

Habersham County 2029 Comprehensive Plan Update

Joint Community Agenda

Including the municipalities of
Alto, Clarkesville, Cornelia,
Demorest & Mt. Airy

May 30, 2008



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¹ The Demorest Community Agenda was prepared in coordination with Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.

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APPENDICIES

- A. COMMUNITY STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST
- B. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
- C. VISIONING WORKSHOP SUMMARIES
 - August 16, 2007: Cornelia & Mt. Airy Summaries
 - August 23, 2007: Unincorporated County & Clarkesville Summaries
 - August 30, 2007: Demorest & Alto Summaries
- D. COMMUNITY VISIONING QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Community Agenda is the most important part of the Habersham County/Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan. Based on the findings of the Community Assessment completed earlier in the planning process and input gathered from the public involvement process that was outlined in the Public Participation Program, this document provides a vision for the community's future and a plan to implement that vision. It also identifies key issues and opportunities that the community wishes to address during the next 20 years, a list of policies to be followed in making day-to-day decisions, and a detailed Short-term Work Program that outlines what actions each of the jurisdictions within the community will implement on over the next 5 years.

Another purpose of this report is to meet the intent of the "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on May 1, 2005. Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with these standards is an essential requirement in maintaining status as a Qualified Local Government.

1.2 Scope

This document was prepared following the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Chapter 1110-12-1-.05, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," effective May 1, 2005. For each participating local government, it includes the three basic requirements for a Community Agenda:

- (1) A Community Vision that is comprised of a vision statement and Future Development Map;
- (2) A list of the Issues and Opportunities that the community intends to address over the next 20 years; and
- (3) An implementation program for achieving that vision, the heart of which is a Short-term Work Program that identifies specific actions the community will take over the next 5 years.

This document also includes some background information that is not required of a Community Agenda, but does describe the context within which the community is planning for its future. The chapter entitled "Context of Change" provides a high level overview of the demographic trends that will influence the community's future, and the chapter entitled "Community Visioning" describes the extensive public involvement effort that was undertaken to craft the community vision statement(s) and the Future Development Map(s). In some respects, these additional chapters are summaries of the other two components of the Comprehensive Plan, the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program*, completed earlier.

