

FINAL DRAFT

**Dawson County  
Comprehensive Plan 2008-2028**

**COMMUNITY  
AGENDA**

Prepared for:

**Dawson County**  
Dawsonville, Georgia

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The Community Agenda outlines a future development road map for Dawson County and therefore is the most important part of the Dawson County Comprehensive Plan 2026. Given the extensive public participation process involved in developing the plan to this point, the Community Agenda should generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of Dawson County and thereby encourage citizens to remain engaged in the development process and ensure that the county implements the plan.

The Community Agenda serves the purpose of meeting the intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as established on May 1, 2005. Preparation in accordance with these standards is an essential requirement in maintaining Dawson County's status as a Qualified Local Government.

## 1.2 Scope

The Community Agenda includes the county's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities it choose to address during the planning period and its implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities.

## 2 Community Vision

The Community Vision section paints a picture of what Dawson County desires to become and provides complete descriptions of the development patterns envisioned. This section begins with the vision statements for the county, the Georgia 400 Corridor and the Georgia 53 Corridor. Next, the Community Vision outlines its relationship to the Quality Community Objectives as set forth by DCA. Finally, the Community Vision presents the Future Development Maps subsection that includes the Character Area Map along with the character area descriptions and the Future Land Use Map along with the future land use category descriptions.

### 2.1 General Vision Statements

This subsection presents the vision statements of the overall goals and desired future that the county seeks to achieve. The following serves as the joint vision statement for the City of Dawsonville and Dawson County:

“Growing in harmony with natural beauty and hometown charm”



*Character of Dawson County – (Left) Rural meadow in southeast Dawson County; (right) Historic Dawson County Courthouse*

#### 2.1.1 Dawson County

Dawson County, which is part of the Georgia Mountains region, envisions a future where its special places, scenery, and cultural resources are preserved and higher density growth is concentrated within distinct and compact areas by allowing low and medium density development in most of the county that is economical to serve with infrastructure.

Dawson County will maintain its unique character, which includes a mountain heritage, rich scenic beauty, specialty farms, friendly people, and small town/rural feel. Its natural resources (i.e., mountains, hillsides, rivers, streams, scenic views, forests, farms, and rural lands) will be protected and their values sustained for the use and enjoyment of future generations, as managed growth occurs.

### **2.1.2 City of Dawsonville –Removed Section**

It is understood that the City will prepare a Comprehensive Plan/Community Agenda separate from Dawson County. In the interest of all county citizens, Dawson County encourages a shared cooperative vision between the City and County.

### 2.1.3 Georgia 400 Corridor

The north portion and south portion of the Georgia 400 corridor will each have their own unique character and land use characteristics. Quality development in the Georgia 400 corridor will be ensured through controls on architecture and site design.

The southern portion of the Georgia 400 corridor (south of Harmony Church Road) will be developed and characterized by light industry and highway commercial uses, including large retailers and restaurants. Large and small retailers will be welcomed in the south part of the Georgia 400 corridor.

The northern portion of the Georgia 400 corridor (north of Lumpkin Campground Road/Harmony Church Road) will have a distinct character of rural scenery and long vistas of forested hills and mountains.

Development in the Georgia 400 corridor will preserve mountain and scenic views, respect existing topography, and blend with the natural landscape.

Georgia 400 will provide for through traffic with enhanced access and mobility within the corridor via frontage roads.

Development in the north portion of the corridor will consist of mixed-use pedestrian centers at crossroads, institutional and commercial campus-style developments, large-scale, a mixed-use village community and higher-density retirement and apartment communities. Master planned communities in this area should reflect Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) principles or conservation subdivision principles.



*South Georgia 400 commercial*



*North Georgia 400 residential*



*South Georgia 400 access*

### 2.1.4 Georgia 53 Corridor

The scenic portions of the Georgia 53 corridor west of Lumpkin Campground Road and east of Perimeter Road will be preserved, including views of undeveloped hillsides, open forest land, trees, rustic stores, and rural residential development.

It is recommended that quality development be ensured through controls on architecture and site design administered by a design review board. Existing development in the corridor will be visually softened to maintain the corridor's scenic elements.

Portions of the Georgia 53 corridor within growth areas will be developed as campus-style light industrial/business parks and as residential areas.

The Savanna area, where the Etowah River crosses Georgia 53, will remain a special place, with its views preserved and values sustained for the use and enjoyment of future generations, as development occurs. Dawson County envisions a future where Georgia 53 east of Georgia 9 is widened (capacity added) without eliminating scenic curves or disrupting the natural landscape.



*Rural corridor commercial*



*Rural character commercial use on Georgia 53*

## 2.2 Quality Community Objectives

In 1999 the DCA Board adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCO) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future. Each character area described in Section 2.4.2 lists the QCO's that will be pursued in that area. Each QCO title is listed below in bold and fully presented in italics followed by an explanation of the relationship between the objective and the Dawson County Vision.

- a. **Regional Identity:** *Regions should promote and preserve an identity, defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.*

Economic linkages to the region that are important to Dawson County and Dawsonville include mountain tourism, agri-tourism, the nurturing of small businesses, and the retention of family farms. Through commercial architectural review, development in identified overlay district areas will have architectural features and characteristics that reinforce historical settlement patterns and are compatible with natural resources, including mountain and other scenic views.

- b. **Growth Preparedness:** *Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.*



Figure 2-1: Historic building in Dawsonville

An immediate prerequisite for additional growth in Dawson County and Dawsonville is to secure future potable water supplies. Since water withdrawals from Lake Lanier have not been settled, Dawsonville, Dawson County, and the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority must work collaboratively to begin immediately securing future water supplies. Indeed, if drought conditions continue over a significant portion of the lifetime of this plan, future water requirements may need to be significantly redistributed. Through conservation and efficient use of water resources Dawson County envisions a future where they have a guaranteed, long-term, sustainable water supply to meet their needs. The possibility does exist however, that there may be limited supplies in the future and that growth must be paced with availability. Water will not be extended countywide. Water service will not be extended in areas where the marginal costs of serving such areas exceed marginal revenues. The county and Etowah Water and Sewer Authority (water/sewer) will partner in growth to serve unincorporated employment areas with the necessary infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.). Sanitary sewer will be provided only in the high density area of the county. Sewer service will not be extended outside the designated service area, unless consistent with the comprehensive plan and Service Delivery Strategy, so as to economize on public expenditures and to manage the location and timing of growth.

Citizens have expressed the desire to have the road network increase in advance of or at least concurrently with development, including frontage roads, a network of new, connected local roads as subdivisions occur, a system of scenic roads, and sidewalks. Multi-modal transportation



and interconnected routes are imperative to reduce future congestion and mitigate large infrastructure expenditures. As the workforce expands and the population grows increasingly older, moderate-income housing opportunities in the form of apartments/condominiums will be needed and which are planned for in the Georgia 400 corridor. Dawson County will within the short-term adopt new ordinances to direct growth as desired, including scenic corridor overlay districts, architectural review requirements in those overlays, and hillside development standards. Consideration or study will also be paid to tools such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's).

- c. **Appropriate Business:** *The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.*

Dawson County envisions a future where it has an economic base consisting of sufficient commercial, tourism and industrial development to offset the tax burdens placed on residents and farmers and continuing to preserve the large amount of publicly owned land in the county which does not generate property taxes.

Dawson County's preferred economic strategies are to: (1) promote mountain tourism, mountain settlement heritage, and racecar/moonshine history; (2) attract and maintain light and medium industry; (3) maintain farming and promote specialty farming; (4) provide a strong base of retail and services; and (5) promote senior-friendly communities and recreation.

A significant percentage of the county's land area is public forest land, which does not generate property tax revenues for the county, however can work to ensure its preservation through the promotion of agri-tourism and eco-tourism. These tools provide for additional economic tax generation while maintaining the green space for all citizens. Therefore, Dawson County must also ensure a healthy future economic base by designating sufficient areas of land for light industrial and commercial development. Dawson's designation as an "Entrepreneur Friendly" community invites new development that complements those needs. This community-based program helps create an entrepreneur environment, building entrepreneur and small business strategy into the community's overall economic development strategies

Dawson County envisions a future where it leases, manages, and develops some Corps of Engineers public lands along Lake Lanier for tourist-related low-impact outdoor recreational development.

Through adequate protection, the Etowah River will become a draw for ecologically friendly tourism that allows public access to and enjoyment of the river and its wildlife. Another economic development strategy is to attract seniors to live in planned communities, a trend already established with Big Canoe, Gold Creek, and Chestatee, which are three existing developments. Dawson County envisions that its family farms and active agricultural operations will continue, including poultry, cattle, equestrian estates, crops, specialty crops, and forestry, among others. The county desires to attract unique and specialty farming activities that are sustainable and respect the land.

Dawsonville envisions remaining the government and civic-institutional center for Dawson County.

- d. **Educational Opportunities:** *Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.*

Lanier Tech is currently working diligently to expand its offerings on their Dawson extension campus. We anticipate that those public partnership efforts will continue to address future technical educational needs for the County. Additionally, the location of the Southern Catholic College in strategic proximity to the city will also provide future opportunities for advanced

learning. Educational needs of the population will be identified in the population element of the comprehensive plan. Educational and training is needed to prepare the workforce for higher paying jobs. The vocational-technical and public schools have an important role to play. The county will update its Economic Development Plan that will include addressing these issues fully.

- e. **Employment Options:** *A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.*

The county needs to attract higher-paying jobs. An updated Economic Development Plan will provide the county with a game plan for addressing the county's needs.

- f. **Heritage Preservation:** *The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.*

Questionnaire results show that Dawson County citizens want to retain historic settlements and characteristics of the community. Dawson County and Dawsonville envision active historical and cultural societies dedicated to preserving the past and sustaining county and city cultural traits and resources.

- g. **Open Space Preservation:** *New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.*

The single most important open space issue is the future of the 10,000-acre Dawson Forest tract. Dawson County envisions a future where it gains control of, or significant voice in, the future use and/or preservation of Dawson Forest, which is owned by the Atlanta Airport Authority but currently leased by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for forest and wildlife management. This will not only be a significant part of the preservation plan, but also be an engine in the promotion of future tourism related economic development. Coupled with the opportunity to link park lands and waterways from Long Swamp Creek to the Appalachian Trail and the headwaters of the Etowah River the county may claim the prime natural resort and tourism attractions in the state.



*Amicalola River at Georgia 53*

Although blessed with many natural resources and significant protected forest and wildlife management lands, Dawson County envisions a future where even more land is set aside for publicly accessible open space and parks. Questionnaire results show support for acquisition of open spaces.

In areas of the county where subdivision development is permitted, conservation design practices should be used so that a portion of the land should be retained as a connected network of greenbelts, wildlife corridors, open space, or agriculture.

- h. **Environmental Protection:** *Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.*

Citizens of Dawson County and Dawsonville support stronger measures to protect river water quality, air quality, mountain and hillside development, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Special reviews and regulations are needed to ensure that, as development occurs in the Georgia 400 corridor and the Georgia 53 corridor east of Georgia 400, storm water runoff is treated to high water quality standards and returned to Lake Lanier.

Dawson County envisions a future where its trout streams remain cold and pollution free, protected by riparian buffers, and where streams that have been impacted are restored to their former status as trout fisheries.

- i. **Regional Cooperation:** *Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.*

Transportation improvement projects effect both the City and other County residents and through Intergovernmental agreement and staff cooperation will be given due consideration when setting SPLOST priorities and other potential GDOT funding requests.

Dawson County will share responsibility with other local governments and organizations for preservation of the environment. Dawson County, and as appropriate, Dawsonville may participate in the following regional initiatives:

*Upper Etowah River Alliance:* This is a collaborative of partners in the Etowah River watershed that is promoting the protection and wise use of the river as a resource.

*Upper Chattahoochee Basin Group:* This is a coalition of the local governments within the Lake Lanier Basin, dedicated to the protection of water quality in Lake Lanier and its tributaries.

*Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan:* This multi-county collaborative plan strives to promote policies and procedures which will preserve the habitat of endangered species in the Etowah while providing evaluative tools for impacts from future development. This plan is the product of work with the Federal Fish & Wildlife Service.

- j. **Transportation Alternatives:** *Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.*

Although most areas of the county will remain mostly dependent on the automobile for transportation, Dawson County envisions a future where a community network of lanes connects residential neighborhoods to commercial, institutional, and recreational destinations. The county also envisions pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use village communities proposed at locations designated on the future land use plan map.

Dawson County envisions a park-and-ride lot and eventual inclusion of a form of transit service that would connect the county to points south. The lot would be located in the southern portion of the Georgia 400 corridor.

Dawsonville envisions a future where bicycle-friendly pavement or paths and trails and a system of sidewalks are provided and used within the downtown area and in mixed-use communities.

**Regional Solutions:** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.

Residents of Dawson County and Dawsonville support continuous consideration of ways to meet their mutual needs with innovative city-county and regional solutions.

- k. **Housing Opportunities:** *Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.*

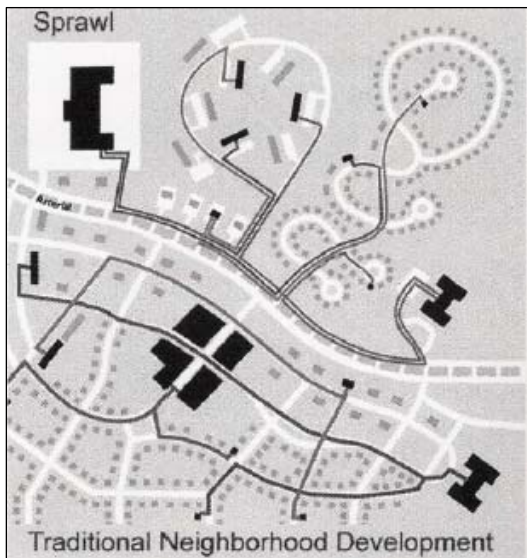
Dawson County's land use plan will provide for a wide variety of residential living opportunities, including: (1) senior-friendly communities; (2) mixed-use, mixed-density residential centers and neighborhoods; (3) rural and farm dwellings; (4) golf course, planned, and resort communities, (5) apartment communities, and (6) low-density conventional subdivisions.

Dawson County envisions a future where a majority, if not substantial majority, of persons working in Dawson County have an opportunity, through varieties of housing choice at different ranges of affordability, to reside in Dawson County. Dawson County recognizes the need for housing choices and will encourage public/private partnerships to meet this need.

Where master planned residential communities are permitted and developed, they should include some housing that is affordable to a variety of households, not just middle- and upper-income families.

Apartments/condominiums, which are appropriate within the Georgia 400 corridor and in mixed-use villages, shall be developed in larger complexes (200-300 units) that provide sufficient park and recreation facilities to serve the needs of their residents.

- l. **Traditional Neighborhood:** *Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.*



*Traditional neighborhood development versus Sprawl*

Traditional neighborhood developments are encouraged within mixed-use villages as designated on the future land use plan map of Dawson County within the northern portion of the Georgia 400 corridor, within the Georgia Hwy 9 S corridor, and within the Burt/Shoal Creek Corridor. Pedestrian and vehicular connectivity will be required along with appropriate emergency accesses.

- m. **Infill Development:** *Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community*

Commercial development will be concentrated and contained in specifically designated areas, including: (1) the Georgia 400 corridor; (2) the Georgia 53 corridor; (3) the City of Dawsonville; and (4) mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly villages at selected locations.

The preferred method of developing residentially is through larger-scale, master-planned communities with amenities such as open space networks, golf courses, and wildlife corridors. Where they are developed, large-scale residential subdivisions shall be developed according to principles of community master planning and conservation subdivision design, with networks of open space. Conventional residential subdivisions with low and mixed densities are not desired in parts of the county designated for farm and rural living, and the land use plan shall not permit them in such areas. This growth management strategy of preventing scattered, low-density subdivisions in locations outside designated growth areas will help Dawson County achieve policies of filling in vacant lands in already developed areas.

- n. **Sense of Place:** *Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing and entertainment.*

Dawsonville is the only traditional downtown area in Dawson County. Scenic corridor overlays will ensure future development is sensitive to the natural landscape that contributes to the county's sense of place.

Large-scale retailers, outlet malls, and strip malls shall only be permitted in the Georgia 400 corridor and in designated portions of the Georgia 53 corridor. These uses are considered incompatible with original settlement patterns of other parts of the county.

### **2.3 Regional Planning Goals and Initiatives**

The Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center's mission statement provides a succinct statement of regional goals, which are important to consider in local comprehensive planning efforts:

- Modern and cost-effective operations for local governments.
- Economic development in the region which will increase the number of jobs available and personal incomes.
- Solutions to multi-jurisdiction problems and collaboration on mutual interests.
- Balance between growth factors and the need for conservation of the area's natural resources.
- Alleviation of suffering caused by income, health status, age or other factors; and the overall quality of life.
- Harmonious relationships among cities and counties.

### **2.4 Future Development Maps**

This sub-section includes two maps: Character Area Map and Future Land Use. Character areas serve as the higher level category. Future Land Use Map categories further detail the types of uses allowed in each future land use category.

Map 2-1 shows the character areas as identified for Dawson County. Section 2.4.2 provides a defining narrative for the character areas. Map 2-2 shows the Future Land Use map. Section 2.4.3 provides a defining narrative for the Future Land Use categories.

The original 2025 Future Development Map was developed over the course of two separate planning processes. The original 2025 Future Land Use Map was adopted in 2005 as the part of a land use plan update for Dawsonville and Dawson County. This included the future land use category descriptions. The Character Area Map was developed in 2006 as part of the creation of this plan. It includes the character areas described here. The character areas were created

to correspond with the 2025 Future Land Use Map. Both maps have been updated in this document to reflect current growth trends and recent land use policies.

### 2.4.1 Defining Narrative

This subsection provides a specific narrative for each character area and future land use category. The narrative includes the following information:

- Written description, pictures and/or illustrations
- List of specific land uses or zoning categories allowed in the area
- Listing of the Quality Community Objectives that will be pursued in the area

#### Summary

The Character Area Map and Future Land Use Map for Dawson County are based on a strategy of managing the extent, location, and timing of development. The plan directs commercial development toward four areas:

- Georgia 400 corridor
- Limited areas of Georgia 53 corridor between Dawsonville and Georgia 400
- Georgia 9 corridor south of Dawsonville
- Lands within and immediately surrounding the City of Dawsonville

The location of commercial development in the Georgia 400 corridor north of the Georgia 53 corridor is proposed to be limited by the existing GA 400 Corridor Regulations which extend approximately 2000' east and west of the centerline of GA 400. A belt of existing agricultural lands running northwest-southeast on the west side of the Etowah River bounds the developed residential areas and provides a specific "edge" following the river. A scenic road designation along the middle part of the Georgia 53 corridor will help prevent development from filling in the corridor between Dawsonville and Georgia 400. Development in the Dawsonville area is proposed to be limited geographically by the agreed upon service delivery area identified by the 2007 SPLOST V Agreement.

Also, a belt of forested land running northeast-southwest, west of Dawsonville and north of Dawson Forest, serves as a second residential limit line to Dawsonville-area growth. This forest belt divides the Dawsonville area from the rural, mountainous north part of the county and generally follows the existing agricultural lands from the GA State owned park lands along Keith Evans and Bailey-Waters Roads to the northwest and Cowart Road to the Southwest. West of the forest belt, unincorporated Dawson County will maintain its current character as very low-density, rural residential. No residential subdivision tract development is anticipated in that area, which is subject to difficult terrain and a five-acre minimum lot size. Residential development is anticipated east of the forest belt on 3 acres, and 1.5 acre lot sizes approaching Dawsonville. Dawson Forest and the national forest lands along Amicalola Creek provide a third line separating rural lands in the far southwest corner and northwest portions of unincorporated Dawson County from higher density residential development where 1.5 and 1 acre lot sizes are prevalent.

## 2.4.2 Character Areas

Character area planning focuses on the way an area looks and how it functions. Applying development strategies to character in Dawson County can preserve existing areas and help others function better and become more attractive. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each situation. The character areas recommended for Dawson County, defined and shown in Map 2-1, define areas that:

- Presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved.
- Have potential to evolve into unique areas.
- Require special attention because of unique development issues.

Table 2-3 shows the relationship between character area categories and future land use map categories. Character areas serve as the higher level organizing category. Future Land Use Categories may be appropriate in more than one character area. However, some future land use categories are only appropriate in a single character area. Each character area is defined below based on the development pattern, land uses and zoning districts that accommodate the character area. Implementation measures recommended to either preserve or create the condition described by each character area are also included.

