drop site Recycle Center				X	X	\$30,000.	Sale of recycled materials; solid waste fund

(Collection)

City of Toccoa
Long-Term Work Program
2004-2008

Plan Element	Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2014	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Assistance Sources
Waste Reduction/Recycling	Continue weekly curbside recyclable collection	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$140,000./Yr	Sale of recycled materials, solid waste fees
	Continue weekly curbside brush, trash, leaf collection	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$90,000.	Solid waste fees
	Continue weekly cardboard dumpster collection	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$30,000./Yr	Sale of cardboard
	Tub grind all yard trimmings	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000./Yr	Solid waste fees, contract services
	Mulch/Compost give away program	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000./Yr	Street Department Crews
	Purchase new/replacement cardboard dumpsters, and recycle baskets	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000./Yr	Capital budget, solid waste transfer
	Purchase recycle truck							\$0	
	Replace cardboard truck with used commercial truck						X	\$0	Pass down used truck
Maintain recycling center on Swift Street	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$15,000./Yr	Sale of recycled materials	

(Waste Reduction)

City of Toccoa
 Long-Term Work Program
 2004-2008

Plan Element	Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Assistance Sources
Disposal	Deliver all municipal waste to transfer station (commercial and Residential)	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000./Yr	Collection fees
	Sale of recycled materials	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000./Yr	Street Department crews
	Mulch/compost give away to public	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000./Yr	City Staff
	Continue to investigate regional disposal options	X	X	X	X	X	\$0	City Staff

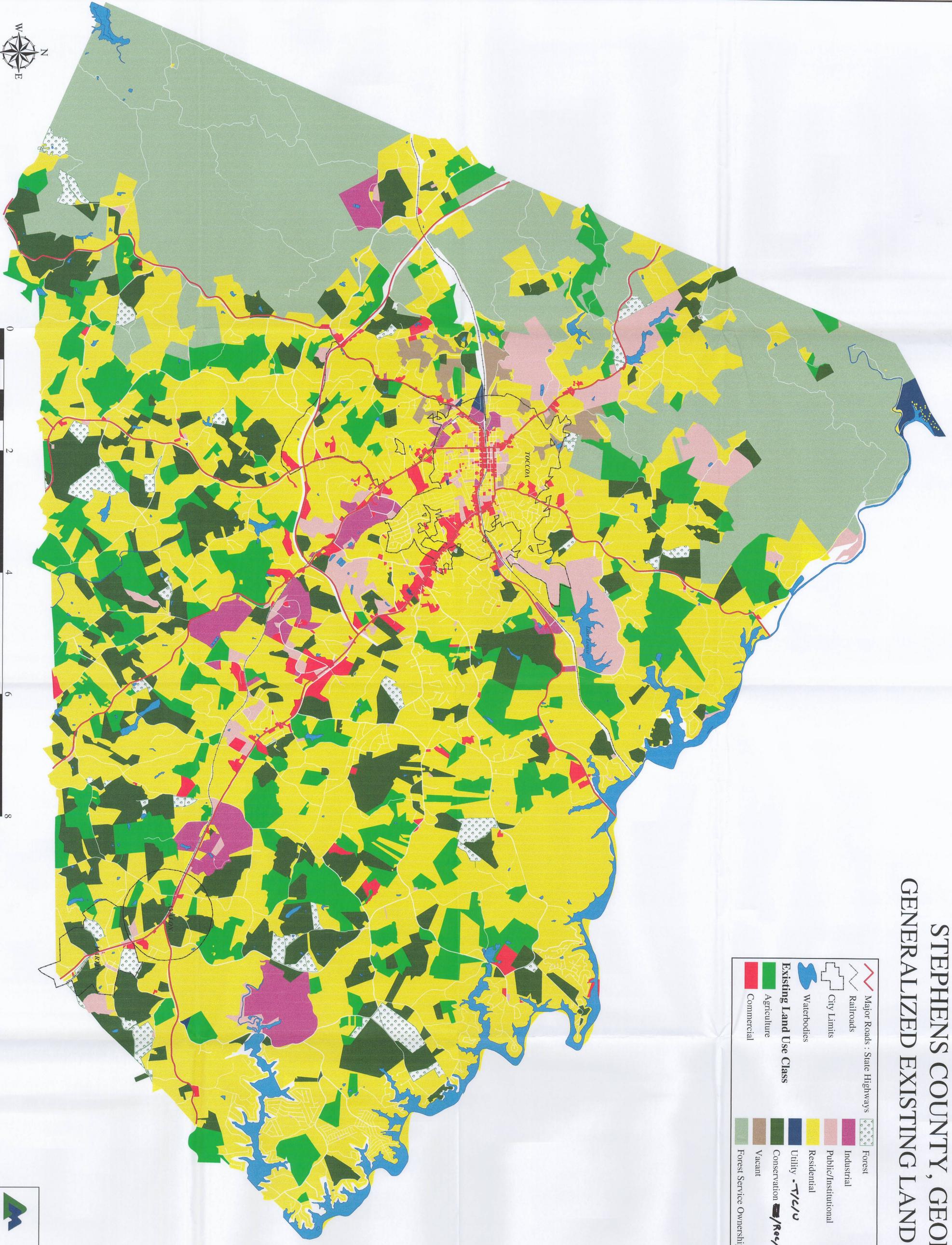
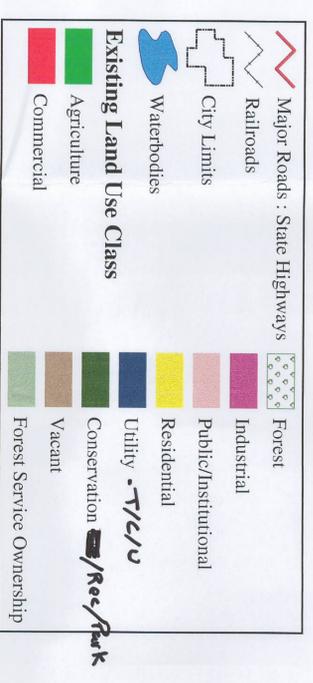
(Disposal)
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City of Toccoa
Long-Term Work Program
2004-2008

Plan Element	Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Assistance Sources
Education/Public Involvement	Christmas tree collection program	X	X	X	X	X	\$500./Yr	Georgia Department of Community Affairs, City Public Relation/Marketing Department
	Tours of recycling center, school groups, civic clubs, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000./Yr	City Public Relations/Marketing Department
	Celebrate Earth Day in school system (poster contest)	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000./Yr	City Public Relations/Marketing Department
	Recongize recycling week	X	X	X	X	X	\$300./Yr	City Public Relations/Marketing Department
	Participate in keep America Beautiful Program	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000./Yr	City Public Relations/Marketing Department Georgia Department of Community Affairs
	Run display ads and leaflets to encourage recycling/educate public	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000./Yr	City Public Relations/Marketing Department
	Prepare DCA full cost reports/ad	X	X	X	X	X	\$100./Yr	In-house staff
	Make presentations at schools, civic clubs, senior center on recycling	X	X	X	X	X	\$500./Yr	City Public Relation/Marketing Department/Public Works Director and Staff Assistant
	Public service announcements	X	X	X	X	X	\$500./Yr	City Public Relation Marketing Department, local media
	Prepare articles for local newspaper on solid waste/recycling issues	X	X	X	X	X	\$2000./Yr	City Public Relation/Marketing Department

(Education)

STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA GENERALIZED EXISTING LAND USE 2004



STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE 2025