1.3 Study Area

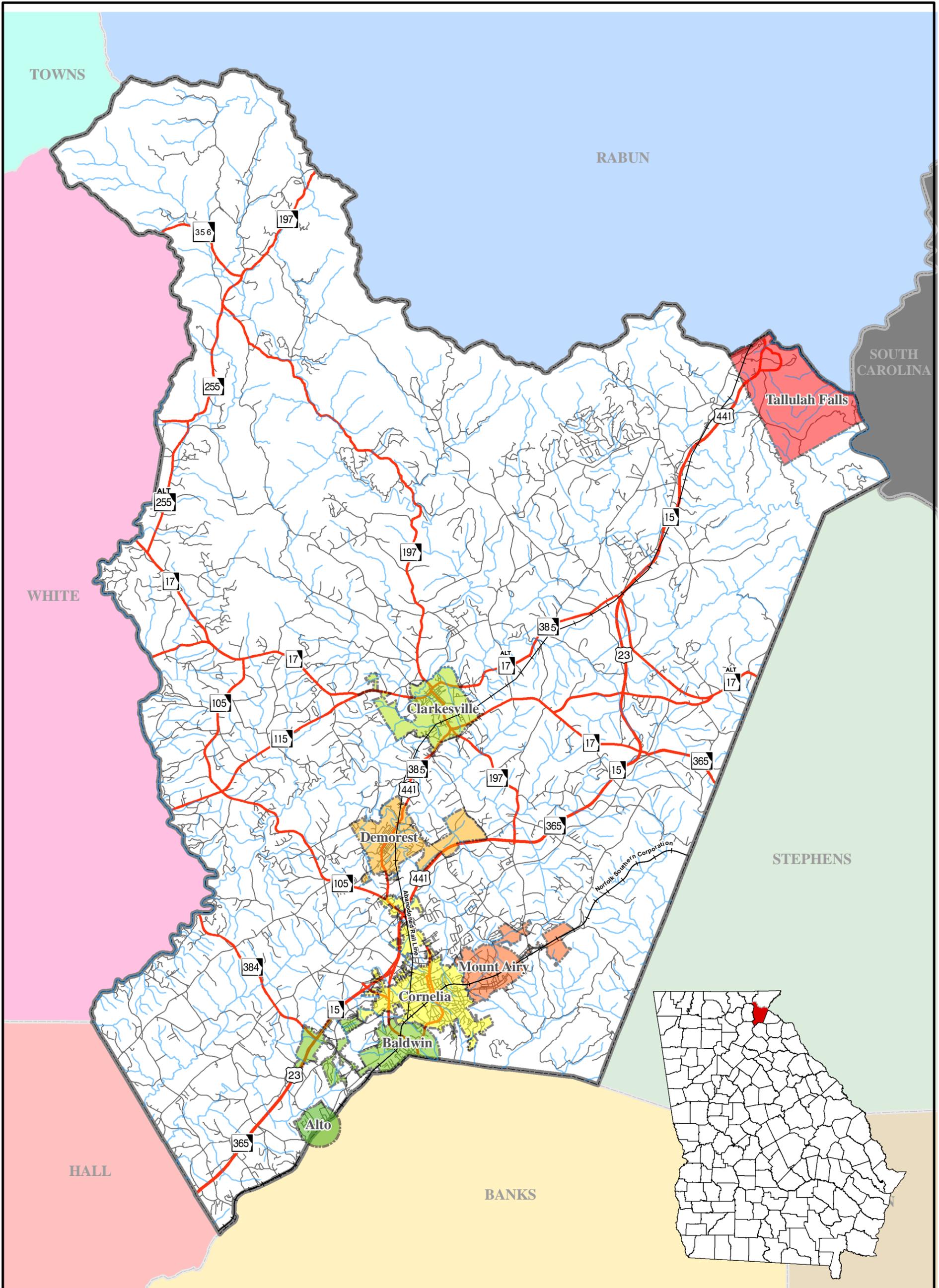
This planning document covers the whole of unincorporated Habersham County and the municipalities of Alto, Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest. Tallulah Falls and Baldwin are the two remaining municipalities within Habersham County. Having portions of its area in Habersham and Rabun County, Tallulah Falls completed its most recent plan jointly with Rabun County in 2005. Having portions of its area in Habersham and Banks County, Baldwin has chosen to participate in the Banks County planning process that had recently begun at the time of completion of the Habersham County/Cities Joint Community Agenda. Figure 1-1 shows the general area of this plan as well as the location of Habersham County within the Georgia Mountains region

1.4 Use of the Plan

Local officials for the County and the five municipalities (Alto, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and Mt. Airy) participating in this plan, as well as local community leaders should use this Community Agenda, in three ways. First, the Future Development Maps should be referenced in making rezoning (land development) and capital investment decisions. They provide a representation of the community's vision and indicate character areas where various types of land uses should be permitted. They take into consideration the land use patterns illustrated in the County's Existing Land Use Map, the current zoning (or land use intensity district) maps for each jurisdiction, topographic characteristics, natural resource sensitivity, the availability of existing and proposed infrastructure, and the needs of anticipated population and employment growth.

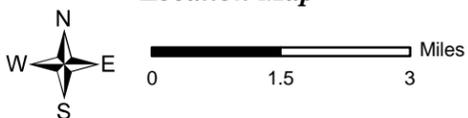
Second, the plan provides policies that will help guide day-to-day decisions. These policies are a reflection of community values and are in keeping with the basic goals of the plan. They, too, should be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions.

Third, the plan includes an Implementation Plan that will help direct public investment and private initiative. Plan implementation is carried out through the application of regulations such as zoning and development codes and through projects and programs outlined in the Short-term Work Program. This plan outlines recommended changes in land use regulations and codes to be consistent with the community's vision; and, after plan adoption, it will be up to County and municipal staff and elected officials to consider these code changes and revise local development codes if necessary. It should be noted that a Comprehensive Plan is a living document. In accordance with the DCA Local Planning Requirements, it should be updated regularly to reflect changing conditions and shifts in public policy.



**Habersham County 2028
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 1-1
Location Map*



- Railroads
- Streams and Rivers
- County Lines
- State & Federal Highways
- Local Roads



May 2008

1.5 Planning Process and Schedule

The Local Planning Requirements adopted by the DCA in May 2005 divide the Comprehensive Plan into three required documents: the Community Assessment, Community Participation Program, and, this document, the Community Agenda.