Future land use was determined in 2004 before DCA adopted the requirement for character areas. The county chose to maintain the majority of the Future Land Use Map developed in 2004 updated with the future land use categories as described in this plan in Section 2.4.3. The character areas serve as a higher-level organizing system built on the foundation of the previously established future land use categories.

The character areas are described in the following pages. Each description includes the following information at a minimum:

- Development Pattern
- Future Land Use Categories
- Zoning Districts
- Strategies

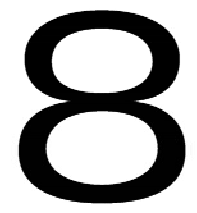
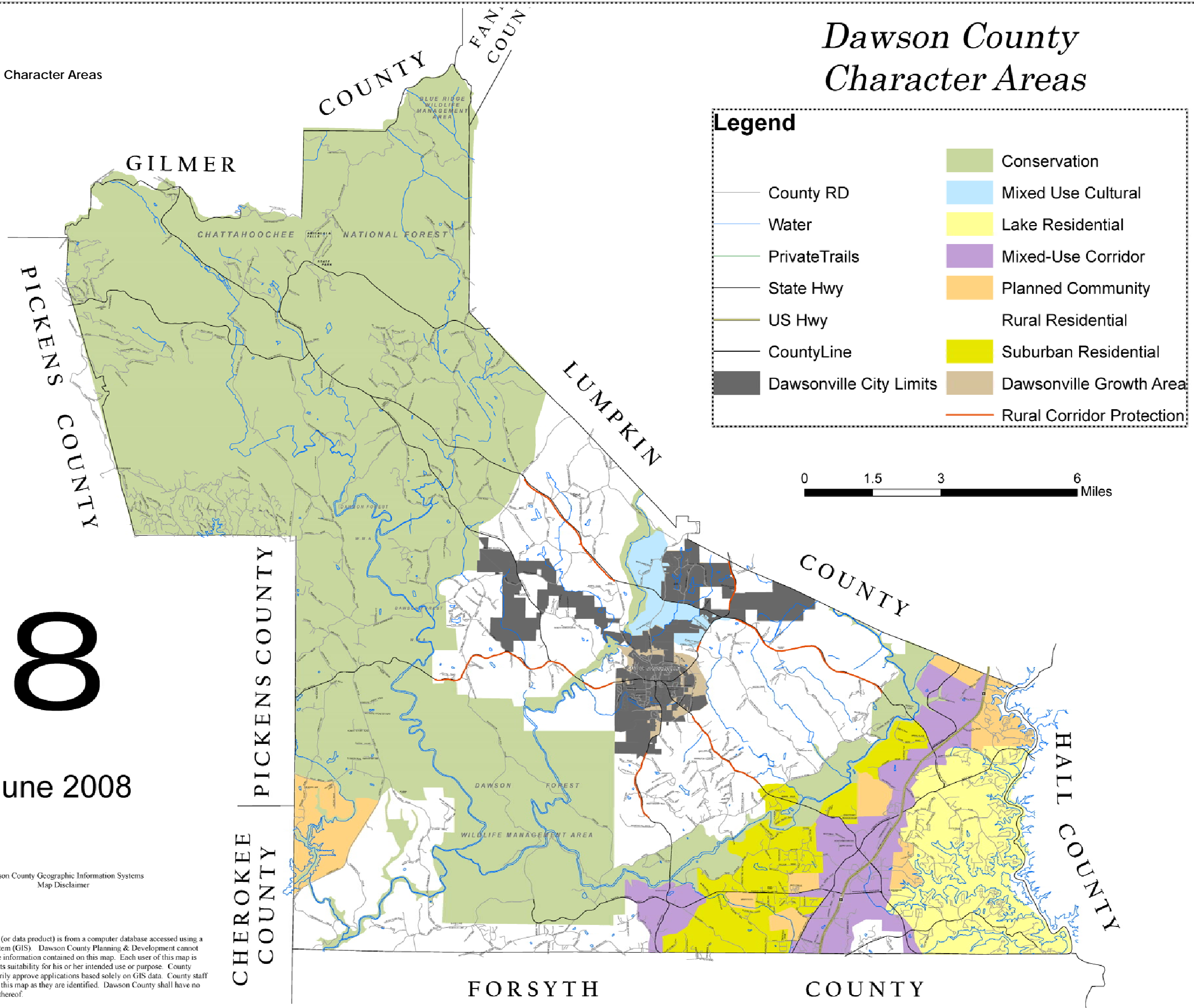
The Development Pattern describes the nature of development included in the character area including appropriate land use, design, infrastructure and intensity. The future land use categories section lists in bullets the Future Land Use Map categories included within each character area. The future land use categories of Public Institutional and Transportation, Communication and Utilities are allowed in each character area and are not listed in the descriptions below. The Zoning Districts section will list in bullets each zoning district typically allowed and those the county will need to adopt in order to implement the development pattern prescribed by each character area. The Strategies section will list in bullets the measures the county can take to ensure that the development pattern described by each character area can become reality.





Map 2-1: Character Areas

# Dawson County Character Areas



June 2008

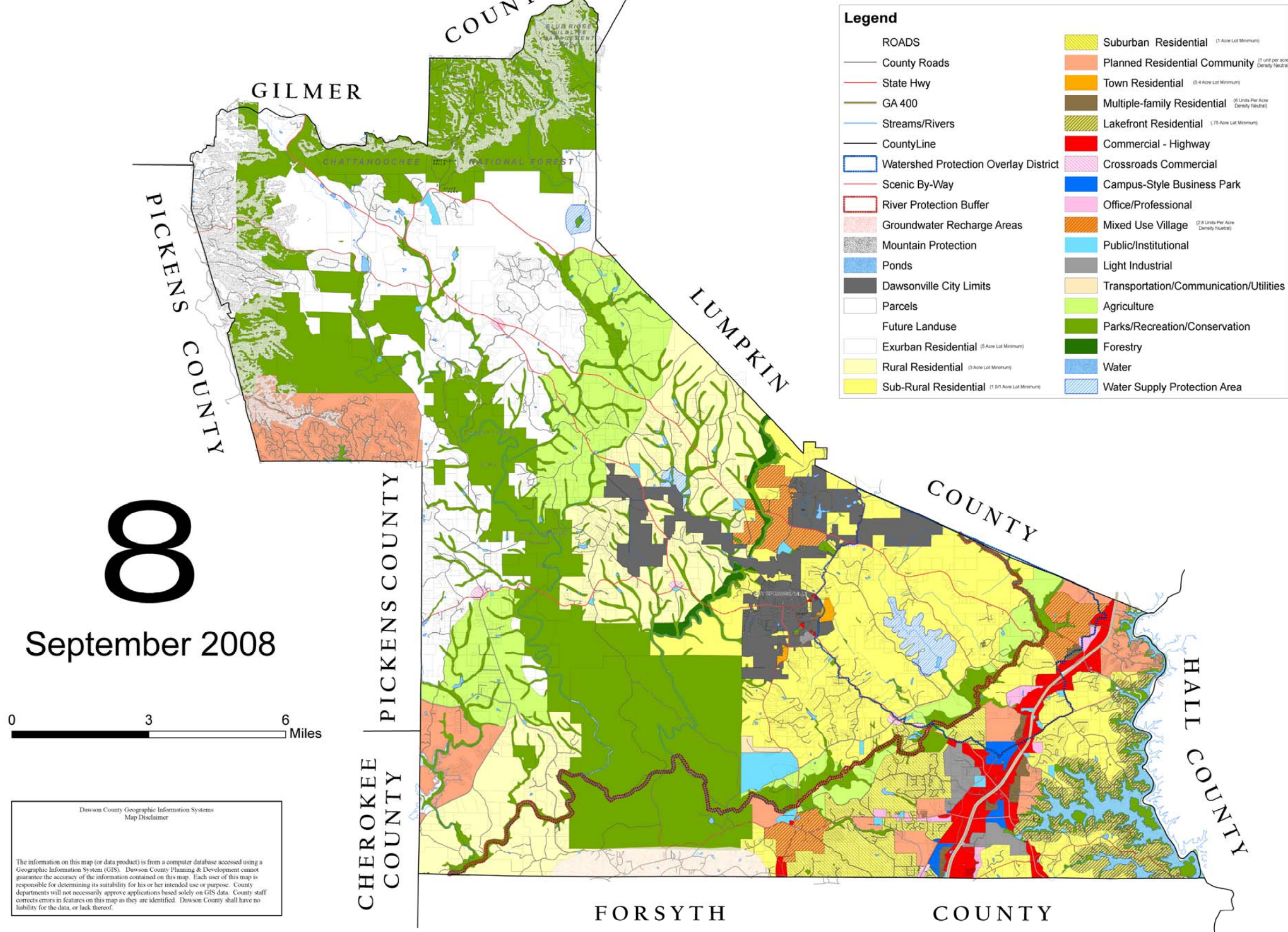
Dawson County Geographic Information Systems  
Map Disclaimer

The information on this map (or data product) is from a computer database accessed using a Geographic Information System (GIS). Dawson County Planning & Development cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information contained on this map. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability for his or her intended use or purpose. County departments will not necessarily approve applications based solely on GIS data. County staff corrects errors in features on this map as they are identified. Dawson County shall have no liability for the data, or lack thereof.



# DAWSON COUNTY FUTURE LANDUSE 2028

Map 2-2: Future Land Use Map





## Conservation

### *Development Pattern*

Undeveloped natural lands, agricultural lands, forest lands and environmentally sensitive lands not suitable for suburban development make up the bulk of the Conservation character area. These areas include river corridors, scenic views, steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. Development in the Conservation character area may include very low density residential development served by septic systems. Sidewalks, curbs and gutters are not compatible, but pedestrian access and connectivity can take place with multi-use trails. Conventional subdivision development along major roadways that traverse the character area is inappropriate (*i.e.* Georgia 53, 183 and 136). The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Promote the use of conservation easements and TDR's
- Maintain large lot sizes to protect farmland, open space and environmentally-sensitive areas
- Follow best management practices for erosion and sedimentation, as defined in the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act
- Minimize impervious surfaces in environmentally sensitive areas
- Discourage extension of public utilities, especially sewer, that would encourage development in these areas
- Support only the extensions of streets and utilities based on acceptable environmental and fiscal impacts and planned uses
- Widen roads only when absolutely necessary and only with designs that will minimize the visual impact
- Limit truck traffic in congested areas by redirecting it to higher capacity roads
- Set aside land for a network of greenways/trails for use by non-motorized users that link to similar character areas
- Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and green space where possible
- Provide appropriate way finding along trails
- Limit the amount of curb-cuts
- Require paved roads to use drainage swales in lieu of curb and gutter
- Allow unpaved roads and shared driveways that provide access for up to 6 residences

### *Future Land Use Categories*

The future land use categories that correspond to the Conservation character area are provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides full descriptions of the development patterns for each future land use category.

- Parks, Recreation and Conservation
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Exurban Residential

### *Zoning Districts*

- R-A (lot size minimum of five acres)
- R-E (lot size minimum of three acres)

### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation

- Environmental Protection
- Regional Cooperation
- Transportation Alternatives
- Regional Solutions

### *Strategies*

- Adopt Scenic Corridor Overlay zoning
- Adopt the Best Management Practices (BMP) for addressing storm water run-off in the conservation area
- Adopt a policy framework to prevent encroachment of inappropriate automobile-oriented development that would adversely affect the quality of life and public realm
- Designate historic and scenic corridors, and provide for a thorough impact assessment process in these designated areas
- Prepare a Greenways Master Plan
- Update county's development regulations to address drainage, driveway and impervious surface requirements
- Adopt a Hillside / Steep Slope Protection regulations

## **Rural Residential**

### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern for this character area consists of rural, undeveloped land likely to face development pressures for lower density residential development. These areas typically have limited water/sewer infrastructure and rely on septic systems. In addition, they typically have low pedestrian orientation and access, very large lots, open space, pastoral views and high degree of building separation. Curbs and gutters generally are not compatible with this character area, but conservation subdivisions located here should include pedestrian and bicycle networks and connect to regional multi-use trails. The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Encourage rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporates significant amounts of open space and utilizes alternatives to public utilities, such as private community package plants and community well systems
- Limit extension of public utilities in these areas
- Support only the extensions of streets and utilities based on acceptable environmental and fiscal impacts and planned uses
- Limit parking in front of properties
- Plan for future expansion as the surrounding area grows
- Separate through-traffic from local traffic
- Connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes
- Consider the use of drainage swales on paved roads in lieu of curb and gutter
- Ensure safe and direct access to major thoroughfares
- Provide at least one access point from a County road for a minimum number of homes
- Allow unpaved roads and shared driveways that provide access for up to three residences

### *Future Land Use Categories*

The future land use categories that correspond to the Rural Residential character area are provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides full descriptions of the development patterns for each future land use category.

- Rural Residential
- Sub-rural Residential

#### *Zoning Districts*

- R-1 (for Sub-Rural Residential with 1.5 acre lot minimum)
- R-E (lot size minimum of 3.0 acres) – New District Needed

#### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Transportation Alternatives

#### *Strategies*

- Develop Green space Master Plan
- Develop Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan
- Adopt conservation subdivision regulations
- Adopt Best Management Practices (BMP) for storm water run-off
- Update county's development regulations to address drainage, parking, driveway requirements

### **Rural Corridor**

#### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern for this character area consists of developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a major thoroughfare that has significant natural, historic or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views with a distinct rural character. Rural Corridor character area covers approximately 300 feet of property on each side of these major thoroughfares (*i.e.* Georgia 53, 9 and 136). Small nodes of commercial development with small, enclosed retail trade and service are appropriate at important intersections (as designated with the Crossroads Commercial future land use map category). These nodes maintain the rural character with appropriate building designs. The desired development pattern should seek to:



*Rural Corridor - Georgia 53*

- Limit extension of public utilities in these areas
- Enact guidelines for new development that enhance the scenic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping and architectural design
- Consider the use of drainage swales for paved roads in lieu of curb and gutter
- Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional rural character and do not include franchise or corporate architecture
- Limit parking in front of commercial properties
- Ensure that major commercial or employment centers do not encroach on residential development

- Connect to regional network of green space and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes
- Provide pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential or commercial districts
- Provide bicycle friendly accommodations
- Consolidate driveways and use directional signage to clustered developments
- Institute driveway controls and access management standards to facilitate traffic flow
- Separate through-traffic from local traffic
- Plan for future expansion as the surrounding area grows

#### *Future Land Use Categories*

The future land use categories that correspond to the Rural Corridor character area are provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides full descriptions of the desired development patterns for each future land use category. Due to the linear nature of this character area, it crosses multiple development patterns that are represented by the future land use map categories.

- Parks, Recreation and Conservation
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Exurban Residential
- Rural Residential
- Sub-rural Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Office Professional
- Crossroads Commercial

#### *Zoning Districts*

- C-RB, C-CB (for Crossroads Commercial)
- Georgia 53 Corridor Overlay District needed
- Other Scenic Corridors Overlay Districts needed

#### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Transportation Alternatives

#### *Strategies*

- Adopt regulations for Scenic Corridors
- Adopt Georgia 53 Corridor Overlay
- Develop an Access Management Plan
- Develop Master Greenways Plan
- Update county's development regulations to address parking, drainage and driveway requirements



## Planned Community

### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern of this character area may consist of the resort variety, like Big Canoe, which has increasingly become home to permanent as well as seasonal residents and "Chestatee," a golf course community. Planned residential communities provide unique, flexible, creative and imaginative arrangements and site plans that result in predominantly single family residential development. The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Encourage the location of higher density housing types within walking distance of services and amenities within and adjacent to the community
- Support only the extensions of streets and utilities based on acceptable environmental and fiscal impacts and planned uses
- Emphasize connectivity with adjacent subdivisions and/or commercial developments in the layout of new developments
- Design for walkability throughout, encouraging creative pedestrian networks
- Create interconnected pattern of streets and trails extending into surrounding neighborhoods for cars, bikes, golf carts, and pedestrians
- Limit truck traffic in congested areas by redirecting it to higher capacity roads
- Separate through-traffic from local traffic
- Examine potential for traffic calming techniques on major corridors to facilitate enhanced pedestrian use (including safe crossings)
- Encourage strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development
- Use access management strategies in appropriate locations *e.g.* requiring new subdivisions to be developed with an internal street system and no private driveways accessing the highway; for lots adjacent to arterial streets, encourage alley access to allow the building to face highway with automobile access to the rear
- Conduct strict review of driveway permits, right-of-way, and road construction plans to ensure full consideration of the quality of life for residential property owners

### *Future Land Use Category*

The future land use category that corresponds to the Planned Community character area is provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides a full description of the desired development pattern for the future land use category.

- Planned Community (Residential)

### *Zoning District*

- R-PCD (1 Unit per acre Density-Neutral)

### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Transportation Alternatives
- Housing Opportunities
- Traditional Neighborhood

### Strategies

- Adopt a gateway and signage master plan for planned communities
- Adopt a circulation master plan that defines how the street, sidewalk, and path network will look and how it will connect to surrounding neighborhoods
- Update county's regulations to require interconnected streets, parking, driveways, sidewalks, greenways, and trails for planned communities
- Adopt a policy framework to prevent encroachment of inappropriate automobile-oriented development that would adversely affect the quality of life and public realm

### Lakeside Residential

#### Development Pattern

The development pattern of this character area consists of suburban residential subdivision development surrounding Lake Lanier. Storm water runoff becomes an issue in this area because it drains into the lake that provides drinking water for Metropolitan Atlanta and supports the habitat of a variety of species. The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Reflect more stringent requirements for water quality enhancement measures on individual sites
- Incorporate regional (*i.e.*, serving multiple sites) water quality enhancement areas to intercept storm water and improve water quality as it flows from development areas into the lake. These regional facilities would be located along the tributaries between Georgia 400 and the lake's shoreline and would likely consist of wetlands, retention ponds, bio-filtration swales, and other best management practices for water quality protection
- Connect to regional network of green space and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes
- Require connectivity and continuity between each master planned development
- Develop vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services (where possible) as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions and multiple site access points
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Minimize impervious surfaces in environmentally sensitive areas
- Encourage County/GDOT to follow best management practices for erosion and sedimentation, as defined in the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act
- Specify use of pervious materials for driveways and other hard surface areas
- Reduce or eliminate parking space requirements, and encourage pervious surface for overflow parking areas
- Support only the extensions of streets and utilities based on acceptable environmental and fiscal impacts and planned uses
- Encourage natural landscaping (xeriscaping) to limit fertilizer and pesticide run-off

#### Future Land Use Category

The future land use category that corresponds to the Lakeside Residential character area is provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides a full description of the development pattern for the future land use category.

- Lakeside Residential

### *Zoning District*

- RL (lot size minimum of 0.75 acres) - New District needed

### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Transportation Alternatives
- Housing Opportunities

### *Strategies*

- Adopt Best Management Practices to protect water quality from storm water runoff and sedimentation
- Review requirements for paving, drainage, and impervious surface, and amend development regulations accordingly
- Develop Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan
- In coordination with the Health Department, develop policies and plans for individual septic system management and well monitoring
- Investigate establishing a local government storm water utility
- Implement strategies, studies, and plans that call for water quality protection on a regional basis (*i.e.*, all counties in the Lake Lanier basin)
- Set specific time frames for adding additional staff (*e.g.*, water quality engineer) to implement water quality enhancement projects and enforce water quality standards during the development plans review process

## **Suburban Residential**

### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern of this character area consists of locations where pressures for the typical types of suburban residential subdivision development are greatest (due to availability of water and sewer service). Guidelines are needed to encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that are accessible to transit (when it becomes available), adequate open space, strategically placed civic buildings, a connected system of streets and housing choices. The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Incorporate regional (*i.e.*, serving multiple sites) water quality enhancement areas to intercept storm water and improve water quality as it flows from development areas into the lake. These regional facilities would be located along the tributaries of the Etowah River and would likely consist of wetlands, retention ponds, bio-filtration swales, and other best management practices for water quality protection
- Incorporate master planned mixed-uses blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision
- Locate schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences
- Promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions

- Employ design features that encourage safe, accessible streets such as narrower streets, on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees and landscaped raised medians for minor collectors and wider streets
- Encourage comparable architectural styles that maintain the regional character and do not include franchise or corporate architecture
- Require connectivity within, and continuity between, each master planned development to disperse traffic and shorten trips (may include minimizing or prohibiting cul-de-sacs) to disperse traffic in a more traditional grid pattern and to shorten walking/biking trips
- Provide safe facilities for pedestrians, school buses, and bicyclists using the road right-of-way
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly multi-use trail/bike routes linking neighboring communities and major destinations such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.
- Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks and increased street interconnections to improve walkability within existing neighborhoods
- Separate through-traffic from local traffic
- Use access management strategies in appropriate locations
- Limit truck traffic in congested areas by redirecting it to higher capacity roads and designating truck routes where appropriate
- Encourage on-street parking and shared parking
- Limit driveway spacing along the highway frontage and align driveways where needed to improve traffic flow
- Require residential subdivisions accessing the highway to be interconnected
- Ensure that residential development does not encroach on major employment centers
- Require traffic studies for developments with more than 200,000 square feet

#### *Future Land Use Categories*

The future land use categories that correspond to the Suburban Residential character area are provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides a full description of the development pattern for the categories.