The Community Assessment was the first major step in preparation of Habersham County’s Comprehensive Plan. The document was completed jointly with a number of the county’s municipalities: Alto, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and Mt. Airy. The Assessment assessed existing conditions within the community, analyzed existing land use patterns, and included a draft list of issues and opportunities facing Habersham County and the municipalities.

The Community Participation Program outlined a program for community visioning and involvement. The process created for Habersham County included a series of evening Visioning Workshops, a community survey, participation in a Community Steering Committee with representatives from each of the participating municipalities as well as community partners such as institutions, associations and boards, numerous stakeholder interviews, an Open House and transmittal and adoption hearings.

This document, the Community Agenda, is the blueprint for implementing the community’s vision. It includes a summary of the vision and results of the community involvement effort, a plan for future development, policies to guide investment in community facilities and an Implementation Program. After the community has had a chance to review the draft Community Agenda and each participating local government has held a public hearing, it will be transmitted to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center (MRDC) and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for comment and approval, a process which takes several months. After the document has been accepted by the GMRDC and DCA the participating local governments will adopt the plan. Adoption is anticipated by the end of 2008.

The schedule below outlines the process employed in preparing this Comprehensive Plan.

Figure -1-2: Project Schedule

Project Phase	2006			2007			2008			
	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	
Project Kick-Off										
Prepare Community Assessment (CA)										
Prepare Community Participation Program (CPP)										
CA and CPP Transmittal & Agency Review										
Community Visioning										
Prepare Community Agenda										
Open House										
Community Agenda and Agency Review										
Adoption of Comprehensive Plan by County and Participating Cities										

1.6 Structure of the Joint Community Agenda

The County and the participating municipalities have requested a comprehensive planning document and a planning process that is coordinated, yet recognizes each distinct community and

their respective priorities and issues. This document has been laid out accordingly, it begins with a Joint Community Agenda that puts forth the Joint Habersham Community Vision Statement and provides great detail on those issues and opportunities that have been recognized as having the potential to impact the entire community and therefore require joint actions and policies to address. These actions and policies are presented in Sections 4.4 – 4.6, which include a Joint Implementation Program and a Joint Short Term Work Program that identifies those projects that the community will band together to undertake in the next five years for the sake of achieving its joint vision. Individual Agendas tailored to the particular needs and circumstances of each participating jurisdiction follow the Joint Agenda. Lastly the document includes a number of supporting plans in Chapter 11, which outline the visions of different community agencies and their individual actions and contributions in helping the community achieve its vision.

2 Context of Change

2.1 Introduction

Habersham County is at a crossroads—while its population has grown 30% since the early 1990s, it still retains its historic rural character. However, without attention, continued growth in Habersham County could transform the area into a “bedroom community,” where increased housing is not complemented by increased job opportunities. Habersham’s declining jobs/housing ratio indicates that the county may be heading in that direction. Even if this trend is reversed, all types of growth should be anticipated and carefully planned so that infrastructure and services can keep up with increased demand. Planning for growth will also allow Habersham County to preserve its existing community character, one of its strongest assets.

2.2 Population

The largest growth in population in Habersham County occurred between 1990 and 2000, when it grew by 30 percent, compared with 9.4 percent between 2000 and 2005 (see **Figure 2-1**). This change mirrors trends in the state, when population growth slowed between 2000 and 2005. However, in Habersham this is not the case for the unincorporated area, which doubled its average annual growth rate from 1990 to 2000 (3.2 percent) between 2000 and 2005 (6.4 percent). Clarkesville and Demorest also grew faster annually from 2000 to 2005, at 4.3 percent compared to 4.1 the decade before. These average annual growth rates exceeded both the state and the county.

Figure 2-1
Average Annual Growth Rates

	1990-2000	2000-2005
State of Georgia	2.6%	1.1%
Habersham County	3.0%	2.1%
Unincorporated*	3.2%	6.4%
Alto	3.5%	0.3%
Clarkesville	0.8%	4.1%
Cornelia	1.4%	0.5%
Demorest	3.5%	4.3%
Mt. Airy	1.1%	2.0%

Sources: JJG using data from, US Census Bureau Decennial Census for 1980 - 2000, 1992 Cornelia Comprehensive Plan for Cornelia 1980 population and US Census Estimate 2005

*County population excluding incorporated municipalities of Alto, Baldwin, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest, Mt. Airy & Tallulah Falls, population within Habersham County. Baldwin and Tallulah Falls are not participating municipalities in this Comprehensive Plan.