- Parks, Recreation and Conservation
- Suburban Residential
- Crossroads Commercial
- Mixed Use Village

#### *Zoning Districts*

- C-RB and C-CB (for Crossroads Commercial)
- RS (lot size minimum of 1 acre) – New District needed
- New district needed for Mixed Use Village (2.8 Units per acre Density Neutral)
- Overlay zoning needed for Georgia 53 (small portion within Suburban Residential)

#### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation
- Transportation Alternatives
- Regional Solutions
- Housing Opportunities
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Infill Development

- Sense of Place

#### *Strategies*

- Adopt Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance
- Adopt a policy framework to prevent encroachment of inappropriate automobile-oriented development that would adversely affect the quality of life and public realm
- Adopt a collector street plan
- Adopt sidewalk requirements
- Adopt green space master plan
- Update traffic study requirements
- Develop Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan
- Update county development regulations to address driveway and parking requirements

### **Cultural Amenities/Mixed Use Corridor**

#### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern for this character area consists of sites of local cultural significance that will experience growth related to the cultural resources. These areas in the future will include a mixture of uses that support the cultural resources. This character area includes Southern Catholic College, Dawson County Park and Bowen Arts Center as well as vacant property located near each. The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Require developments accessing the highway to be interconnected
- Encourage shared driveways and inter-parcel access for adjacent commercial uses
- Limit driveway spacing along the highway frontage and align driveways wherever possible
- Examine potential for traffic calming techniques on major corridors to facilitate enhanced pedestrian use (including safe crossings)
- Provide safe facilities for pedestrians, school buses, and bicyclists using the road right-of-way
- Create safe, convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the adjacent neighborhoods and subdivisions
- Create a network of interconnected streets and parking lots
- Incorporate sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths

#### *Future Land Use Categories*

The future land use categories that correspond to the Cultural Amenities/Mixed Use Corridor character area are provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides a full description of the development pattern for the categories.

- Parks, Recreation and Conservation
- Sub-rural Residential
- Town Residential
- Mixed Use Village

#### *Zoning Districts*

- New district needed for Mixed Use Village (2.8 Units per acre Density Neutral)
- New district needed for Town Residential (2.5 Units per acre)

#### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Employment Options
- Heritage Preservation

- Open Space Preservation
- Transportation Alternatives
- Housing Opportunities
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Sense of Place

#### *Strategies*

- Develop an Access Management Plan for the corridor
- Develop a Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan
- Update county regulations to address inter-parcel access and driveway requirements

### **Mixed Use Corridor**

#### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern for this character area includes developed or undeveloped land on both sides of lands designated along Georgia 9 and 400 and Eastern Hwy 53. This area includes retail centers, office and employment areas usually located on large tracts of land with campus or unified development, mixed use villages, multi-family development, light industrial and other associated uses. The desired development pattern should seek to:

- Locate Commercial/Office Employment Centers in areas with ample sewer capacity, with direct access to major arterials, and in close proximity to major population centers
- Provide suitable transitions to surrounding residential uses
- Establish a grid pattern of public streets with block lengths between 300 and 600 feet
- Locate mixed-use centers on land that has good access to GA 400 and other high-capacity highways, utilities and infrastructure
- Emphasize connectivity with adjacent subdivisions and/or commercial developments in the layout of new developments
- Create a network of interconnected streets and parking lots
- Provide safe facilities for pedestrians, school buses, and bicyclists using the road right-of-way
- Create safe, convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to neighborhoods and subdivisions that are adjacent to the commercial corridors
- Incorporate sidewalks, crosswalks and bike paths
- Require dedicated right-of-way
- Limit driveway spacing along the highway frontage and align driveways where needed to improve traffic flow
- Encourage shared driveways and inter-parcel access for adjacent commercial uses
- Require residential subdivisions accessing the highway to be interconnected and to provide at least two entrances
- Encourage shared parking lots between uses
- Relate road alignment to topography
- Ensure environmental protection

#### *Future Land Use Categories*

The future land use categories that correspond to the Mixed Use Corridor character area are provided below. Section 2.4.3 Future Land Use provides a full description of the desired development pattern for the categories.

- Parks, Recreation and Conservation
- Town Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Office Professional

- Commercial Highway
- Light Industrial
- Campus-style Business Park
- Mixed Use Village

#### *Zoning Districts*

- R-3 (multi-family residential 6 units per acre Density Neutral)
- C-OI (Office Professional)
- C-HB; C-PCD (Commercial)
- C-IR (Light Industrial)
- Georgia 400 Corridor Design Overlay
- New district needed for Campus Style Business Park
- New district needed for Mixed Use Village (2.8 Units per acre Density Neutral)
- New overlay needed for Georgia 53 corridor and Georgia 136 corridor

#### *Quality Community Objectives*

- Regional Identity
- Growth Preparedness
- Employment Options
- Heritage Preservation
- Open Space Preservation
- Transportation Alternatives
- Housing Opportunities
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Sense of Place

#### *Strategies*

- Adopt a shared parking ordinance
- Adopt Campus Style Business Park zoning district
- Adopt Mixed Use Village zoning district
- Adopt Georgia 53 overlay zoning district
- Create an access management and driveway control master plan for corridors that allow signalized intersections every 600 to 1,200 feet without intervening curb cuts
- Update county development regulations to address inter-parcel access and driveway requirements
- Adopt Best Management Practices to protect water quality from storm water runoff and sedimentation

### **Dawsonville Growth Area**

#### *Development Pattern*

The development pattern for this character area consists of developed or undeveloped land adjacent to the city limits of the City of Dawsonville and lies within what is considered a growth area for the City according to the 2007 SPLOST V agreement. Development includes a mixture of single-family residential, highway commercial, and parks, open space and conservation areas. Development of the area will be in conformance with the traditional town form established by the older sections of the city including a connected street grid, pedestrian-friendly streets lined with sidewalks that connect schools, neighborhoods and commercial areas. This development pattern will provide an appropriate transition from the town center core to the suburban and rural edges found outside the city limits.

### 2.4.3 Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Plan 2028 for Dawson County-Dawsonville is based on a strategy of managing the extent, location, and timing of development. Commercial development will be directed primarily toward four areas: The Georgia 400 corridor; parts of the Georgia 53 corridor near Georgia 400; the Georgia 9 corridor near the Forsyth County line; and lands within and immediately surrounding the City of Dawsonville. The location of development in the Georgia 400 corridor north of the Georgia 53 corridor is proposed to be limited by a belt of existing agricultural lands running northwest-southeast on the west side of the Etowah River. A scenic road designation along the middle part of the Georgia 53 corridor will help prevent higher density residential development from expanding eastward from Dawsonville and westward from Georgia 400. Urban development in the Dawsonville area is proposed to be limited geographically by Perimeter Road and/or the current sanitary sewer service area for the City of Dawsonville as established in the 2007 SPLOST V agreement and the Service Delivery Strategy Agreement.

Also, a belt of forest land running northeast-southwest, west of Dawsonville and north of Dawson Forest, serves as a second limit line to Dawsonville-area growth. This forest belt divides the Dawsonville area from the rural, mountainous north part of the county. West of the forest belt, unincorporated Dawson County will maintain its current character as very low-density, rural residential. No subdivision tract development is anticipated in that area, which is subject to difficult terrain and a 5-acre minimum lot size. Suburban residential development is anticipated east of the forest belt, near Dawsonville. Dawson Forest and the national forest lands along Amicalola Creek provide a third line separating rural lands in the far southwest corner and northwest portions of unincorporated Dawson County from suburban development.

The future land use plan map of Dawson County-Dawsonville organizes the city and county into the following "base" and "overlay" categories, described in the following paragraphs.



**Base Categories:**

- Parks, Recreation, and Conservation
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Exurban Residential
- Rural Residential
- Sub-rural Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Lakefront Residential
- Town Residential
- Planned Residential Community
- Multiple-family Residential
- Transportation, Communications and Utilities
- Public-Institutional
- Office-Professional
- Crossroads Commercial
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Campus-style Business Park
- Mixed Use Village



Parks, Recreation Conservation – Dawson Forest

**Overlay Categories:**

- Georgia 400 Overlay District (North and South)
- Georgia 53 Corridor Overlay District
- Other Scenic Corridors Overlay District(s)
- Water Supply Watershed Protection Overlay District
- Groundwater Recharge Area Overlay District
- River Corridor Protection Overlay District
- Wetlands Protection Overlay District
- Mountain Protection Overlay District
- Hillside and Steep Slope Protection Area



Forested land, Georgia 9

**Parks, Recreation, and Conservation**

Dawson Forest, a 10,000-acre tract of land owned by the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport Authority, is the largest single tract of land shown on the future land use plan map as Parks, Recreation, and Conservation, as are the lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

**Forestry**

Although extensive private forest lands may remain in Dawson County during the next ten years, the future land use plan map does not show lands within a Forestry category. Much of the existing private forest land in the county is shown within the Exurban Residential and Rural Residential future land use categories. This means that some loss of forestland will occur, but it does not mean that forest lands will be completely converted to residential use during the planning horizon. National Forests are shown in the parks, Recreation, and Conservation future land use category. The lack of a Forestry designation on the future land use plan map does not imply encouragement that forest lands will be converted to other uses.

## Agriculture

The Future Land Use Map, Map 2-2, shows three significant blocks of Agriculture in Dawson County. First, an area of existing Agriculture, paralleling the west side of the Etowah River, is proposed to be maintained until 2015 or beyond as an agricultural belt. The agricultural belt along the Etowah River serves to limit the western expansion of development in and near the Georgia 400 corridor. A second area of Agriculture is shown on the Future Land Use Map in the northern-central part of unincorporated Dawson County. A third, much smaller area of Agriculture is shown west of (below) national forest lands abutting Amicalola Creek. Agricultural protection techniques, including the transfer of development rights may be appropriately applied to preserve these identified agricultural lands.

At least some of the land shown as Agriculture is within the Current Use Assessment Program for agriculture. The program allows farmland owners to keep their taxes low by agreeing not to convert their property to a non-agricultural use for a period of 10 years.

Although most Agriculture shown on the future land use plan map is cropland, some agricultural operations such as poultry houses may result in odors, dust, noise, or other effects which can be incompatible with single-lot residential development, which is permitted in this land use category. Although designated as Agriculture, property owners continue to have low-density residential subdivision rights. Within the designated agricultural belt along the west side of the Etowah River, subdivision for detached, single-family residences may be appropriate if developed at lot sizes of five acres or more. If subdivided, lands in the agricultural belt should adhere to conservation subdivision principles in order to retain as much of the belt as possible, thereby protecting sensitive habitat along the river and also contributing to objectives of protecting the existing water supply watershed. Transferable development rights (TDR) is also a potentially useful technique for maintaining this agricultural belt.



*Agricultural land at Georgia 9/Thompson Road and the Etowah River*

### **Exurban Residential** – 217,800 square feet (5 Acre)

The exurban residential area is neither exclusively agricultural nor exclusively residential. Much of this area is rural, agricultural, steeply sloping, and/or forest land. The minimum lot size of five (5) acres is the least amount of land that is considered necessary to sustain viable agricultural or forestry operations.

Most of the land in this future land use classification has steeply sloping mountain and hillside topography. It is attractive from a residential market standpoint for Exurban Residential development, given the scenic mountain views. This area is well beyond the projected limits of development during the 20-year planning horizon (to 2028). In the context of growth management, a five-acre minimum lot for subdivisions is expected to prevent suburban subdivision development, though amenities-driven (*i.e.*, mountain views) exurban development is still likely despite the five-acre minimum lot size.



*Exurban Residential*



*Rural Residential*

### **Rural Residential** – 130,680 square feet (3 Acre)

This future land use category corresponds to lands west of the forest greenbelt which runs west of Dawsonville's proposed developed area. This area currently includes exurban and rural residences, farms, and forests. A three-acre lot size ensures that this area remains rural and very low density residential, so as to prevent the need to extend facilities and services to that area.

It is desirable that conservation subdivision principles be followed in this area in order to encourage the set-asides of open space or retention of farm and forest lands.

### **Sub-rural Residential** – 65,340 square feet (1.5 Acre or 1.0 Acre with public water)

The primary area of unincorporated Dawson County designed as Sub-Rural Residential is bounded by the forest belt and Dawson Forest on the west, Lumpkin County line on the north, and the agricultural belt to the south and east. In the southern part of this area, there is extensive residential development, but the northern part of this area is mostly undeveloped.



*Sub-rural Residential*

Though this area may receive new development at gross densities of up to 0.67 unit per acre (1.0 acre with public water), it is not targeted for major development. Public water service may be extended into much of this area, particularly the southern half, during the planning horizon (year 2028). It is desirable that conservation subdivision principles be followed in this area in

order to encourage the permanent protections of open space or retention of farm and forest lands.

There is a second area designated as Sub-rural Residential by the future land use plan map, east of Georgia 400 and lakefront residential uses along Lake Lanier. Development in this area must be sensitive to the Lake Lanier watershed, and as a result, densities are proposed to be kept low (0.67 unit per acre) in this area.

**Suburban Residential** – 43,560 square feet (1 Acre) with public water and sewer to 65,340 square feet (1.5 acre) without public utilities



**Suburban Residential**

This future land use category provides for suburban residential development at densities of 1 unit per acre with public water. It corresponds to an area in the southern part of unincorporated Dawson County south of the Etowah River and its agricultural belt, generally between Georgia 9 and Georgia 400. Without public utilities, the allowable density is one unit per 1.5 acres. However, because of infrastructure availability (new schools, convenient highway access, water, and some sanitary sewer) and position vis-à-vis metro-Atlanta residential market demand, this area is expected to begin developing.

Designating this area for up to 1 unit per acre allows for significant new residential development at a density that is still compatible with the established residential density. It is anticipated that residential subdivisions in this category may be developed according to conventional suburban development principles. However, as subdivisions are developed, they should be connected with one another, counter to conventional cul-de-sac-type designs.



**Lakefront Docks**

**Lakefront Residential** – 32,670 square feet (0.75 Acre) with public water and sewer to 65,340 square feet (1.5 acre) without public utilities

This future land use category provides for suburban residential development along Lake Lanier, where there is significant existing development. Recognizing that a majority of properties with lake frontage are currently developed or subdivided as lots of record this category addresses the potential of new infill residential development. Typical densities for new residential in this area are somewhat larger than existing developments as Dawson County understands the need to protect water quality in this important resource. Further protecting this resource, residential subdivisions in this category may be developed according to conservation subdivision development principles.

This category is intended for a density of up to 1.33

units per acre with public water. It corresponds to an area along the Lake Lanier coastline. Without public utilities, the allowable density is one unit per 1.5 acres. However, because of infrastructure availability, lake access (convenient highway access, water, and some sanitary sewer) and position vis-à-vis metro-Atlanta residential market demand, this area is expected to continue developing.



*Town Residential*

**Town Residential** – 17,424 square feet (0.40 Acre)

This category is assigned to the unincorporated lands surrounding the City of Dawsonville that are expected to be served by sanitary sewer (generally around Perimeter Road).

**Planned Residential Community** (1 unit per acre – Density Neutral type development; 100 acre minimum)

This future land use classification corresponds with existing development and new areas that are master-planned as a unit for predominantly residential subdivisions. Planned residential communities may be of the resort variety, like “Big Canoe,” which has increasingly become home to permanent as well as seasonal residents, and “Chestatee,” a golf course community. Planned residential communities are encouraged to provide unique, flexible, creative, and imaginative arrangements and site plans that result in density neutral single-family residential development.



*Planned Community residence in Chestatee development in Dawson County*

The allowed density of existing planned residential communities (*e.g.*, Chestatee, Gold Creek, and Big Canoe) is up to 1 unit per acre and limited by master plan approvals. Planned residential communities provide for open space or green space that constitutes at least 30 percent of the land area within the development. For any future planned residential communities, overall land area must be at least 100 acres and gross densities must be limited to a maximum of 1 unit per acre and set by binding master plans.

**Multiple-family Residential** (6 units per acre – Density Neutral type development)

This category includes senior communities, apartments, townhouses, and condominiums. It is limited predominantly to the Georgia 400 corridor. The recommended residential density is a maximum of 6 units per acre. This density is established as a maximum gross density such that projects within this category are not limited to a single housing type and may include any of the noted multi-family construction types as well as other attached residential units. This allows for a creative use of available land and a variety of housing choice within developments. Those developments choosing to exercise the density neutral option will be required to submit and develop according to a binding master plan.



*Public School on Dawson Forest Road*

**Public-Institutional**

This future land use category is the same as that described in the existing land use classification (*i.e.*, schools, churches, government office buildings, etc.). In addition, the Future Land Use Map shows three areas of possible future water supplies. Working in cooperation with the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority these designations are intended to recognize the importance of reserving sites as potential future water supply reservoirs to meet long-range water needs for Dawson County and Dawsonville.



*Office Professional*

**Office-Professional**

This category is for land dedicated to business and service establishments that do not have retail sales and which operate in an office environment. It is a subset of commercial land use. For the purpose of this plan, office land uses are addressed separately from commercial uses because they are more compatible with residential land uses and can serve as a transitional land use between commercial and residential areas.

**Transportation, Communications and Utilities**

This category is the same as the existing land use category by the same name. It includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, electric utility substations, airports, and other similar uses.



*Crossroads Commercial*

**Crossroads Commercial**

This category is for small node (4-15 acres) of commercial development at intersections primarily in rural/exurban and suburban areas along corridors designated as "scenic." Crossroads Commercial nodes are not appropriate for automobile sales and service establishments or other highway commercial uses. Rather, they are intended to be limited to very small, enclosed retail trade and service establishments serving the immediate area. Crossroads Commercial areas are also subject to design review and approval to ensure their architecture and site design are in keeping with policies for scenic corridors and rural/exurban development character.

**Commercial - Highway**

This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, services, and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center.

**Campus-Style Business Park**

This category combines commercial and light industrial uses. It is intended to provide for campus-style developments containing businesses, light manufacturing, and related uses such as research and development, showrooms, assembly and fabrication. This use is appropriate primarily in the Georgia 400 corridor in designated locations on the Future Land Use Map.

**Light Industrial**

Light Industrial districts are established where some industrial operations such as warehousing and low-intensity manufacturing can occur without objectionable impacts such as noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, and radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions.

**Mixed Use Category**

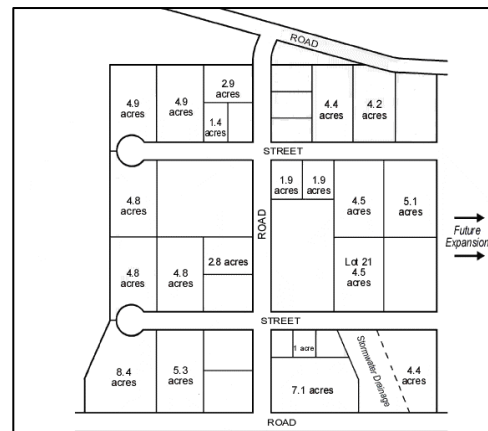
The minimum planning standards require that if mixed land use categories are included on the future land use plan map, they must be clearly defined, including the types of land uses allowed, the percentage distribution among the mix of uses (or other objective measure of the combination), and the density or intensity of each use. Accordingly, a detailed explanation and specifications for Mixed Use Villages are provided.

**Mixed Use Village**

Good design is a fundamental component of great places. A single vision is necessary for full implementation. This can only be accomplished through intense, contextual master planning. Creation of a Mixed Use Village will not be an easy task; yet will provide a fuller, richer, longer lasting community than can be found elsewhere. A Mixed Use Village consists of a combination of retail, service, civic, office, institutional and multi-family and other residential uses. These uses are coordinated to create a cohesive and master planned "new neighborhood" with the associated needs for convenience and specialty commercial and services to serve this neighborhood. It is intended that a significant portion of the population of this village work within the core district of the village, and therefore an appropriate percentage of the land area is devoted to commercial and services uses within walking or biking distance of the core.



*Typical Shopping Center*



*Illustrative Industrial/Business Park Subdivision*

The Mixed Use Village is defined here specifically for Dawson County and is anticipated to apply at no more than three locations – one in the northern part of the Georgia 400 corridor; one at the intersection of Dawson Forest Road and Hwy 9 S; and one on Georgia 136 and the Burt Creek/Shoal Creek Corridor. It is not anticipated that all of these villages would be built within a single year or even within the first 5 years of implementation of the plan. The magnitude of the size and scope of the development described would serve to limit the potential for multiple quick developments.



Typical Live/Work Unit

Adapted from Nashville-Metro Planning, Neighborhood Guidebook

The Mixed Use Village specifications (see Table 2-1) are based on a desired gross overall density of 2.8 units per acre. This is a density neutral concept, regulated by a binding master plan. Most Villages as

shown are approximately 500, but no more than approximately 1000 acres of total land. This equates to 2800 housing units. If fully occupied at 2.5 persons per unit this equates to a total population of approximately 7,000 persons. This market threshold is considered enough to support convenience retail and service uses (e.g., a couple of “corner stores”), a small grocer, some specialty stores and offices, along with a few churches. The Mixed Use Village category as proposed, however, has more retail and service uses than the market within the center itself can support (i.e. if residents within the Village’s residents were the only customers considered). The greater amount of retail and service uses is justified, considering these villages are located at intersection of major corridors and are intended to be their own destinations. This will draw additional traffic from other areas to further the feeling of a “specialty community”.

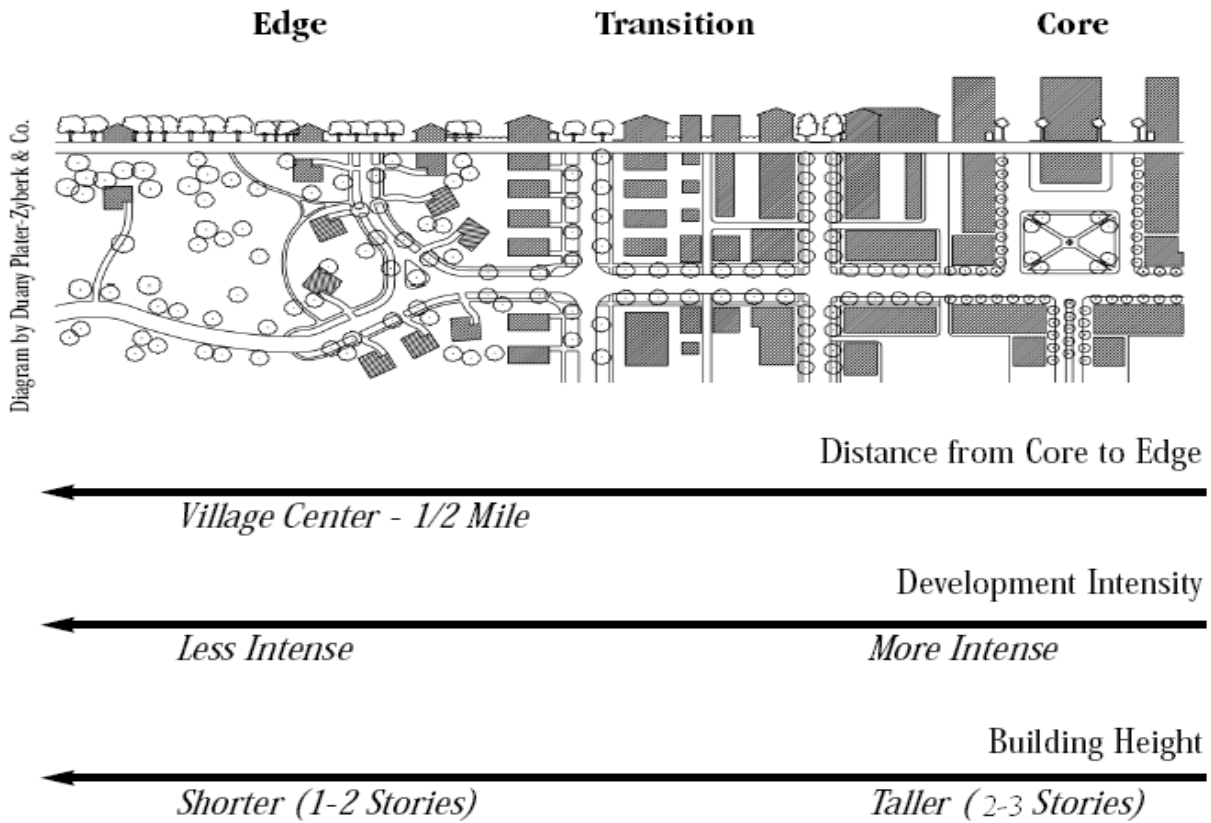
One of the most important ideas in creating a new community is the concept of public space; particularly civic space and a Village center. Each Mixed Use Village should include a specific Village center. This center should be the core of the village with other uses radiating outward in intensity. This is not to say that the neighborhood center must be located in the exact center of the development, but can vary for topography,



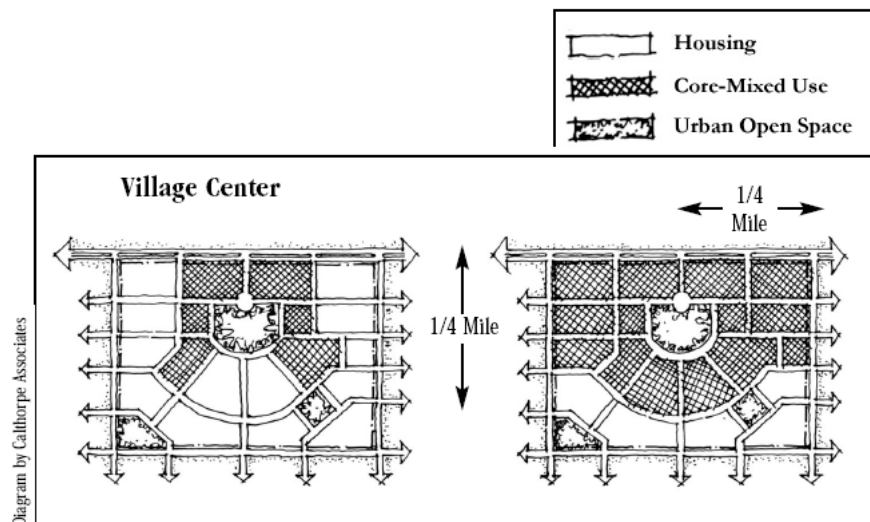
Village in Huntersville, NC



location on major corridors etc. However the center should serve as the place for daily interaction, shopping, eating, and other personal services within a typical walking or bicycling distance. Each Village center must include a civic open space. This can be a plaza, square or green, however it must be used and reinforced through appropriate site and building planning as the focal point of the center. A civic building is typically included in this area however is not required.



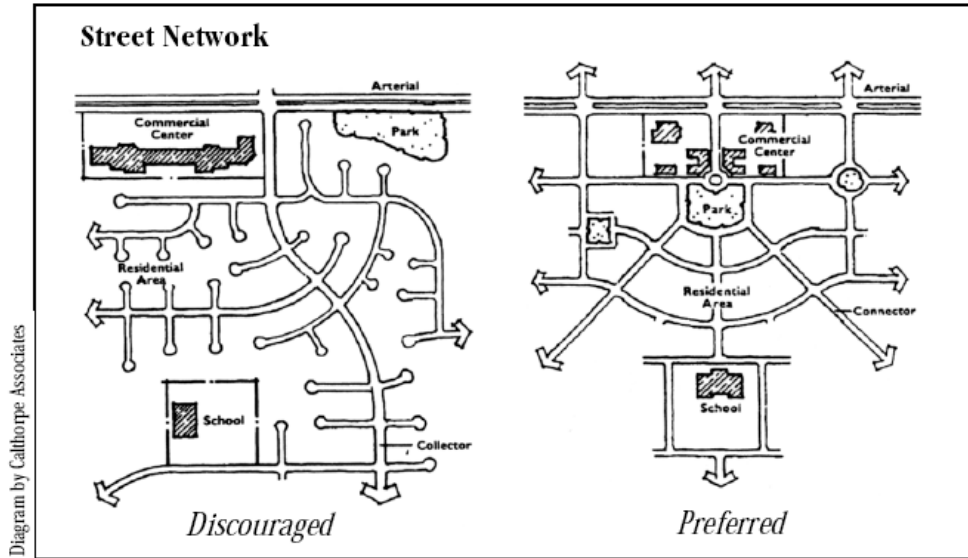
Transitions from the Village Center to throughout the rest of the development should be seamless. Heights and massing should be stepped down as you move away from the center and approach the edge of the Village. In general, housing densities should be highest within the core area progressively decreasing as you move outward.



The village is planned usually with blocks no larger than 400-500 feet wide and at a scale that accommodates and encourages pedestrian activity. The Mixed Use Village intends to encourage shared parking in low-rise (1.5-3 story) parking decks at the rear or interior of blocks as opposed to surface parking and low-

intensity buildings characteristic of suburban development. Road networks within the Village should be connected as much as possible however maintaining a subtle sense of hierarchy for separation of primary commercial traffic from primary residential traffic.

The street network and building facades should lend themselves to a pedestrian orientation. Meaning that they should be comfortable to walk along and visually interesting. Wider sidewalks, street trees and landscaping as well as street furniture, awnings and architectural guidelines are



required for each village. Additionally upper story uses are encouraged for each commercial area. Step backs for taller buildings are required if they interfere with the pedestrian security of the streetscape. A maximum height of 4 stories or 50 feet whichever is lesser shall be maintained for commercial buildings.

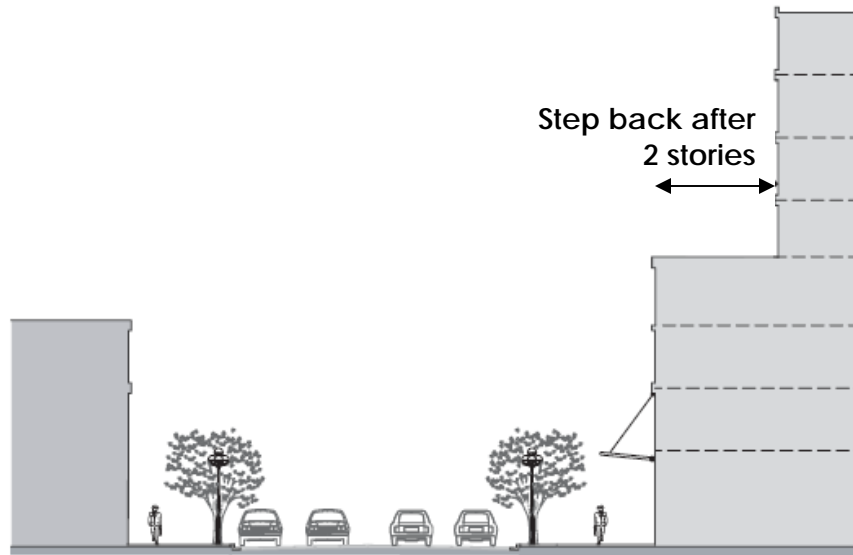
Mixed Use Villages should be somewhat balanced in terms of jobs-housing needs. Considering that Dawson County is a suburb to the Atlanta market it is unrealistic to assume that all workers within the village will be employed in the core area. However, keeping in mind that there is an average of 1.5 workers per household, Mixed Use Villages should attempt to capture at least 25% of that employment in order to reduce traffic congestion and eliminate as many trips as possible. This equates to between 525 and 1050 persons. Not everyone who works in a center will live there, but providing a quantitative balance between the on-site housing and employment helps provide greater opportunities for



Freshfield Village, Kiawah, SC

persons to live and work within the center. Assuming 300 square feet per worker average, there is a need for a minimum of 150,000 square feet of building space devoted to employment. Because a pedestrian scale and close connection among buildings is desirable, no individual user should occupy more than 50,000 square feet of floor area and the maximum commercial area shall be no more than 250,000. The 250,000 square feet of nonresidential space includes civic-institutional uses in addition to employment uses.

A variety of housing types must be provided in order to meet the seamless transition, and employment requirements of the village. A consistent character shall be maintained in the varied housing alternatives via the master plan and binding architectural guidelines. These types are flexible however include, living quarters above retail/office spaces, townhouses, condominiums, apartments and single family homes of various sizes and styles. No multi-family residential building may be more than 3 stories or 35 feet in height



whichever is lesser.

Adapted from City of Burlington, Downtown Urban Development Guidelines

Sufficient space must be provided within the village to protect existing environmental features and vistas as well as for plazas, greens, and parks and recreation. A minimum of 30 percent of the total land area is required to be designated as an open space or green space.

A wide range in acreage is provided in the table below, because the size of the village can vary based on many different characteristics of development, including the mix of land uses, the intensity of development, and the spatial form that development takes within the core.

Table 2-1: Mixed Use Village

Land Use	Description	Number of Units or Square Footage	Density or Intensity	General Range of Land Area Needed (acres)	Range of % Total Land Area in Activity Center
Detached (cluster) homes	Fee-simple lots	0-1500 units	2.8 units per acre overall	158-340	32-34%
Townhouses/attached condominiums	Freestanding	200-1000 units	2.8 units per acre overall	25-125	5-13%
Apartments/condominiums, 650 – 1850 square feet per unit, 1250 square feet average	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> floors of mixed-use buildings	100-300 units	125,000-375,000 square feet	Included with employment	
Employment uses: Office, retail, service, restaurants, civic, institutional	In mixed-use building or freestanding	150,000 -250,000 square feet		7-20	1-2%
Parking structure(s) for employment uses and apartments/condominiums	65%-100% of spaces for	815-2080 spaces	1 per 300 square feet	10-25	2%-3%

Landscaping, parks, recreation, open space	30% of Total			150-300	30%
Miscellaneous	10% of total			50-100	10%
Roads	20% of total			100-200	20%
TOTAL approximate acreage				500-1000	100%

This document is not intended to completely define the Village or its plan, but will set out the framework for that zoning district and future master planning efforts.

Development of each village must be phased so that within the first phases both residential and nonresidential spaces are provided at the same time, as opposed to one or the other being built first. The appropriate phasing of other land uses mix depends on market conditions at the time of development and therefore is not specified here.

#### 2.4.4 Future Land Use Overlays

##### Georgia 400 Overlay District (North and South)

This overlay district, which is further divided into a northern and southern portions each with its own character, was previously established by amendment to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Regulations and guidelines were prepared in 2000 and adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 2001. The Georgia 400 corridor also receives focused attention in terms of revisions to the regulations and guidelines and adoption of a frontage road access management plan.

##### Georgia 53 Corridor Overlay District

This corridor was also previously established by amendment to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The boundary of the corridor was refined to focus on Georgia 53 from the Dawsonville city limits (approximately at Georgia 9 in Dawsonville) eastward to the Forsyth County line. In 2003, Dawson County received a Georgia Quality Growth Grant to prepare a corridor plan for the Georgia 53 corridor. As a part of that corridor plan, which is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan 2010 by amendment, regulations are being prepared to implement its various recommendations.

That part of the Georgia 53 corridor west of Georgia 400 between the limits of development near Lumpkin Campground Road and the limits of development near Perimeter Road is designated as a scenic corridor. The scenic part of the corridor is flanked by suburban development.

##### Other Scenic Corridors Overlay District(s)

A prior amendment to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan established other major highway corridors as "scenic." These corridors include Georgia 53 west of Dawsonville, Georgia 183 from Georgia 53 to Georgia 52 including the Juno community, Georgia 136 (Gold Creek Parkway), and Georgia 52. Dawson County has not yet prepared regulations to implement those designations. In addition, the county's Chamber of Commerce has sought and received official designation of a scenic route encompassing these parts of these areas and also including Etowah River Road.

##### Water Supply Watershed Protection Overlay District

This is one of five environmental protection districts established pursuant to environmental planning criteria of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. It establishes buffer requirements, impervious surface setbacks, and overall impervious surface limitations for watersheds. This district establishes protection criteria which apply upstream of the Etowah

Water and Sewer Authority's intake on the Etowah River (just below Georgia 53). Dawson County has adopted regulations to implement the state's environmental planning criteria for water supply watersheds.

### **Groundwater Recharge Area Overlay District**

One Groundwater Recharge Area is located within Dawson County – a long, narrow area straddling the Forsyth County-Dawson County line west of Georgia 9. Within this area, lot sizes are established for on-site septic use to ensure that groundwater is not adversely affected. Dawson County has adopted regulations to implement the state environmental planning criteria for the protection of groundwater recharge areas.

### **River Corridor Protection Overlay District**

A third district established pursuant to the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria is River Corridors. The Etowah River, which reaches the regulatory threshold of 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) below Georgia 9, is subject to these rules which establish a minimum two-acre lot size and a 100-foot buffer on both sides of the river. While not required by state rules, the land use element update establishes the entire river in Dawson County as "protected" given the sensitivity of this corridor with regard to habitat for sensitive or endangered species. In addition, the future land use plan designates the west side of the Etowah River as an agricultural belt. Dawson County has adopted regulations to implement the state environmental planning criteria as it applies to the portion of the river identified by DNR.

### **Wetlands Protection Overlay District**

A fourth district established pursuant to state Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria is Wetlands. The state criteria do not specify regulations to be adopted, but they require Wetlands to be identified and the impacts of the land use plan on Wetlands be identified. Dawson County has adopted regulations to implement wetlands protection.

### **Mountain Protection Overlay District**

A final district established pursuant to the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria is "Protected Mountains." This overlay district applies to land areas with an elevation of 2,200 or more, and with slopes of 25 percent or more, including ridges and crests above. Generally, such areas are found mostly within national forest lands. Development criteria place limits on building heights, establish lot size minimums and multi-family density maximums, and require reforestation and landscaping plans in some instances. Dawson County has adopted regulations to implement these state environmental planning criteria.

### **Hillside and Steep Slope Protection**

While not an overlay district per se, this section is intended to recognize the potential threats posed by development on steep slopes with regard to public safety, environmental protection, and the aesthetic character of the county. A significant portion of northern Dawson County contains steep slopes. The county continues to work on regulations for hillside and steep slope protection through a variety of regulatory options. A slope map will serve to inform any new zoning district or development area, within which certain development regulations apply.

### 2.4.5 Table 2-2: Character Area and Future Land Use Relationship

Table 2-2: Character Area and Future Land Use Relationship

Land Use Category	Character Areas							
	Conser- vation	Rural Res- idential	Rural Corridor	Planned Com- munity	Lakeside Res- idential	Sub- urban Res- idential	Cultural Amenities Mixed Use Corridor	Mixed Use Corridor/ Node
Parks, Recreation and Conservation	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Forestry	✓		✓				✓	
Agriculture	✓		✓					
Exurban Residential	✓		✓					
Rural Residential		✓	✓					
Sub-rural Residential		✓	✓				✓	
Planned Community				✓				
Suburban Residential			✓			✓	✓	
Lakefront Residential					✓			
Town Residential							✓	
Multi-family Residential							✓	✓
Office Professional			✓				✓	✓
Crossroads Commercial			✓			✓	✓	
Commercial Highway								✓
Light Industrial								✓
Campus-style Business Park								✓
Mixed Use Village						✓	✓	✓
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public-Institutional	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## 2.4.6 Future Land Use Acreages

Table 2-3 provides the acreage of future land use by land use classification.

**Table 2-3: Future Land Use Acreage 2028**

Land Use Classification	Unincorporated	
	Acres	%
Forestry	508	0.3
Agriculture	9,575	7.4
Exurban Residential – 5 acre lot minimum	22,241	17.1
Rural Residential – 3 acre lot minimum	14,463	11.1
Sub-rural Residential – 1.5 acre lot minimum	17,281	13.3
Suburban Residential	3,473	2.7
Lakefront Residential	2,200	1.7
Planned Residential Community	6,995	5.4
Town Residential	117	0.1
Residential, Multi-Family	323	0.2
Public/Institutional	991	0.8
Transportation, Communication, Utilities (exc. Roads)	123	0.1
Water Supply Watershed (acquisition for protection)	1,103	0.8
Road Right-of-Way	3,502	2.7
Mixed Use Village	2,239	1.7
Office – Professional	370	0.3
Commercial Crossroads	175	0.1
Commercial – Highway	2,168	1.7
Campus-style Business Park	367	0.3
Light Industrial	757	0.6
Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	41,179	31.6
Total	130,150	100

Source: Robert & Company, October 28, 2004. Revised 4/1/05. Subtotals rounded to the nearest acre or tenth of a percentage point. Revised July 14, 2005, Revised June 20, 2008.