Habersham’s annual growth rate is about half that of all the counties in the Georgia Mountains Regional Redevelopment Center (GMRDC) region (4 percent). Counties such as Forsyth, Banks, Dawson, Hall, Lumpkin, and Union all had higher annual population growths, but this may have been due to their closer proximity to the Atlanta metro region, as well as to Habersham’s steep slopes and terrain, which can and should be an impediment to development.

If current growth and development trends continue, Habersham’s population is expected to double between 2025 and 2029, growing from a 2005 population of 39,603 to 88,568. The greatest growth is expected to occur in unincorporated Habersham, which in 2030 is expected to be 65,663 (see **Figure 2-2**). This is not an overwhelming increase in density, and should allow the county to retain its rural character. This last statement is supported by population density calculations. In 2030, with a projected population of 91,318, Habersham’s projected density will be .51 people per acre, in comparison to .22 people per acre in 2005. Habersham will not be dense enough to be considered suburban, as its 2030 density will still be quite less than Hall County’s 2005 population density of .65 people per acre. Nevertheless, Habersham’s increase in density until 2030 will be significant.

**Figure 2-2
Population Projections through 2030**

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2029	2030
Habersham County	27,621	35,902	39,603	47,800	55,810	63,820	77,569	88,568	91,318
Unincorporated*	19,975	26,338	29,041	35,051	40,904	45,331	55,498	63,630	65,663
Alto	651	876	887	898	909	1,008	1,106	1,185	1,205
Clarkesville	1,151	1,248	1,505	1,762	2,331	2,798	3,265	3,639	3,732
Cornelia	3,219	3,674	3,771	3,868	3,965	5,358	6,751	7,865	8,144
Demorest	1,088	1,465	1,777	2,089	2,737	3,285	3,833	4,271	4,381
Mt. Airy	543	604	665	726	939	1,192	1,445	1,647	1,698

Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census for 1980 - 2000, 1992 Cornelia Comprehensive Plan for Cornelia 1980 population, US Census Estimate for 2005, JJG for 2010 – 2030. Population projections derived from joint county and municipality water study.

*County population excluding incorporated municipalities of Alto, Baldwin, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest, Mt. Airy & Tallulah Falls. Baldwin and Tallulah Falls are not participating municipalities in this Comprehensive Plan

Overall the county’s population is aging, and there is currently negative population growth in the 18-to-20-year-old age bracket. Forecasts show that by 2030 the greatest count of people will fall between ages 35 and 44, and the second largest will be 65 years or over (see **Figure 2-3**). Clarksville and Cornelia are expected to grow, and their high proportion of elderly residents living below the poverty line may call for a greater quantity of public housing and/or assisted

living facilities. In 1999, 29.5 and 28.8 percent of those living in poverty were 65 or older in Clarkesville and Cornelia, respectively.

**Figure 2-3
Habersham County: Projected Total Population by Age**

Age Group	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0 – 4 Years Old	1,702	1,747	2,260	2,461	2,935	3,393	3,844	4,635	5,415
5 – 13 Years Old	3,344	3,653	4,655	5,109	6,140	7,141	8,138	9,862	11,578
14 – 17 Years Old	1,734	1,134	1,516	1,499	1,627	1,714	1,771	1,949	2,079
18 – 20 Years Old	2,275	2,057	1,924	1,883	2,022	2,104	2,146	2,327	2,444
21 – 24 Years Old	1,844	1,754	2,068	2,178	2,520	2,832	3,127	3,679	4,203
25 – 34 Years Old	3,650	4,171	4,787	5,200	6,192	7,143	8,081	9,727	11,353
35 – 44 Years Old	2,856	3,798	5,432	6,230	7,769	9,327	10,924	13,556	16,254
45 – 54 Years Old	2,544	2,944	4,702	5,375	6,684	8,006	9,358	11,595	13,881
55 – 64 Years Old	2,333	2,711	3,586	3,998	4,871	5,732	6,601	8,072	9,557
65 and over	2,738	3,652	4,972	5,671	7,040	8,420	9,830	12,167	14,553
Total Population	25,020	27,621	35,902	39,603	47,800	55,810	63,820	77,569	91,318

Source: Age distribution from GA DCA.