## 2.4.7 Relationship of Land Use to Regulations

Table 2-4 identifies how the existing zoning or overlay districts that match the future land use plan base and overlay categories. The purpose is to show not only what zoning classifications help implement the future land use classifications but also to determine where new zoning or overlay districts will need to be created.

Table 2-4: Future Land Use and Zoning Districts

Future Land Use Classification	Zoning District Dawson County
Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	None needed
Forestry	None needed
Agriculture	RA
Exurban Residential – 5 Acre	RA
Rural Residential – 3 Acre	RE needed
Rural Residential – 1.5 Acre	R-1 & R-2 with Updates
Suburban– 1 Acre	RS Needed
Lakefront Residential – 0.75 Acre	RL Needed
Town Residential – 0.4 Acre	RT needed
Planned Residential Community 1 dua Density Neutral	R-PCD
Multiple-family Residential 6 dua Density Neutral	R-3
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	None needed
Public-Institutional	None needed
Office-Professional	C-OI
Crossroads Commercial	C-RB; C-CB
Commercial	C-HB; C-PCD
Light Industrial	C-IR
Campus-style Business Park	New district needed
Mixed Use Village 2,8 dua Density Neutral	New district needed
Georgia 400 Overlay District	Revise overlay
Georgia 53 Corridor	New Overlay needed
Other Scenic Corridors	New Overlays needed
Water Supply Watershed Protection	Special district adopted
River Corridor Protection	Special district adopted
Groundwater Recharge Area	Special district adopted
Wetlands Protection	Special district adopted
Mountain Protection	Special district adopted
Hillside and Steep Slope Protection	New regulation needed

Sources: Assessment of county and city zoning ordinances.



## 2.4.8 Land Use Change 2004-2028

Table 2-5 shows how land use will change in number of acres over the planning period, if development takes place in accordance with the future land use plan.

### Parks, Recreation, and Conservation

Most of the 41,000 acres of the Park, Recreation, and Conservation land in 2028 is National Forest. Another large percentage is the 10,000-acre Dawson Forest, currently managed for wildlife.<sup>1</sup> The remainder of parks, recreation, and conservation is primarily along streams and rivers in the county, including flood plains. Total acreage in Parks, Recreation, and Conservation will increase by almost 9,000 acres between 2004 and 2028, due primarily to the designation of flood plains and riparian buffers throughout unincorporated Dawson County.

Table 2-5: Land Use Change 2004-2028 Unincorporated

Land Use Classification	Existing Land Use 2004		Future Land Use 2028		Change in Land Use Acres
	Acres	%	Acres	%	
Forestry	49,400	38	508	0.3	-48,892
Agriculture	19,679	15.1	9,575	7.0	-10,104
Residential, all non-multi-family	22,357	17.2	66,770	51.4	+44,413
Residential, Multi-Family	95	0.1	323	0.3	+228
Public/Institutional	385	0.3	991	0.8	+606
Water Supply Watershed acquisition	n/a	n/a	1,103	0.8	+1,103
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	233	0.2	123	0.1	-110
Road Rights-of-Ways	3,502	2.7	3,502	2.7	0
Commercial, all categories	571	0.3	3,080	2.4	+2,509
Mixed Use Village	--	--	2,239	1.7	+2,239
Light Industrial	467	0.4	757	0.6	+290
Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	33,179	25.5	41,179	31.6	+8,000
Vacant	282	0.2	n/a	n/a	-282
Total	130,150	100	130,150	100	

Source: Robert & Co. 2004. Revised 4/01/05 Revised July 14, 2005, Revised June 20, 2008.

<sup>1</sup> Dawson Forest is owned by the Atlanta Airport Authority and was purchased for a possible second Atlanta region airport. The future use of the Dawson Forest site is not known, but if it were to be planned as a second Atlanta regional airport, the future land use plan map would most likely change dramatically.

## Forest and Agricultural Lands

The figures in Table 2-5 appear as though private forest land will be reduced entirely. Stakeholders indicated that the private timber companies intended to sell off forest lands because they were not viable in competition with cheaper land in south Georgia on which productive forests can be grown. Private forest lands have been reclassified as Residential (of varying density types, especially five-acre minimum exurban development). Although some private forest land will undoubtedly be converted to other uses, portions of forest are likely to remain as undeveloped tracts, conservation land, and or woodlots incorporated into low-density residential properties. The use of TDR's and other preservation practices within new development will further protect agricultural and forested properties.

Agriculture is anticipated to decrease by more than 10,104 acres. The Future Land Use Map provides for two large blocks of agriculture, one northeast and one southwest of the national forest lands along Amicalola Creek. That loss of agricultural land may be an exaggeration, however, since viable farms are likely to continue in the northwest portion of the county, on lands within the Exurban Residential future land use category.

## Residential

The Future Land Use Map provides for a small amount of multi-family residential use in unincorporated Dawson County (an increase of 228 acres). This is a very small percentage of unincorporated land area (0.3 percent). Land in all non-multi-family residential categories will increase by approximately 44,000 acres. Table 2-6 shows the percentage distribution of all residential land among the various residential categories of the future land use plan. The estimated number of housing units for those categories is provided under the section, "Buildout Scenario."

**Table 2-6: Distribution of Residential Acreage 2028 Unincorporated**

Residential Category of the Future Land Use Plan 2025	Acres 2028	Percent of all Residential Development
Exurban (5-acre lot)	22,241	33.1%
Rural (3-acre lot)	14,463	21.5%
Sub-rural (1.5-acre lot)	17,281	25.8%
Suburban (1 acre lot)	3,473	5.2%
Lakefront (0.75 acre lot)	2,200	3.3%
Planned residential community (1 dua)	6,995	10.4%
Town Residential (0.4-acre lot)	117	0.2%
Multi-family (0.017 acre per unit – 6 dua)	323	0.5%
Total, Residential Categories	67,093	100%

*Revised 4/1/05. Subtotals rounded to the nearest acre or tenth of a percentage point. Revised July 14, 2005, Revised June 2008.*

Not included within Table 2-6 are residential units that will be constructed within Mixed Use Villages, which are accounted for in the buildout scenario (see Table 2-8).

## Public-Institutional

Land in the water supply watershed category will increase by 1,100 acres so as to acquire three watershed lakes (and watershed protection areas) for future water supply. The largest of these water supply acquisition sites is north of Georgia 53, east of Dawsonville, and just west of the Etowah River. It is critically important that the county or its water and sewer authority acquire these lands in order to provide for future water supplies. Other Public-Institutional acreages will

increase by more than 600 acres to account for school and park properties throughout the county.

### Commercial and Industrial Lands

A key consideration in the design of the Future Land Use Plan 2025 for unincorporated Dawson County was ensuring that enough commercial and industrial land would be available to balance the property tax base between residential and nonresidential development. This was particularly important for Dawson County, since it has a high percentage of public (not taxed) land.

As of 2004, commercial and industrial land constituted only 1,038 acres, or 0.7 percent of the unincorporated land area. By designating all appropriate lands within the growth areas for commercial and industrial development, including Mixed Use Villages, the Future Land Use Map provides for 6,047 acres, or 4.7 percent of the total unincorporated land area. Table 2-7 shows the distribution of acreage among types of commercial and industrial development in unincorporated Dawson County.

**Table 2-7: Distribution of Commercial and Industrial Acreage 2028 Unincorporated**

Commercial or Industrial Category of the Future Land Use Plan 2028	Acres 2028	Percent of all Commercial and Industrial Development
Office-Professional	370	6.1%
Commercial Crossroads	175	2.3%
Commercial - Highway	2,168	35.9%
Campus-style Business Parks	367	6.1%
Light Industrial	757	12.5%
Mixed Use Villages	2,239	36.6%
Total	6,076	100%

*Revised 4/1/05. Subtotals rounded to the nearest acre or tenth of a percentage point. Revised July 14, 2005, Revised June 2008.*

### 2.4.9 Buildout Scenario for Unincorporated Dawson County

A "buildout scenario" is an approximate analysis of how many additional dwelling units can be constructed in unincorporated Dawson County given the densities established in the Future Land Use Map. The buildout figure is not the same as a population forecast or projection. Buildout refers to the amount or capacity of land to develop according to the plan, assuming that every piece of undeveloped property will fully develop as described in the plan. Such an assumption is not always realistic, but it is important to conduct such an analysis in order to determine if the plan is balanced and does not provide for too much residential land in comparison to population projections. Further, this scenario is based on acreages available only and not necessarily tied to water supplies. Those supplies may be more limited in the future thus overshadowing the factor of acreages available as a primary basis of build-out scenarios.

Population forecasters have projected Dawson County's population (including Dawsonville) could grow to a total of 100,000 persons during the planning horizon. The buildout figures in Table 2-8 indicate that Dawson County's Future Land Use Map (with the residential categories provided) is adequate to meet the forecasted long-term population growth of approximately 100,000 persons, but also not excessive in terms of land supply for housing.

**Table 2-8: Buildout Scenario for the Future Land Use Plan - Unincorporated**

Land Use Classification	Acres	Density	Units
Estimated housing units, 2003 (unincorporated)	--	--	7,949
Agriculture	-10,104	1 per 20 acres	-505
Exurban Residential – 5 acre lot	22,241	1 per 5 acre	4,448
Rural Residential – 3 acre lot (assumes ½ built, ½ unbuilt)	7,231	1 per 3 acre	2,410
Sub-rural Residential – 1.5 acre lot (assumes 2/3 built, 1/3 unbuilt)	11,509	1 per 1.5 acre	7,673
Suburban Residential – 1 acre lot (assumes 60% built, 40% unbuilt)	2,084	1 per 1 acre	2,084
Lakefront Residential – 0.75 acre lot (assumes 60% built, 40% unbuilt)	1,320	1 per 0.75 acre	1,760
Planned Residential Community (1 dua) (assumes ½ built, ½ unbuilt)	3,498	1.0 per acre	3,498
Town Residential (0.4 acre lot)	117	2.5 per acre	293
Residential, Multi-Family (6 dua)	323	6 per acre	1,938
Mixed Use Village (2.8 dua)	2,239	2.8 units per acre	6,269
Total Housing Units, Buildout (unincorporated)			37,817

### 2.4.10 Phased Growth Strategy

The Future Land Use Map is a guide that shows future land use patterns envisioned to be appropriate for the county during a 20 period. There is a tendency, however, for property owners to recognize the future uses recommended in the plan and then immediately attempt to market them for sale, and developers to develop all such lands within the short-term rather than over a 20-year period.

A key consideration with Dawson County's future land use plan is the need to provide enough commercial and industrial development to offset the burden of property taxes on residential property owners. The future land use plan maximizes the available (and appropriately situated) land for commercial and industrial development in an effort to close the imbalance between residential and nonresidential tax bases.

In showing desirable future patterns 20 years into the future, this does not mean that Dawson County will authorize in the short term (through rezoning) the building of all of the activity centers and multi-family development. Such a premature usage of all such lands would be contrary to the intent of the county. In addition, the 20-year growth pattern assumes that the proper facilities and services (*e.g.*, water, sewer, roads, and schools) will be in place at the time of development. It is unrealistic, for this reason as well, to expect that all development shown in the 20-year plan can occur in the short run.

To guard against the possibility that property owners and land developers will seek approval in the short term to develop according to the plan but at a faster pace than anticipated, a strategy for phasing development is provided in the plan as described in the following paragraphs and table.

Although the "buildout" of Dawson County would provide for an estimated 110,000 residents, that does not mean the county encourages that much residential development. If residential development continues at a pace exceeding commercial and industrial development, the county government will continue to face an imbalance in terms of tax revenues and expenditures. For this reason, "target" and maximum desired population levels are established in the Phased Growth Strategy (Table 2-9). The numbers shown are "cumulative," meaning that for each five-year time period shown, the numbers are the total in unincorporated Dawson County at that time.

Table 2-9: Phased Growth Strategy - Unincorporated

Land Use	Year 2008	Cumulative Total By the Year 2013	Cumulative Total By the Year 2018	Cumulative Total By the Year 2023	Cumulative Total By the Year 2028
Minimum Percent of Unincorporated Land Area Devoted to Commercial and Industrial Development	0.8%	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%
Target Percent of Unincorporated Land Area Devoted to Commercial and Industrial Development	--	1.75%	2.5%	3.3%	4.3%
Minimum Acres of Unincorporated Land Area Devoted to Commercial and Industrial Development	1,100	2,065	2,750	3,450	4,130
Target Acres of Unincorporated Land Area Devoted to Commercial and Industrial Development	--	2,410	3,450	4,475	5,784
Target Population	21,250	25,000	32,500	40,000	47,500
Maximum Population	25,000	32,500	40,000	47,500	55,000
Target Housing Units	8,500	10,000	13,000	16,000	19,000
Maximum Housing Units	10,000	13,000	16,000	19,000	22,000
Maximum Apartment Units	500	1,750	2,500	3,750	5,000
Mixed Use Village	0	1	2	3	3

Revised 4/1/05. Revised June 2008

### 3 Community Issues and Opportunities

The Community Issues and Opportunities chapter provides an updated list of Community Issues and Opportunities. It also provides an updated description of the issues and opportunities that incorporates changes needed to respond to public comments or other input gathered during the public review of the Community Assessment.

The issues and opportunities described below have been identified from a review the Analysis of Supportive Data and Information. This analysis included an examination of the Quality Community Objectives. The Analysis of Supportive Data and Information can be found as an addendum to this report. The report organizes the issues and opportunities by the major topics defined in the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Local Planning Requirements, which are listed as follows:

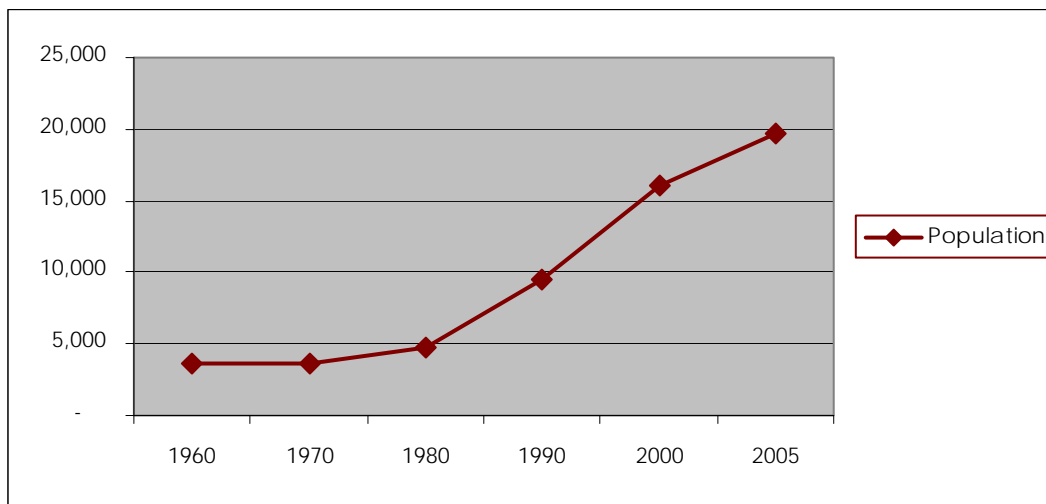
- Population
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Land Use

#### 3.1 Population

##### 3.1.1 Issues

**Rapid population growth** – Dawson County sits directly in the path of the northern expansion of suburban metropolitan Atlanta. As a result, dramatic growth rates have occurred over the last 15 years. From 1990 to 2005, population increased by 109 percent from 9,429 to an estimated 19,731 – an average annual growth rate of 7.3 percent. Dawson County's population grew by an estimated 23.3 percent from 2000 to 2005, the 67<sup>th</sup>-highest county growth rate in the nation and 14<sup>th</sup>-highest county growth rate in the state. Each county surrounding Dawson County ranked in the state's top 25 fastest-growing counties.

Figure 3-1: County Historical Population

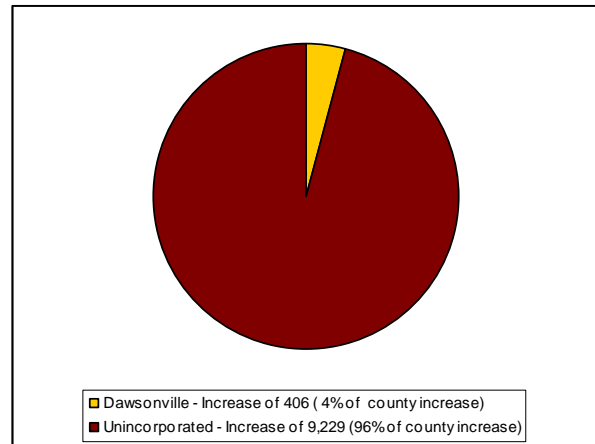


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Rapid household growth** - Growth in the number of households accompanied the high rate of population growth. County households increased from 3,360 in 1990 to an estimated 7,534 households in 2005, which is an annual rate of growth of 8.3 percent from 1990 to 2005.

**Growth focused in unincorporated areas** - Much of Dawson County's growth has most recently occurred along the Dawson Forest Road corridor and along the Georgia 400 corridor in the Southeast section of the county. A small amount of the county's growth has occurred within the city limits of Dawsonville. Much of the growth has occurred along Dawson Forest Road near the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority's sewer trunk line. Growth taking place in other areas of the county will depend on the use of septic systems, which will require a larger minimum lot size.

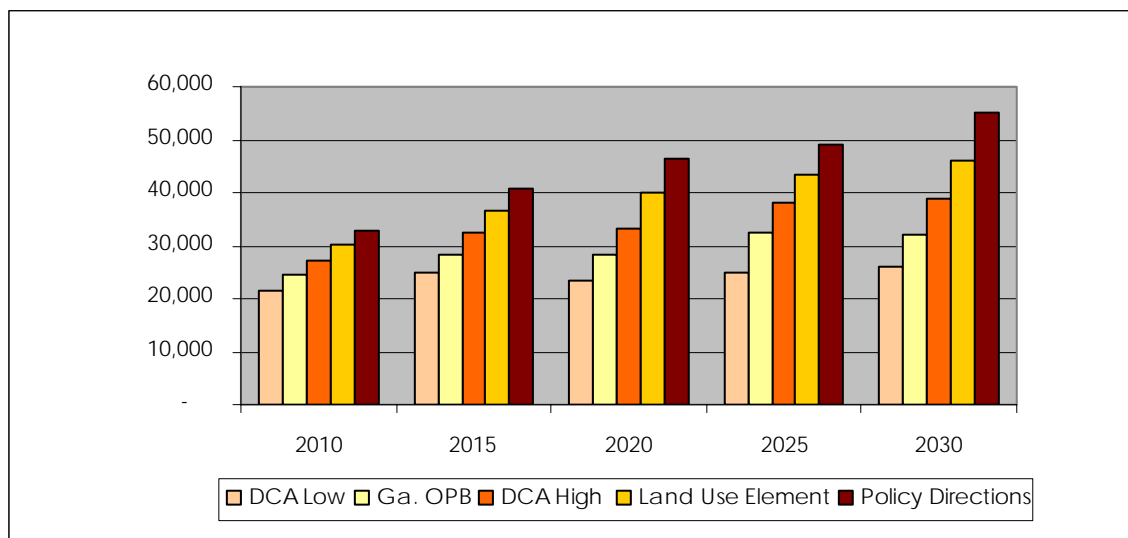
Figure 3-2: Population Growth Distribution



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Population and Housing projections show continued growth** - Assuming the infrastructure needs can be provided, population projections for Dawson County show that the population would continue to soar over the next 25 years to nearly 50,000, an increase of approximately 148 percent and an average annual growth rate of nearly six percent. Figure 3-3 shows the range of population projections analyzed for the Community Assessment. The population increase projected for 2030 would create approximately 18,000 households, an increase of 197.9 percent and an average annual growth rate of almost seven percent. As shown, growth in number of households will outpace population growth as the average household size continues to shrink in Dawson County, as projected throughout the nation.

Figure 3-3: County Population Projections 2010-2030



Source: DCA Low - Projections based on DCA Website Projections (1.0 multiplier); Ga. OPB - Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget 2015 Population Projections as of 12/2004; DCA High - Projections based on DCA Website Projections (1.33 multiplier); Land Use Element - Dawson County Land Use Element 2005 Update prepared by Jerry Weitz & Associates/Robert and Company 2004; Policy Directions - Policy Directions Report: Dawson County Impact Fee Program, July 14, 2004 prepared by Ross+Associates Note: See Analysis of Supporting Data for more information about the various projections shown above.