*Figures adjusted beginning in 2005 to reflect U.S. Census 2005 population estimate and JIG population projections.

In terms of racial composition, between 1990 and 2000, Habersham remained a predominately White county, but that is changing. Between 1990 and 2000, Habersham saw an increase of 73.8 percent of its non-White population. Alto saw the highest increase among the municipalities, with a 451.5 percent increase—from 3.8 percent to 20.8 percent—in its non-White population during this time. Demorest saw a 101.9 percent increase. Overall the racial composition projection is for White and African American populations to slowly decrease while Asian, Hispanic, and other racial and ethnic groups increase (see **Figure 2-4**). While Alto is expected to experience slower growth than the county or other jurisdictions by 2030, its high Hispanic population in 2000 (20 percent of the town’s population) will present different issues and opportunities than may be found in the county’s other areas.

**Figure 2-4
Habersham County: Projected Share of Population by Race**

Race	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
White alone	91.7%	88.9%	88.0%	87.3%	86.7%	86.1%	85.6%	85.1%
Black/African-American alone	5.6%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	4.1%	4.1%	4.0%	3.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.9%	2.0%	2.3%	2.6%	2.8%	3.0%	3.2%	3.3%
Other race	0.6%	4.4%	5.0%	5.6%	6.1%	6.6%	7.0%	7.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: GA DCA

Demorest is expected to grow the most out of all the participating municipalities. For Mt. Airy, its position as the jurisdiction with the highest median income suggests that suburban style single-family housing will continue to be the preferred option at the same time its population is expected to double (between 2010 and 2030) (see **Figure 2-5**). This trend could lead to issues of suburban sprawl and tax the city’s infrastructure if community improvements do not keep pace with residential development.

**Figure 2-5
 Median Household Income**

	Georgia	Habersham County	Alto	Clarkesville	Cornelia	Demorest	Mt. Airy
1989	\$29,021	\$24,386	\$20,568	\$21,125	\$20,765	\$23,558	\$27,132
1989 Adjusted*	\$38,991	\$32,764	\$27,634	\$28,382	\$27,899	\$31,651	\$36,453
1999	\$42,433	\$36,321	\$30,750	\$27,880	\$31,111	\$31,382	\$42,813
% Change**	8.8%	10.9%	11.3%	-1.8%	11.5%	-0.8%	17.4%

* 1989 median figures adjusted for inflation using the US Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator to allow comparison to 1999 figures

** Compares adjusted 1989 and 1999 figures

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census Decennial Census 1990 SF3 Table P53, and Census 2000 SF3 Table P80A

2.3 Economic Development

Habersham County’s economy is relatively unique among Georgian counties. Whereas agriculture and manufacturing have become ways of the past for many areas, Habersham’s employment projections for these two industries exceeds the states. Additionally, Habersham’s unique natural assets provide the opportunity for the community to enhance its tourism industry, so long as the area continues to retain its rural quality.

Despite exceeding the state industry statistics, there has been a decline in the county’s manufacturing sector between 2000 and 2004 (4,244 to 4,074 jobs, respectively, and a total loss of 600 jobs between 1995 and 2005). In 2000 this represented 35.5% of total employment in the county. But, Habersham still has a significant share of its employment in manufacturing compared to the state (31.8 percent compared to 12.5 percent in 2004) (see **Figure 2-6**). Indeed, manufacturing (or production, transportation, and material moving occupations) accounted for 23.6 percent of the jobs held by Habersham’s residents in 2000—in Alto this portion is 41.6 percent and in Cornelia it is 30.7 percent. The county’s agricultural specialization is also apparent in the manufacturing sector, as food manufacturing companies comprise the largest percent of employment in the county.