### 3.1.2 Strategies

- Maintain existing phased growth strategy
- Determine maximum amount of growth allowed per year or develop a system by which to judge the demand for growth annually
- Focus growth to areas served with existing infrastructure

## 3.2 Economic Development

### 3.2.1 Issues

**Gap in education and training** – In Dawson County, segments of the labor force lack education and job training needed to attract higher wage jobs, while other segments of the labor force have education and skill levels that make them overqualified for jobs available in the county. Overall, the latest available numbers for educational attainment show room for improvement. Fewer than 12 percent of county residents held bachelor's degrees in 2000, while only 47 percent had education beyond high school.

**Lagging wages in county** – Dawson County's wages lag far behind the state and national wages in almost every category recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Dawson County's average annual wage in 2004 was only 71 percent of the state average annual wage, and 68 percent of the national annual wage. While the number of jobs in the county is increasing, they are not increasing as fast as the population and are increasing fastest in sectors with lower wages (retail trade, accommodation and food service, etc.).

**Mismatched labor force** – Since higher paying jobs reside in other counties, a majority of the county's growing labor force leaves the county each day for work. Meanwhile, just over half of the county's jobs are filled by Dawson County residents. Workers enter the county from neighboring counties to work. The median household income of Dawson County in 2003 was \$48,455, which was significantly higher than the state of Georgia (\$42,421) and the United States (\$43,318) median income. Meanwhile, average annual pay for those who work in Dawson County (and may live in other counties) is only \$26,936, which trails the state of Georgia (\$37,866) and the United States (\$39,354).

**Lack of a Strategic Economic Development Plan** – Dawson County lacks a strategic economic development plan. The Dawson County Chamber of Commerce, which also serves as the Dawson County Development Authority, has adopted an economic development plan that emphasizes the need to improve public education and other issues facing the county. However, the Chamber developed the plan under the leadership of a board that has changed significantly in makeup since adoption. A new plan would provide an updated, more comprehensive, unified vision for economic development in the county.

**Tax base relies too heavily on residential property** – Dawson County residential property owners accept a significant portion of the tax burden due to a shortage of commercial and industrial development. Property designated for future commercial use in prime locations needs to be developed as commercial in order to boost the County commercial tax base. Too often, however, this property is being used for residential uses, thus reducing potential contribution to the county tax base.

### 3.2.2 Opportunities

**Growing economic base** – Employment has increased by more than 380 percent between 1990 and 2004, rising from 1,151 to 5,564, according the Bureau of Labor Statistics. With projected population growth between 2005 and 2030, the employment is expected to increase to 19,982, an increase of 151 percent, according the Dawson County's *Policy Directions Report*.



**New population brings higher incomes and education attainment** – Increasing population has brought higher-income households with increased levels of college and post-graduate educational attainment. The share of Dawson County residents with a college degree increased from 6.5 percent to 11.9 percent between 1990 and 2000, which in real numbers was an increase of 103 percent. Population growth between 2000 and 2005 has likely shifted that number even higher as incomes, cost of new housing and population increased. Median income in Dawson County grew from \$48,455 between 2000 and 2003 to \$49,909, an increase of 3.0 percent, outpacing the state and nation. The county could use these changes to attract higher-paying jobs to the county, which will provide more employment choices for the county's labor force within the county.

**Educational and training opportunities expanding** – Two institutions of higher learning have been established in Dawson County that can provide opportunities for preparing the labor force. Lanier Technical College opened a campus in Dawsonville in the spring of 2006. Meanwhile, Southern Catholic College opened near Dawsonville in the fall of 2005. North Georgia College and State University, located north of Dawson County in Lumpkin County, also offers nearby opportunities in education and training.

**Tourist Expansion** – Dawson County's abundant natural resources, rich history and culture, recreational opportunities and outlet shopping provide multiple options for visitors to the county. The Etowah River, Lake Lanier and many mountain streams provide ideal settings for a variety of outdoor activities including hiking, fishing, canoeing and bicycling. In addition, the North Georgia Premium Outlet mall draws thousands for shopping and has attracted many other businesses to Georgia 400 between the Forsyth County line and area around Georgia 53. The possible acquisition of the 10,000 acres of Dawson Forest WMA and a new waterway park would further the tourist and quality of life expansion desired by the county. A marketing campaign encouraging tourists to take advantage of these opportunities could draw more income to the county.

**Access and land** – The Georgia 400 corridor connects southeast Dawson County, the most developable portion of the county, with greater Atlanta by way of a four-lane highway in Dawson County that becomes a limited access freeway in Forsyth County. The highway provides an important connection to the interstate system, creating an abundance of industrial and warehousing opportunities.

**Expanded commercial tax base** – Developing the Georgia 400 corridor as planned with industrial and commercial uses will expand the commercial tax base and reduce the burden currently placed on residential property owners. The county has set a goal that commercial property should contribute 40 percent of the tax base. Developing as planned in this area will help the county reach that goal.

### 3.2.3 Strategies

- Market county's increasing educational levels to potential employers
- Coordinate with Lanier Technical College to develop skills pool to attract higher paying jobs
- Develop Marketing Plan to encourage tourism
- Maintain goal of 40 percent of tax base coming from commercial property and 60 percent from residential property
- Work closely with Forsyth and Lumpkin counties to maintain Georgia 400 as a convenient connection to Interstate 285 and the Atlanta region in order to attract business and tourism
- Protect natural, historical and cultural resources
- Ensure long-term support of mall and surrounding shopping areas

### 3.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

#### 3.3.1 Issues

**Water Quality** – Storm water runoff from developed and developing areas increases the pollution of the watershed and increases flooding as water moves more quickly. Development in the county and upstream on the county's rivers, streams and creeks threatens the county's water quality, especially from non-point pollution. Development in the county and upstream has threatened endangered species, particularly those with habitats in the Etowah River. Development demand for lakeside residential property in the Lake Lanier watershed could threaten a major source of the greater Atlanta water supply.

**Air quality** – The region's housing growth, industrial expansion and associated increases in traffic have contributed to the region's air quality challenges to the extent that may soon place the county under air quality non-attainment status. Non-attainment status typically results in a loss of federal highway funding.

**Landscape** – Much of the county's landscape is not suited for conventional suburban development. Steep slopes of more than 30 percent cover a great deal of the county. Development of these areas would contribute to soil erosion among other problems.

**Historic and cultural character threatened** – Development of farmland has contributed to the disappearance of farmland and the rural scenery of the county. Since level ground suitable for development is limited, development has drifted toward agricultural land. As suburban development continues in these areas, it threatens the rural, agricultural character and heritage of Dawson County. In addition, much of the county's historic resources can be found in rural areas.

#### 3.3.2 Opportunities

**Seeking solutions to threatened habitats** – Several studies are currently underway that will provide recommendations for policy and regulation changes. These studies include the Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and the Statewide Water Management Planning Act. Updates to the county's storm water regulations in response to the recommendations of the HCP could provide the design requirements needed to prevent pollution, habitat destruction and flooding.

**Preserve county character and environmentally sensitive areas** – Conservation subdivisions, transfer of development rights (TDR), zoning regulations and creative land development practices can be used to preserve and conserve agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive areas and open space character, while also allowing new construction.

**Preserve history and culture** – The County can protect its heritage by conducting an extensive review of historical, cultural and archeological resources. This review would be followed by the development of regulations, guidelines and educational/marketing programs specifically tailored to ensure current residents and future generations have the opportunity to appreciate the county's history and culture.

#### 3.3.3 Strategies

- Implement appropriate Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan recommendations
- Update the Storm Water Design Manual
- Encourage sustainable industrial practices
- Working in cooperation with EWSA to develop a long-range water resources plan including policies for conservation and reuse as necessary
- Encourage sidewalks, bikeways, and introduction of public transportation to limit pollution caused by automobiles

- Encourage green space protection, protection of forests and other sensitive areas to protect air and water quality
- Prepare historical, cultural and archeological resources inventory and preservation plan
- Prepare regulations and guidelines to provide protection for the historical, cultural and archeological resources
- Implement education and marketing program to increase the appreciation of the historical, cultural and archeological resources
- Prepare guidelines and regulations to protect scenic highways
- Develop Conservation Subdivision Ordinance
- Develop TDR ordinance
- Adopt stricter requirements for water quality enhancement measures on individual sites
- Install regional water quality enhancement areas to intercept storm water and improve water quality as it flows from developing areas
- Implement strategies, studies and plans that call for water quality protection on a regional basis (*i.e.* all counties in the Lake Lanier basin)
- Consider possible establishment of a local government storm water utility

### **3.4 Facilities and Services Issues**

#### **3.4.1 Issues**

**Coordination between land and school planning** – Members of the Dawson County Board of Education are not currently represented on the City of Dawsonville and Dawson County planning committees. State law does not require these groups to agree on location of new schools and other land development related issues. Coordination does currently take place, but more coordinated planning is needed to ensure that new schools will be able to serve the growing population.

**Limited drinking water resources** – Water resources are limited, and no approved plans are in place to correct limitation (supply is limited region wide).

**Limited sewer service areas** – Sewer service is limited to the south and southeast portions of the county near Georgia 400. As a result, new suburban development must occur at densities low enough to support septic systems.

#### **3.4.2 Opportunities**

**Parks master plan** – Dawson County approved a parks master plan in 2005 that provides the framework for developing the county parks system and recreational programs.

**Greenspace master plan** - A detailed green space plan could expand on the parks master plan and provide more guidance for property acquisition.

**Expanded school capacity** – New school projects in the county include a new middle school, expanded elementary schools and a new alternative school. These expansions provide increased capacity to meet the demands of new development.

**Shared cost of providing public services and facilities for new development** – Efforts are currently underway to determine the best way to pay for facilities and services in order to serve the growing population (*e.g.* impact fees, etc.).

#### **3.4.3 Strategies**

- Continue support of the Statewide Water Plan in cooperation with EWSA.
- Include Board of Education representatives on the Dawson County Planning Commission
- Develop long-range water resources plan with EWSA

- Promote conservation culture – become leader in conservation ingenuity
- Develop long-range sewer expansion plan
- Develop Green space Master Plan
- Adopt impact fees

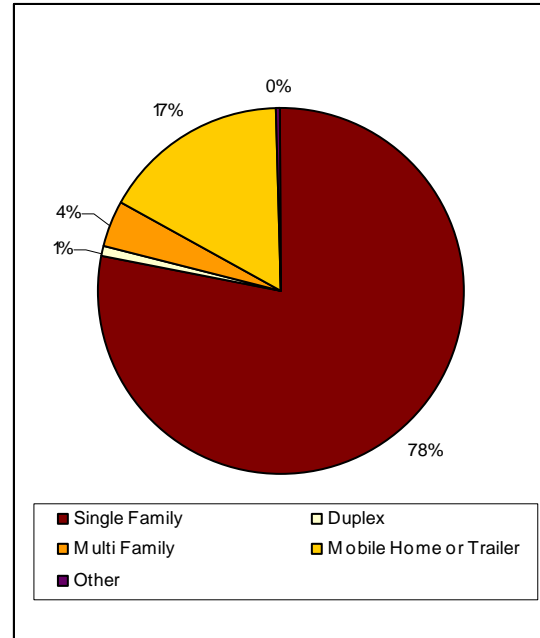
### 3.5 Housing

#### 3.5.1 Issues

**Lack of housing type mix** – The new housing market currently provides few options beyond single-family homes on large lots and limits options that would meet residents’ needs at all stages of life. As shown in Figure 3-4, single family homes made up 78 percent of the county’s housing stock in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Multi-family housing made up only four percent of the total housing stock, which was an increase from less than one percent in 1990. Conditions that contributed to the prevalence of single family housing include:

- Zoning regulations that segregate housing types and do not provide for mixed use development
- Drinking water capacity limits the total supportable density
- Limited sewer availability means that homes built without sewer must rely on septic systems that need large lots in order to operate

Figure 3-4: County Housing Mix



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Special housing needs** – Special housing needs of those with substance abuse rehabilitation needs are not currently being met in the county. Special housing needs for elderly also are not being met (e.g. no nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospitals, etc.)

**Jobs-Housing Imbalance** – The jobs-housing balance goal seeks a geographic equilibrium between housing and jobs. The underlying theory is that as jobs and housing are more evenly distributed and mixed, people will be able to live closer to their jobs, and traffic congestion and vehicular traffic will be reduced. A balanced community generally has a jobs-housing ratio of 1.25 to 1.75, with 1.4 considered ideal. Dawson County’s jobs-housing ratio in 2004 of 0.64 indicates that the county serves as a bedroom community more than a balanced community. In addition, the housing available along the high-growth Georgia 400 corridor is priced to attract the bedroom community resident and prices out a large portion of those who work in the county. The average wage for employees in Dawson County in 2004 would allow for the purchase of a home valued at \$91,688. The median income of residents of Dawson County, meanwhile, would allow for the purchase of an \$189,654 home. The actual average sale prices for homes in 2003 (data not available for 2004) in Dawson County was \$204,463, which explains why many of those who work in the county (48 percent of all workers in 2000) live elsewhere. No public housing or subsidized housing currently exists in Dawson County to help offset this imbalance.

#### 3.5.2 Opportunities

**Housing stock continues to increase** – Housing development between 2000 and 2004 increased the number of housing units from 7,162 to 8,714, an increase of 21.7 percent, which outpaced all

adjacent counties with the exception of Forsyth (33.1 percent) and Cherokee (29.9 percent) counties. While the market has focused on single-family units, as population increases and diversifies, the growing housing market provides opportunities to meet an expanded list of housing needs for new residents (*e.g.* variety of housing types, assisted living facilities, etc.).

**Increased share of multi-family housing** – Multi-family housing gained in share from less than one percent in 1990 to more than four percent in 2000. Multi-family housing near Georgia 400, between Georgia 53 and Dawson Forest Road, can provide housing for people working in the retail center.

**Mixed use villages** – Mixed use villages placed at strategic locations or nodes throughout the county can provide affordable housing options for a wider range of potential residents. Undeveloped vacant land still has potential to develop in ways that will enhance the surrounding areas and provide mixed-use villages at strategic locations along the major corridors. The Commercial Planned Community Development district can be used for creating other mixed-use centers.

**Revitalization of existing homes to provide affordable housing** – Neglected homes/neighborhoods in need of revitalization can provide affordable housing for new residents in areas with existing services and infrastructure and provide the residential base to support existing businesses.

**New regulations increasing opportunities for aging-in-place housing** – New zoning districts designed to provide a variety of housing types can make it possible to develop communities that provide Dawson County residents with an opportunity to live in one neighborhood throughout the various stages of life, including senior housing.

### 3.5.3 Strategies

- Adopt Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance
- Create zoning districts that implement all Future Land Use Map Categories
- Consider alternative zoning solutions for mixed-use villages
- Develop inventory of existing housing stock and determine revitalization needs
- Develop home revitalization programs
- Develop zoning districts that provide incentives for providing senior living near other housing

## 3.6 Land Use

### 3.6.1 Issues

**Commercial to residential land use changes** – Residential development of properties designated for commercial growth threatens the county tax base. The Future Land Use Map adopted in 2005 and also a component of the Community Agenda was created with the goal of a future tax base with 60 percent of the receipts coming from residential and 40 percent coming from commercial. This plan will ultimately lessen the residential property owner tax. Residential development in areas designated for commercial threatens that goal. Conversion of prime commercial land to residential use creates potential for land use incompatibility between new residential uses and commercial/industrial uses and severely restricts the potential to build the non-residential tax base.

**Agricultural conflicts** – Agricultural-residential land use conflicts can emerge when new residents move to areas with intensive farming (*i.e.* poultry farming).

**Residential to office demand** – Residential uses are converting to office uses are taking place on lots fronting highway and major road corridors due to development pressure.

**Commercial encroachment** – Encroachment of automobile-oriented, larger-scaled commercial uses in residential neighborhoods can detract significantly from neighborhood character.

**Incompatible land uses** – Incompatible land uses and abrupt zoning changes along the Georgia 400 corridor and parts of the Georgia 53 corridor occur as a result of the desire to focus commercial uses into these locations. This focus creates the potential for problems as new commercial and industrial uses locate adjacent to established low-density residential areas.

**Strip commercial development** – Strip commercial development will require special attention over the life of the plan to prevent underutilization and blight as market and economic conditions change (along the Georgia 400 corridor and the Georgia 53 corridor in the Dawsonville area).

### 3.6.2 Opportunities

**Encouragement of traditional neighborhood development** – Traditional neighborhood development can provide a wide range of housing types in newly developing areas with a connected pedestrian-friendly street system and ample open space. In addition it provides the opportunity to cluster community facilities including schools, fire stations, libraries and parks in order to create a sense of place.

**Large minimum lot sizes in farming areas** – Lot size minimums in areas with intense farming can decrease the impact of the farming operations on adjacent residents. Five acres and two acres are the current minimums for these areas.

**Encourage TDR's** – TDR's can be applied to preserve agricultural lands and other sensitive areas in need of protection from development.

**Encourage conservation subdivisions** – Conservation subdivisions can be used to retain the character of agriculture and protect the natural resources of the environmentally sensitive areas. Conservation subdivisions could be developed with the Residential Planned Community Comprehensive Development district.

**Promote green space** – Regulations can encourage developers of residential and mixed-use development to set aside appropriate amounts of green space for public recreation and storm water collection/filtering.

**Protect views** – Guidelines for scenic corridors could protect views. Adopted guidelines for Georgia 400 and the adoption of guidelines for Georgia 53 can help create a sense of place and can provide clear guidance for property owners with residential lots facing Georgia 53 that are experiencing pressure to convert to office or commercial uses.

### 3.6.3 Strategies

- Develop educational program in order for the public to understand the tax consequences of not providing more commercial and industrial tax base
- Adopt zoning ordinance amendments to ensure adequate buffer exists between new commercial and industrial uses anticipated along the Georgia 400 corridor and the neighboring existing single-family residential areas
- Adopt Georgia 53 corridor guidelines
- Adopt Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance
- Adopt Scenic Corridor guidelines
- Adopt Green space Master Plan
- Adopt Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan
- Develop long-range water resources plan
- Adopt Conservation Subdivision regulations
- Identify appropriate locations for Conservation Subdivisions

- Adopt Transfer of Development Rights ordinance
- Increase the minimum lot size requirements for agricultural uses

### 3.7 Transportation Issues

**Few transportation alternatives** – The Dawson County transportation system relies too heavily on the private automobile for transportation. Few alternative transportation options (*i.e.* pedestrian, bicycle, public transportation, etc.) exist for those who do not drive, including those who cannot afford to purchase an automobile, such as children, teenagers and some elderly.

**Intersection of Georgia 400/53** – Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) plans to alter the intersection of Georgia routes 400 and 53. GDOT would like to replace the at-grade intersection by either sending Georgia 400 traffic above or below Georgia 53, with access to each via ramps. The planned intersection improvements could negatively impact the surrounding commercial centers by limiting access and visibility from Georgia 400.

**Limited pedestrian and bicycle network** – Few sidewalks and walking trails exist to provide places for walking and biking. In all but two districts, the county subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances do not require the construction of sidewalks and/or other walking and bicycle networks with subdivision development. The county has worked with the City of Dawsonville on a plan to provide sidewalks near Dawson County High School, but a program for installing sidewalks in neighborhoods and along corridors throughout the county is not in place.

**Limited street connectivity** – Limited street connectivity and the lack of a street grid providing alternative routes for navigating the Georgia 400 area means those drivers must access arterials to make even the shortest trips. Dawson County does not have a collector street plan or regulation that would require new development to connect to existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, nearby parks, schools or recreational areas, with the exception of the Residential Community Planned Comprehensive Development district and the Commercial Planned Comprehensive Development district. Currently adopted land development regulations encourage the use of cul-de-sacs in all districts except in the Commercial Planned Comprehensive Development. As a result, the county has seen an overuse of cul-de-sacs, contributing to a disconnected street system.

**No road improvement plan** – The County Road Improvement Program provides limited long-range vision for meeting future road improvement needs and instead works to catch-up as new development takes place. The funding currently is not in place to finance such a program, which limits the county's ability to direct development into specific areas with the use of new roadway infrastructure.

#### 3.7.1 Opportunities

**Transportation alternatives** – An express bus service operated by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) currently provides service from the City of Cumming in Forsyth County to downtown Atlanta, with various stops along the way. Expansion of that service north to the Georgia 400 area between Dawson Forest Road and Georgia 53 would provide new options for commuters in Dawson County. In addition to bus service, providing a park-and-ride lot near the intersection of Georgia 400 and Georgia 53 would provide a formalized location for commuters to meet and travel to jobs in other areas.

**Guidelines for connected streets** – A collector street/street connectivity plan could establish a better connected street system for the county. Regulations that require street connectivity and the construction of planned streets could establish a network of connected streets providing the county with alternatives to Georgia 400 and other arterial roadways. Guidelines could build off of the corridor guidelines created for Georgia 400 and Georgia 53 in addition to the district

regulations for the Residential Community Planned Comprehensive Development district and the Commercial Planned Comprehensive Development district.

**Bicycle and pedestrian improvements** – Installation of off-road bike trails and multi-use paths could improve pedestrian safety and encourage walking. Pedestrian enhancements at major intersections (e.g. crosswalks, signals, medians, etc.) could improve pedestrian safety and encourage walking as a transportation alternative for short trips. One example of the improvements needed would be pedestrian and bicycle bridges spanning Georgia 400 located along the corridor between Dawson Forest Road and Georgia 53. This and other improvements could increase connectivity and encourage walking and biking as transportation alternatives for short trips.

**Scenic by-ways** – Dawson County’s major roads all have a “Scenic By-Ways” designation in the currently adopted comprehensive plan. These designations provide the framework for establishing protective guidelines for these corridors to ensure the protection of scenic view sheds.

**Access management** – Guidelines for corridors in the county can include access management techniques that limit the number of curb cuts. Limiting curb cuts will provide for a more efficient flow of traffic, reduce left hand turns and reduce the number of entry points on to the roadway. Limited curb cuts also limit the interruptions of the streetscape, leading to fewer pedestrian conflicts on sidewalks and fewer conflicts with bicyclists in designated lanes.

**Provide appropriate cross sections for functional classifications** – Roadway cross-section and intersection treatments should reflect the functional classification of the roadway and relative needs for access and pedestrian flow versus circulation.

### 3.7.2 Strategies

- Increase alternatives to automobile travel
- Adopt standards for street cross sections that include sidewalks
- Add bike lanes, bicycle-friendly shoulders and multi-use paths/trails where appropriate for future construction
- Coordinate with GDOT or GRTA for possible extension of the regional express bus system into the county
- Require sidewalks or other pedestrian pathways in all new developments
- Pursue Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) planning and Implementation Funds, and Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grants
- Continued coordination with GDOT
- Develop a road improvement plan
- Improve communication with GDOT Board Representative
- Adopt Greenways Master Plan
- Incorporate a connected street plan where appropriate for future connectivity in the County
- Develop a system of alternate routes to alleviate dependency on Georgia 400
- Improve pedestrian access at the major intersections along Georgia 400 with signals, cross sections, etc.
- Coordinate with GDOT to incorporate some context sensitive improvements for Georgia 400
- Require developers to submit a plan for a grid or street network that increases connectivity
- Educate the citizens on alternatives to automobile travel
- Coordinate with local traffic enforcement authorities for safety/accident data
- Coordinate with GDOT’s office of Highway Safety for statistics
- Coordinate and become familiar with GDOT’s Navigator System
- Research the Automated Transportation Management System (ATMS) program offered by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) programs



offered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (research specifically how some adjacent counties have benefited from the use of these programs to improve the efficiency of the transportation network with the latest technologically advanced traffic management systems)

- Attend the Quarterly State Transportation Board meetings and become familiar with area board representative
- Allow County staff to become more active in professional organizations/associations
- Educate local community on the relationship of GDOT to the county
- Increase coordination with GDOT's policies on Context Sensitive Design
- Work with local elected officials on innovative financing methods
- Coordinate with local municipalities in the Special Purpose Location Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) Program
- Educate the local business community on the benefits of creating a Community Improvement District (CID) to assist in raising funds for infrastructure improvements
- Draft design alternatives that would meet the needs of the county and GDOT for the intersection of Georgia 53 and 400
- Inventory cross sections on county roads and assess conditions of each

### **3.8 Intergovernmental Coordination**

#### **3.8.1 Issues**

**Dawsonville growth area** – Dawson County and the City of Dawsonville worked together and completed an updated joint city-county Land Use Element in 2005. Since that time, however, conflicts have emerged over how unincorporated areas adjacent to Dawsonville should be developed.

**Provision of county services** – Service Delivery Strategies between Dawson County and the City of Dawsonville no longer accurately reflect the provision of many services. Updated agreements between city and county are needed in order to provide an efficient delivery of services to all residents of Dawson County.

**Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area (WMA)** – The Atlanta Airport Authority owns a large portion of the Dawson Forest WMA. While the Authority does not plan to use the property as an airport, use of the property for development could create demands for service that the county does not have resources to provide.

**Relationship among various county boards and commissions** – Coordination among the various boards and commissions in Dawson County lacks the formality needed to ensure that all groups are pursuing a common goal.

#### **3.8.2 Opportunities**

**Special Purpose Location Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)** – Dawson County and the City of Dawsonville currently work to use tools effectively and efficiently. The SPLOST is an excellent means for funding public improvements.

**Shared services** – Dawson County continues to provide many services to residents of incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

**Improved coordination among various county boards and commissions** – Members of important boards and commissions in Dawson County can improve coordination by using crossover appointments.

**City-County coordination implementing impact fees** – As Dawson County moves forward with implementing an impact fee program, the City of Dawsonville and the county can work

together to collect the fees in both the City of Dawsonville and in unincorporated Dawson County.

### **3.8.3 Strategies**

- Include Board of Education representation on the Planning Commission
- Pursue with the Atlanta Airport Authority a long-term conservation master plan for the Dawson Forest WMA
- Pursue the creation of a "Grand Park" waterway park between adjoining counties along the Etowah River.
- Participate in water resources and conservation planning with EWSA

## 4 Implementation Program

The four subsections included in this section outline the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing the Community Issues and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures to be undertaken by the county to implement the plan. The four subsections include the following:

- Short Term Work Program
- Long-term and ongoing activities
- Policies
- Supplemental Plans

### *4.1 Short Term Work Program*

The Short Term Work Program identifies specific implementation actions the county government or other entities intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This program includes ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements or other programs or initiatives for plan implementation. For each action this subsection outlines the following information:

- Brief description
- Timeframe for undertaking the activity
- Responsible party for implementing the activity
- Estimated cost
- Funding source

**Dawson County Short Term Work Program 2007-2012**

DCA Category	Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Community Facilities	Develop long-range water resources plan		✓	✓				EWSA	TBD	General Fund
Community Facilities	Develop long-range sewer expansion plan	✓	✓	✓	✓			EWSA	TBD	General Fund
Community Facilities	Wastewater treatment plan expansion for additional 300,000-500,000 GDP capacity	✓	✓	✓				EWSA	TBD	SPLOST, CDBG, GEFA, ARC, USDA, RD
Economic Development	Work closely with Forsyth and Lumpkin counties to maintain Georgia 400 as a convenient connection to Interstate 285 and the Atlanta region in order to attract business and tourism.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	PCD, GMRDC, GDOT, Chamber, DCDA	N/A	
Economic Development	Market County's increasing educational levels to potential employers		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	DCDA, Chamber	N/A	
Economic Development	Coordinate with Lanier Technical College to develop skills pool to attract higher paying jobs		✓	✓				DCDA, Chamber	N/A	
Economic Development	Develop Marketing Plan to encourage tourism		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Chamber	TBD	TBD
Housing	Develop zoning districts that provide incentives for providing senior living near other housing				✓	✓	✓	PCD	TBD	General Fund
Housing	Consider alternative zoning solutions for mixed-use villages		✓	✓	✓			PCD	TBD	General Fund
Intergovernmental Coordination	Pursue with the Atlanta Airport Authority a long-term conservation master plan for the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area			✓	✓	✓	✓	PCD, BOC, USFS	N/A	
Land Use	Adopt Georgia 53 Corridor Overlay			✓	✓			PCD, BOC	TBD	General Fund
Land Use	Revise and update Subdivision Regulations		✓	✓				PCD	\$15,000	General Fund
Land Use	Create zoning districts that implement all future land use map categories	✓	✓	✓	✓			PCD	TBD	General Fund
Land Use	Adopt Campus Style Business Park zoning district			✓	✓			PCD	\$5,000	General Fund
Land Use	Adopt Mixed Use Village zoning district		✓	✓				PCD	TBD	General Fund
Land Use	Adopt Urban Residential zoning district		✓	✓				PCD	TBD	General Fund
Land Use	Adopt conservation subdivision ordinance		✓	✓				PCD	\$10,000	General Fund
Land Use	Adopt zoning ordinance amendments to ensure adequate buffer exists between new commercial and industrial uses anticipated along the Georgia 400 corridor and the neighboring existing single-family residential areas			✓	✓			PCD	TBD	General Fund
Land Use	Develop educational program in order for the public to understand the tax consequences of not providing more commercial and industrial tax base			✓	✓			Finance, BOC	\$5,000	General Fund

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Land Use	Create master plan for Mixed Use Cultural Amenities Character Area			✓	✓			PCD	TBD	General Fund
Land Use	Create master plan for Mixed Use Corridor Character Area at SR 9/Dawson Forest Road				✓	✓	✓	PCD	\$25,000	General Fund
Land Use	Require a gateway and master signage plan for planned communities		✓	✓	✓			PCD	TBD	General Fund
Natural & Cultural Resources	Support Federal enforcement of the Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan recommendations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	PCD, PWD, EWSA, FWS	N/A	
Natural & Cultural Resources	Adopt stricter requirements for water quality enhancement measures on individual sites.		✓	✓				PCD, PWD	\$15,000	General Fund
Natural & Cultural Resources	Adopt Green space Master Plan			✓	✓			PCD, Parks and Recreation	\$80,000	General Fund
Natural & Cultural Resources	Add staff (e.g., water quality engineer) to implement water quality enhancement projects and enforce water quality standards during the development plans review process		✓	✓	✓			PWD	\$45,000/year	General Fund
Natural & Cultural Resources	Adopt Best Management Practices (BMP) for storm water run-off		✓	✓				PCD, PWD	\$15,000	General Fund
Natural & Cultural Resources	Update county development regulations to tighten requirements pertaining to impervious surface erosion control, drainage, etc.			✓	✓			PCD, PWD	TBD	General Fund
Population	Develop more specifically a system by which to measure growth in population vs. infrastructure and available stock demands			✓	✓	✓	✓	PCD	N/A	
Transportation	Attend the Quarterly State Transportation Board meetings and become familiar with area Board Rep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	PCD, PWD	N/A	
Transportation	Coordinate with GDOT to incorporate some context sensitive improvements for GA 400	✓	✓					PCD, GDOT, GA 400 Task Force	\$60,000	General Fund
Transportation	Develop a road improvement plan		✓	✓	✓			PWD	TBD	General Fund
Transportation	Interchange at SR 400 and SR 53 - New Interchange		✓	✓	✓			GDOT	Varied	State
Transportation	Add bicycle-friendly shoulders and multi-use paths/trails where appropriate for future construction					✓	✓	PWD	TBD	General Fund
Transportation	Adopt a collector street plan						✓	PWD	TBD	General Fund
Transportation	Adopt sidewalk requirements (sidewalks in all new suburban and urban developments)		✓	✓				PCD, PWD	TBD	General Fund
Transportation	Adopt standards for street cross sections that include sidewalks		✓	✓				PCD, PWD	TBD	General Fund
Transportation	Coordinate with local traffic enforcement authorities for safety/accident data			✓	✓	✓	✓	PWD, Sherriff	N/A	
Transportation	CR 223/Lumpkin Campground Road at CR 252/Dawson Forest Road - Intersection Improvement					✓	✓	GDOT, PWD	TBD	General Fund, GDOT, SPLOST
Transportation	Develop Access Management Plans for prioritized or "selected" corridors	✓			✓		✓	PCD, GDOT, PWD	TBD	General Fund

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Transportation	Improve pedestrian access at the major intersections along GA 400 with signals, cross sections, etc. in the County			✓	✓	✓	✓	GDOT, PCD, PWD	TBD	General Fund, GDOT
Transportation	Projects identified in SR 400 Access Management Study						✓	GDOT, PCD, PWD	TBD	General Fund, Impact Fees
Transportation	Pursue TE Grants			✓	✓	✓	✓	PCD, GMRDC, DCDA, PWD	N/A	
Transportation	Replace/repair deficient bridges as described in Dawson County Comprehensive Plan 2006-2026 Analysis of Supporting Data Chapter 7 (Table 7-6)	✓	✓				✓	PWD	(See table 7.6 Transportation Element)	
Transportation	SR 52: two westbound passing lanes between Gilmer and Lumpkin Counties - Reconstruction, Passing Lanes			✓	✓	✓		GDOT, PWD	\$1,096,000	GDOT
Transportation	SR 9 passing lanes from Thompson Rd to Jenkins Rd. - Reconstruction, Passing Lanes				✓	✓	✓	GDOT, PWD	\$1,068,000	GDOT
Transportation	Update county's regulations to require interconnected streets, parking, driveways, sidewalks, greenways, and trails for planned communities			✓	✓			PCD	TBD	General Fund
Transportation	Update traffic study requirements				✓	✓	✓	PCD, PWD	TBD	General Fund

### 4.2 Long Term and Ongoing Activities

This subsection identifies specific long-term or ongoing implementation actions the County government or other entities intend to take beyond the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This includes ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements or other programs or initiatives for plan implementation. For each action this subsection outlines the following information

- Brief description
- Timeframe for undertaking the activity

**Dawson County Long Term and Ongoing Activities**

DCA Category	Activity	Long-Range/ Ongoing
Community Facilities	Renovations and addition to Dawson County Courthouse	Long Range
Housing	Develop inventory of existing housing stock and determine revitalization needs	Long Range
Housing	Develop home revitalization programs	Long Range
Land Use	Adopt regulations for Scenic Corridors	Long Range
Land Use	Adopt Scenic Corridor Overlay zoning	Long Range
Land Use	Adopt Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance	Long Range
Land Use	Adopt Transfer of Development Rights ordinance	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Develop Transfer of Development Rights ordinance	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Develop education and marketing program to increase the appreciation of the historical, cultural and archeological resources	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Implementation of strategies, studies and plans that call for water quality protection on a regional basis (i.e. all counties in the Lake Lanier basin)	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Install regional water quality enhancement areas to intercept storm water and improve water quality as it flows from developing areas.	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Investigate establishing a local government storm water utility	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Designate historic and scenic corridors, and provide for a thorough impact assessment process in these designated areas	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Prepare guidelines and regulations to protect scenic highways	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Prepare historical, cultural and archeological resources inventory and preservation plan	Long Range
Natural & Cultural Resources	Prepare regulations and guidelines to provide protection for the historical, cultural and archeological resources	Long Range
Transportation	Cowart Rd. from SR 53 to the Cherokee County line - widen road	Long Range
Transportation	Coordinate with GDOT or GRTA for possible extension of regional express bus in the County	Long Range
Transportation	Coordinate with GDOT's office of Highway Safety for statistics	Long Range
Transportation	Dawson Forest Rd. from Lumpkin Camp Ground Rd. to SR 400 - Widening	Long Range

Transportation	Dawsonville Bypass from White Lane to SR 9	Long Range
Transportation	Develop a system of alternate routes to alleviate dependency on GA 400	Long Range
Transportation	Educate local community on the relationship of GDOT to the County	Long Range
Transportation	Educate the citizens on alternatives to automobile travel	Long Range
Transportation	Educate the local business community on the benefits of creating a Community Improvement District (CID) to assist in raising funds for infrastructure improvements	Long Range
Transportation	Inventory cross sections on county roads and assess conditions of each	Long Range
Transportation	SR 136 at Chestatee River & @ Etowah River - Bridge Rehabilitation	Long Range
Transportation	SR 400 from the Forsyth County line to Lumpkin Camp Ground Rd. - Widening	Long Range
Transportation	SR 53 from the Forsyth County line to East Bypass/Perimeter Road - Widening and Completion of Perimeter Rd./Dawsonville Bypass from White Lane to SR 9	Long Range
Transportation	Adopt a shared parking ordinance	Long Range
Transportation	Coordinate and become familiar with GDOT's Navigator System	Long Range
Transportation	Dawsonville Bypass from White Lane to SR 9 - New Construction Roadway Project	Long Range
Transportation	Develop Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan	Long Range
Transportation	Gold Mine Road at Sweetwater Juno Rd. - Intersection and Operation Improvements	Long Range
Transportation	Kilough Church Road from Lumpkin Campground Road to SR 53 (new location between Kilough Church Road and SR 53) - Widening/New Location Roadway	Long Range
Transportation	Lumpkin Campground Road from Forsyth County line to Kilough Church Road - Widening	Long Range
Transportation	Research the ATMS/ITS programs & features of surrounding counties	Long Range
Transportation	Develop a Bike/Ped/Greenways Master Plan	Long Range
Transportation	SR 53 from West Bypass/Perimeter Rd. to Cowart Rd. - Widening and Completion of Perimeter Rd./Dawsonville Bypass from White Lane to SR 9	Long Range



### **4.3 Policies**

This subsection lists the policies the county has adopted with this plan to provide ongoing guidance and direction to county government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing the Community Issues and Opportunities.

#### **4.3.1 Policies for managing the location of growth**

- a. Intense development in the Georgia 400 corridor north of the Georgia 53 corridor will be limited by a belt of existing agricultural lands running northwest-southeast on the west side of the Etowah River. The agricultural land will be preserved by preferential tax assessment, conservation subdivision designs, conservation easements, and/or other appropriate agricultural protection techniques.
- b. Intense development in the Georgia 53 corridor will be prevented from expansion in a linear fashion (eastward from Dawsonville and westward from Georgia 400) with a scenic road designation along the middle part of the corridor near the Big Savanna area at the Etowah River.
- c. Development in the Dawsonville area will be located inside Perimeter Road. Also, a belt of forest land running northeast-southwest, west of Dawsonville and north of Dawson Forest, serves as a second limit line to residential growth.
- d. Dawson Forest and the national forest lands along Amicalola Creek provide a third boundary between lands in the far southwest corner and northwest portions of unincorporated Dawson County and suburban development to the east.

#### **4.3.2 Policies for phasing and timing of growth**

- a. Dawson County adopts a policy to balance its residential growth with an appropriate amount of commercial and industrial development that will help offset the tax burden of residents.
- b. The Director of Planning and Development Services will monitor the amount of residential building (*i.e.*, number of housing units) to determine whether the pace of residential development is within the range of "target" and "maximum" housing units in unincorporated Dawson County.
- c. If it cannot be shown by development applicants that adequate water supply and sanitary sewer or on-site sewage disposal systems are available, the Board of Commissioners is under no obligation, despite the recommendations of the future land use plan, to approve rezoning or development requests that would exceed the targets or maximums of the phased growth strategy.
- d. If due to homebuilding the number of total housing units exceeds the maximum number of housing units specified in the phased growth strategy for a given five-year interval, or annual permit data show a pace that would if sustained exceed the maximum, the Board of Commissioners may impose maximum annual permit caps by resolution or ordinance to regulate the pace of residential development consistent with this phased growth strategy.
- e. If the number of apartments permitted exceeds the maximum apartment units specified in the phased growth strategy, the Board of Commissioners may, consistent with its adopted phased growth policy, deny rezoning of land for apartment projects until such additions to the housing stock will not exceed the maximum levels of apartment units specified in the phased growth strategy.

- f. If the county receives more than one application for a Mixed Use Village, and the plan only calls for one additional Village to be developed at the time or during the time frame considered, the Board of Commissioners shall not be obligated to approve rezoning for both activity centers. In such event that competing proposals for villages are filed, the Board may approve the application for a village project that is most advantageous to the county after considering public benefits, amount of open space, quality of design, and advantage of location.
- g. Crossroads commercial designations are not all intended to be built in the short term. An application for rezoning to accomplish a crossroads commercial land use designation may be rejected by the Board of Commissioners as premature, *i.e.*, not needed within the time frame proposed to be developed, unless the applicant submits sufficient evidence of need for the uses proposed due to residential growth in the vicinity of the crossroads.
- h. For lands shown on the future land use plan map as commercial and industrial, proposals to rezone and develop for residential uses should be rejected because such change would upset the planned balance of the property tax burden between residential and nonresidential uses.

#### 4.3.3 General Land Use Policies and Objectives

- a. Promote orderly and high-quality growth and development based on physical, social, and economic needs; environmental and historic protection considerations; and the ability of the tax base and public facilities and services to support such growth and development.
- b. Plan for more intensive growth to occur around existing infrastructure and in designated growth areas when new infrastructure is supplied, in order to minimize infrastructure costs and the adverse effects of sprawl.
- c. Maintain a controlled pace of growth that will not outpace the ability to provide community facilities and services (*e.g.* fire, police, water, sewer, transportation systems, schools and recreation).
- d. Require all new developments of any type to be developed where all appropriate infrastructure is available, or require development to bear the costs of providing additional needed infrastructure.
- e. Ensure that the existing character of each area of the county is given strong consideration when determining the appropriate type and design characteristics of future development in such areas, to assure that changes do not severely disrupt the quality of life currently enjoyed by members of the community.
- f. Preserve unique and historically significant communities, structures and places whenever possible and encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures and properties in order to maintain their long term viability.
- g. Use a variety of growth management techniques, including containment and growth phasing strategies that are available and appropriate for Dawson County and Dawsonville to achieve goals for conservation, growth and development.
- h. Encourage a land use distribution pattern that emphasizes: land use compatibility; safe, efficient and sustainable development and preservation of the integrity of existing land uses.
- i. Ensure appropriate transitions between incompatible land uses.

- j. Coordinate land use and transportation planning and minimize the adverse effect of traffic and parking on the quality of life, environment, and visual attractiveness of developed areas in Dawson County and Dawsonville.
- k. Manage development activity to minimize negative impacts on the natural environment.
- l. Protect Dawson County's water resources by regulating development and other activities in water supply watersheds and near all lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater recharge areas.

#### **4.3.4 Commercial and Industrial Development Policies**

- a. Guide commercial developments to occur in compact nodes and within corridors (*e.g.*, Georgia 400, 53 and 9) as designated on the future land use plan map.
- b. Provide adequate land for industrial development to be located in areas designated on the future land use plan for light industry and campus-style business park, supported by appropriate infrastructure and services (*i.e.* water, sewer, highway access, etc.).
- c. Within Mixed Use Villages and in the City of Dawsonville, provide a grid pattern of local streets rather than a hierarchy of roads (*e.g.*, arterial, collector, etc.) to increase roadway efficiency and reduce traffic congestion.

#### **4.3.5 Policies for Economic Development**

- a. Encourage, foster and maintain small businesses by supporting business-friendly best practices and initiatives including designation as a Georgia "Entrepreneur Friendly" Community
- b. Dawson County seeks additional high-skilled and high-paying jobs that will allow more of the county's new residents to have the choice of living and working in the county.
- c. Dawson County aggressively seeks education and training opportunities that will provide the population with the job skills they need to attract high-skilled jobs to the county
- d. Dawson County supports programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit in the County's economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.
- e. Dawson County seeks to balance the supply of housing and employment and consider their location in relation to each other.
- f. In cooperation with Forsyth County and Lumpkin County, Dawson County seeks to maintain the quality of convenience afforded to the county by Georgia 400 and will seek to limit congestion by ensuring good stewardship of the property, sustainable industry and maintain the access by ensuring cooperation among all highway users as development occurs.

#### **4.3.6 Policies for Natural and Cultural Resources**

- a. Dawson County will follow best management practices for protecting its treasured animal habitats and will lead the region in developing and implementing measures to protect these valuable resources. As a result, the protection and conservation of Dawson County's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- b. Dawson County will promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

#### 4.3.7 Policies for Community Facilities

- a. Dawson County will continue to seek ways for new growth to pay for itself (in terms of public investment in infrastructure and services to support the development) to the maximum extent possible. Dawson County will maintain the adopted impact fees program and encourage the collection of such fees throughout the county.
- b. Dawson County will work with the Dawson County Board of Education to encourage school location decisions that support the community's overall growth and development plans.

#### 4.3.8 Policies for Housing

- a. The housing stock of Dawson County will provide residents with the ability to live each stage of life in one neighborhood or in adjacent neighborhoods where homes of various scales meet the needs residents have at different stages of life. This means providing locations for renters just starting out, young families with children, empty nesters and seniors who need assistance. As such, zoning regulations in Dawson County should support the inclusion of housing that meets the needs of all of the county residents, especially seniors.

#### 4.3.9 Policies for Land Use

- a. Dawson County is committed to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community in areas designated for such development, where people have easy access to schools, parks and necessary services (grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- b. Dawson County will ensure appropriate transitions occur between incompatible land uses.

#### 4.3.10 Policies for Transportation

- a. Dawson County will provide communities that are connected to each other and provide places for walking, biking for all ages, and encourages healthy lifestyles. Where people of all ages can safely walk and bike for leisure as an alternative transportation mode.
- b. Within Mixed Use Villages and in the Dawsonville, growth area, provide a connected network of streets rather than a hierarchy of roads (*e.g.*, arterial, collector, etc.) to increase roadway efficiency and reduce traffic congestion.
- c. Dawson County promotes connectivity of the road network (such as fostering a network of connected streets, multiple connections between subdivisions).
- d. Dawson County supports the creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- e. Dawson County encourages new development that supports and ties in well with existing and planned public transit options in the community.
- f. Dawson County does not support the addition of an airport within the county.

#### 4.3.11 Policies for Intergovernmental Coordination

- a. Dawson County will provide services to residents of Dawson County in both incorporated and unincorporated areas based on the service delivery strategy agreements with the City of Dawsonville and other entities.

- b. Dawson County will be led by boards and commissions that coordinate effectively in part due to the use of crossover appointments that allow board members to gain the perspective of and experience with a variety of tasks for which the county is responsible.
- c. Dawson County seeks opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- d. Dawson County works jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (*i.e.* growth management, watershed protection), pursues joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions and consults other public entities in the area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- e. Dawson County provides input to other public entities in the area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on the county residents and the county's plans for future development.

#### **4.4 Supplemental Plans**

This section incorporates by reference supplemental plans that focus on special areas, situations or issues of importance to the county. Rather than including the text of the various recommendations and implementation plans, this document adopts the plans by reference to ensure that they are part of the official Dawson County Comprehensive Plan 2006-2026 update. The following plans are included by reference with adoption date shown in parentheses:

- Dawson County Recreation Master Plan (2005)
- Development and Design Guidelines the Georgia 400 Corridor (2005)
- Access Management Plan and Regulations for Georgia 400 Corridor (2005)
- Georgia 53 Corridor Study (2006)

### Dawson County Report of Accomplishments 2002-2007

Item Number from STWP	Item Accomplished	Currently Undertaken	Project Postponed	No Longer County Project	Explanation of Project Status
1	Expand sprayfield by 25 acres to 500,000 gpd.	X			In process. To be completed by 2005. Additional 97 acres to be undertaken in phases.
2	Incremental expansion of water system.	X			Completed in 2000.
3	Nominate properties to National Register.			X	Now the responsibility of the Historic Society.
4	Acquire 100 acres adjoining park for future expansion.			X	Parks and recreation master plan indicated a need for additional park space in another location
5	Construct 6 new ball fields and gymnasium.	X			Completed 2004
6	Construct arts and exhibitors building.	X			Old Rock School converted to Center for Arts.
7	Acquire 40 acres for new park in southern Dawson.	X			Acquired 55 acres for Rock Creek Sports Complex.
8	Construct new public safety complex at GA 400.		X		Land has been procured and building program is currently underway
9	Replace two patrol cars each year.	X			Lease purchase agreement for entire fleet.
10	Purchase one new tanker truck and rescue vehicle each year.	X			New tankers replaced over a five year period.
11	Complete construction of repeater tower and purchase communication equipment.	X			Currently in operation / 911 center.
12	Expansion of sewer services on GA 400.	X			New line completed in 2006.
13	Continued expansion and study/outfall construction.			X	In progress, study underway.
14	Sewer plant expansion.	X			Completed in 2007


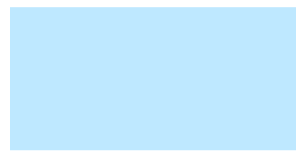







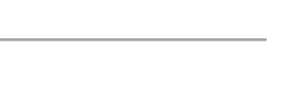


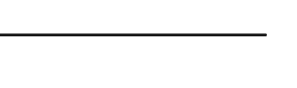

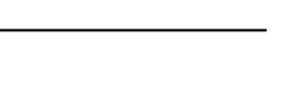

### Dawson County Report of Accomplishments 2002-2007

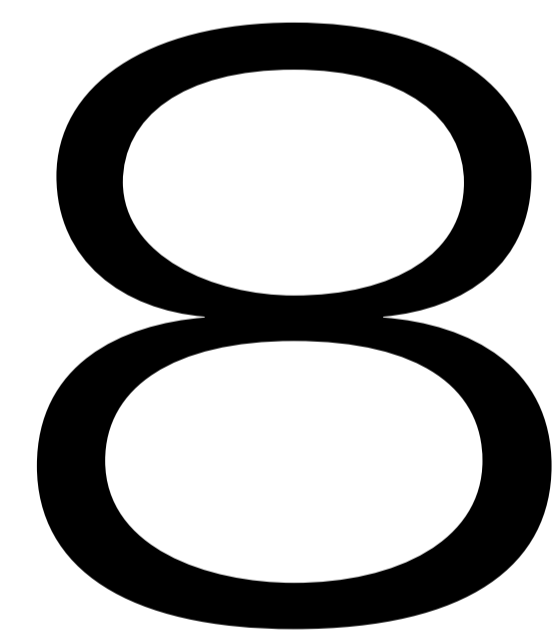
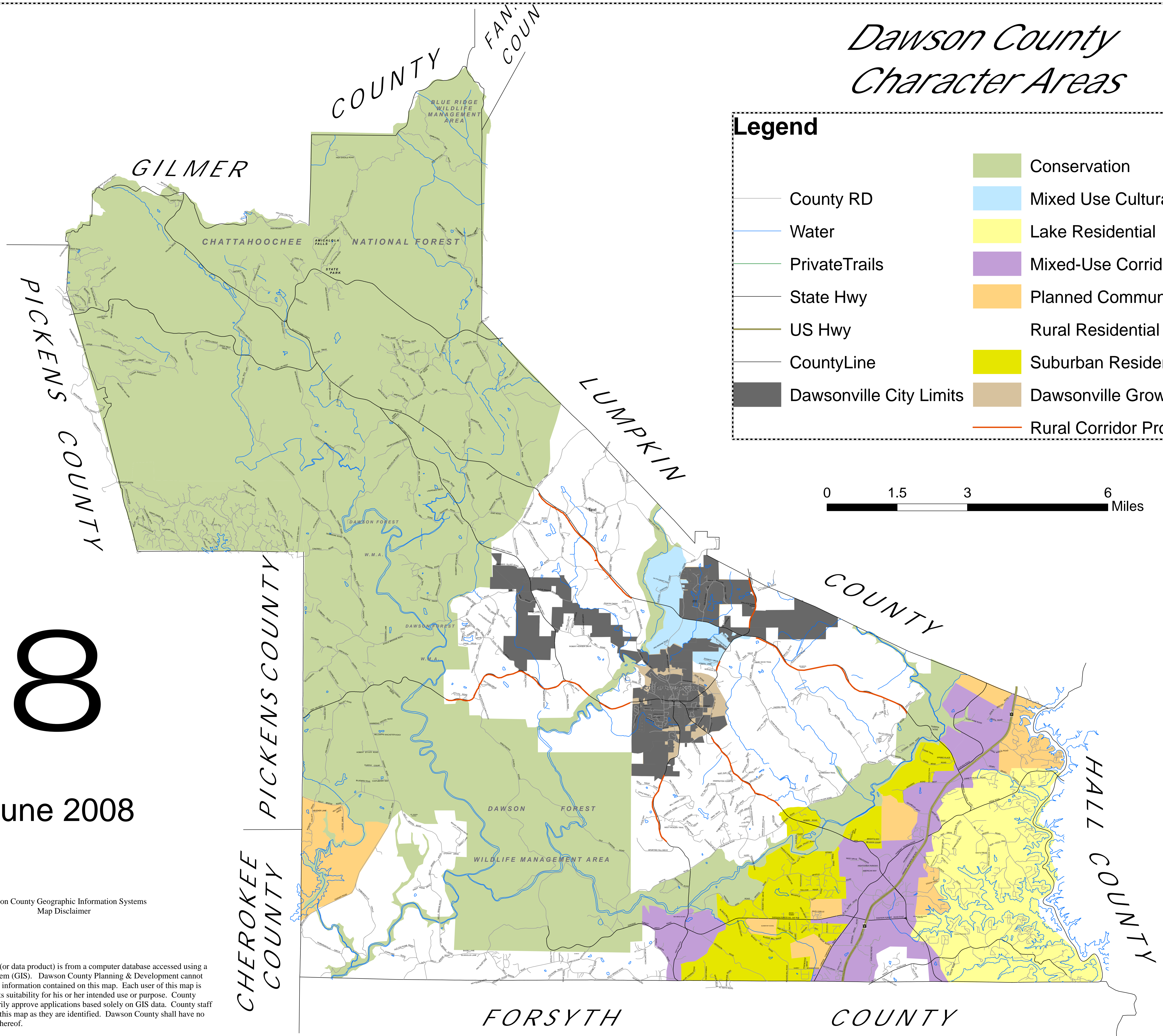
Item Number from STWP	Item Accomplished	Currently Undertaken	Project Postponed	No Longer County Project	Explanation of Project Status
15	Revise and update zoning regulations.	X			Updates have been accomplished. Additional updates proposed in new STWP.
16	Revise and update subdivision regulations.	X			Program underway as proposed in new STWP.
17	Complete residential and commercial water system expansion.	X			Completed in 2001 under EWSA Authority.
18	Continue developer financed extensions, begin water plant expansion, system improvement program.	X			Water plant expansion complete. Improvement Program underway under EWSA Authority
19	Continue system improvements, coordinate with sewer expansion to provide full service areas.	X			Program underway under EWSA Authority.
20	Begin study request for water plant expansion, secure increased withdrawal point.	X			Completed in 2007
21	Complete Phase I sanitary sewer expansion.	X			Completed in 2002.
22	Construct two warning sirens at schools or other sites	X			Completed in 2002.
21	Review Commercial Tower Ordinance	X			Completed in 2002.
22	Begin water plant expansion to 500,000 GPD	X			Completed under EWSA Authority.



# Dawson County Character Areas

## Legend

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
|  | Conservation              |
|  | Mixed Use Cultural        |
|  | Lake Residential          |
|  | Mixed-Use Corridor        |
|  | Planned Community         |
|  | Rural Residential         |
|  | Suburban Residential      |
|  | Dawsonville Growth Area   |
|  | Rural Corridor Protection |
|  | County RD                 |
|  | Water                     |
|  | Private Trails            |
|  | State Hwy                 |
|  | US Hwy                    |
|  | CountyLine                |
|  | Dawsonville City Limits   |

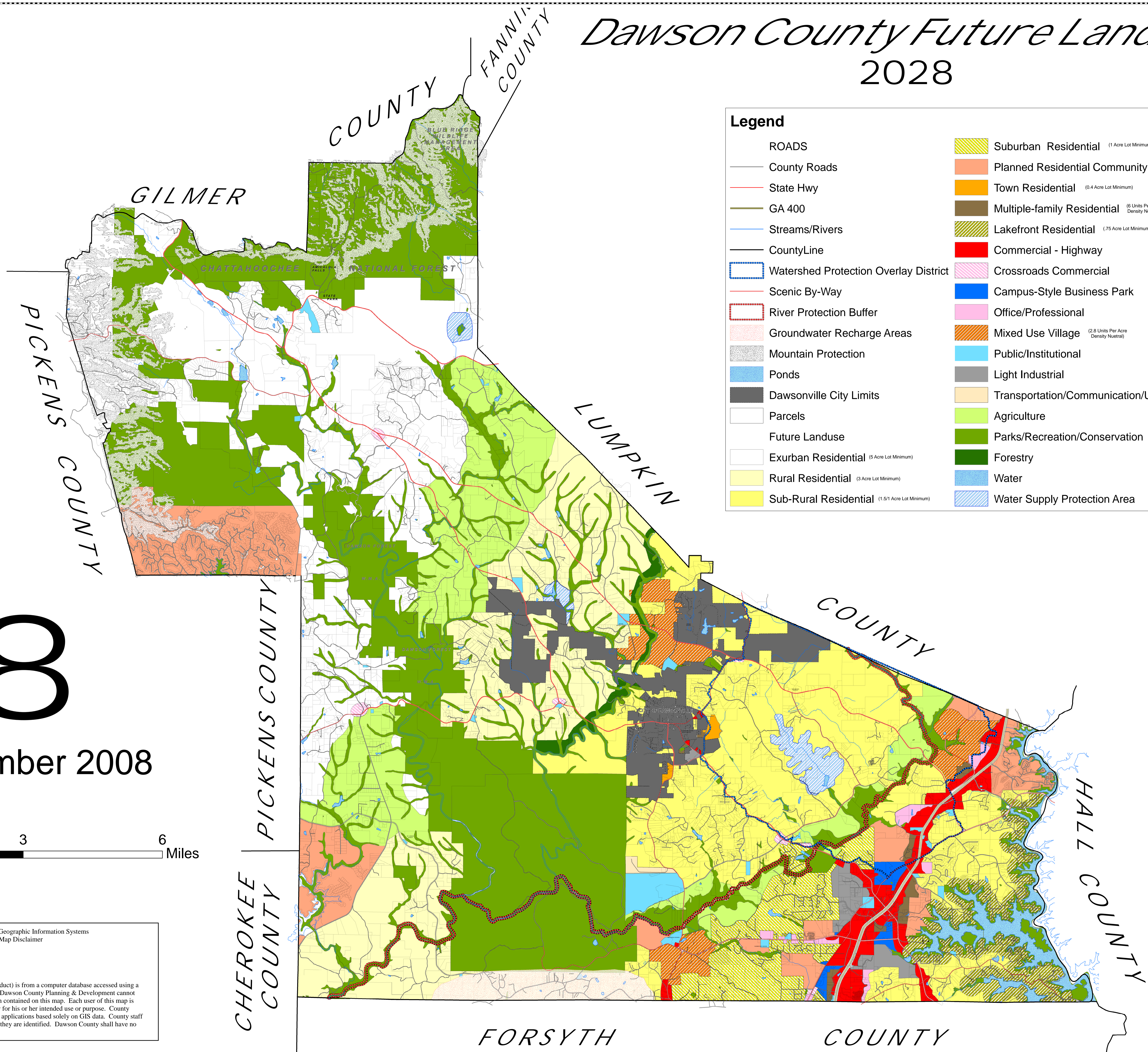


June 2008

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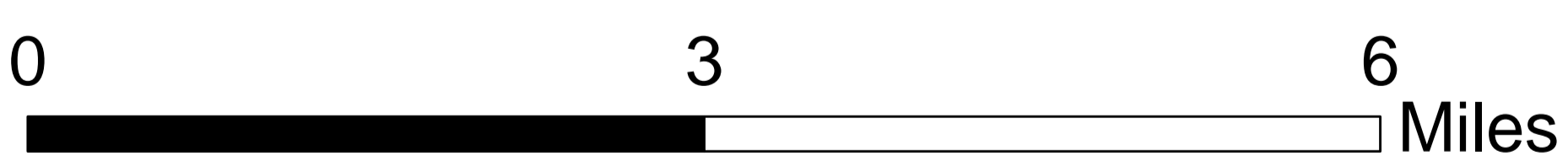
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# Dawson County Future Landuse 2028



Legend	
ROADS	Suburban Residential (1 Acre Lot Minimum)
County Roads	Planned Residential Community (1 Unit per Acre Density Neutral)
State Hwy	Town Residential (0.4 Acre Lot Minimum)
GA 400	Multiple-family Residential (6 Units Per Acre Density Neutral)
Streams/Rivers	Lakefront Residential (.75 Acre Lot Minimum)
CountyLine	Commercial - Highway
Watershed Protection Overlay District	Crossroads Commercial
Scenic By-Way	Campus-Style Business Park
River Protection Buffer	Office/Professional
Groundwater Recharge Areas	Mixed Use Village (2.8 Units Per Acre Density Neutral)
Mountain Protection	Public/Institutional
Ponds	Light Industrial
Dawsonville City Limits	Transportation/Communication/Utilities
Parcels	Agriculture
Future Landuse	Parks/Recreation/Conservation
Exurban Residential (5 Acre Lot Minimum)	Forestry
Rural Residential (3 Acre Lot Minimum)	Water
Sub-Rural Residential (1.5/1 Acre Lot Minimum)	Water Supply Protection Area

08  
September 2008



Dawson County Geographic Information Systems  
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