Figure 2-6
Employment Distribution by Percent of Total Employment (2000 & 2004)
Habersham County and Georgia

NAICS Code	Industry	Habersham County		Georgia	
		2000	2004	Count	2004
11	Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agriculture support	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
21	Mining	0%-0.2%	0%-0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
22	Utilities	1.4%	0.8%-1.9%	0.7%	0.6%
23	Construction	4.3%	5.2%	5.8%	5.7%
31	Manufacturing	35.5%	31.8%	14.9%	12.5%
42	Wholesale trade	2.3%	2.5%	5.7%	5.8%
44	Retail trade	15.0%	13.3%	13.3%	13.7%
48	Transportation & warehousing	1.7%	2.8%	3.8%	4.3%
51	Information	0.8%-2.1%	2.7%	4.0%	3.8%
52	Finance & insurance	3.7%	4.0%	4.7%	5.1%
53	Real estate & rental & leasing	0.6%	0.8%	1.7%	1.8%
54	Professional, scientific & technical services	1.7%	2.0%	5.8%	5.8%
55	Management of companies & enterprises	1.1%	1.0%	2.8%	3.0%
56	Admin, support, waste mgt, remediation services	4.8%	3.9%	9.5%	8.7%
61	Educational services	6.6%	6.6%	1.8%	1.9%
62	Health care and social assistance	7.9%	8.8%	9.8%	11.6%
71	Arts, entertainment & recreation	0.5%	1.4%	1.0%	1.1%
72	Accommodation & food services	7.9%	7.9%	8.5%	9.5%
81	Other services (except public administration)	3.1%	3.8%	4.1%	4.4%
95	Auxiliaries (exc corporate, subsidiary & regional mgt)	N	N	1.4%	N
99	Unclassified establishments	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census. County Business Patterns 2000 and 2004.

*N- Not applicable.

Meanwhile, jobs in the services sector generally increased—particularly the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, which though still small, grew from .5 percent of total employment in 2000

to 1.1 percent in 2004, almost a three-fold increase. Payrolls in healthcare and social services, finance and insurance, and transportation and warehousing all increased their payrolls over 50 percent, over 30 percent, and nearly 100 percent, respectively.

Because of the presence of Piedmont College, it is also no surprise that Habersham has a larger share of educational services employment (6.6 percent in 2004) than the state (1.9 percent in 2004), though the 6.6 percent share of Habersham’s employment remained steady from 2000 to 2004. Finally, it is notable that public administration saw a 710.8 percent growth between 1995 and 2005, suggesting an increasing governmental role for Habersham County in the north Georgia region.

People who live in Habersham tend to work in Habersham—73 percent of the county’s workers were also county residents in 2000, but there is room for improvement in this area (see **Figure 2-7**). Attracting new businesses and jobs will be hard without expanding water and sewer facilities. Habersham County and Demorest have applied for state permits to withdraw 10,000 gallons of water a day to boost industrial capacity. Currently, Hall County has the largest proportion of large employers in the area, which means Habersham would do well to further develop industry-supportive infrastructure and create economic incentives to help recruit new businesses.

Figure 2-7
Employment in Habersham County by County of Residence, 2000

County of Residence	Persons Working in Habersham	
	County	Percent of Total (%)
Habersham County	11,308	73.0
Banks County	1,078	7.0
White County	788	5.1
Stephens County	694	4.5
Hall County	464	3.0
Rabun County	215	1.4
Franklin County	211	1.4
Gwinnett County	92	0.6
Other	642	4.1
Total Residents	15,492	100.0

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. 2005. *Habersham County, Area Labor Profile*.

There are a few major changes that Habersham will be dealing with in the employment sector over the years. But one important issue is that manufacturing is projected to comprise a smaller portion of employment from 2005 to 2030, dropping from 21 percent to 19 percent, respectively (see **Figure 2-8**). However, Habersham’s employment share for the manufacturing sector is still projected to be double that of the state by 2030 (19 percent versus 9 percent). Yet a decline is also projected for the transportation, communications, utilities, and agricultural sectors, while the

Figure 2-8
Employment Projections by Industry Sector
Habersham County, 2005 to 2030

	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025		2030	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total Employment	19840	100%	21,180	100%	22,520	100%	23,860	100%	25,200	100%	26,540	100%
Farm Employment	610	3%	610	3%	610	3%	610	3%	610	2%	610	2%
Agricultural Services, Other	260	1%	290	1%	320	1%	350	1%	390	2%	420	2%
Mining	30	0%	30	0%	30	0%	40	0%	40	0%	40	0%
Construction	1320	7%	1,400	7%	1,480	7%	1,560	7%	1,650	7%	1,730	7%
Manufacturing	4230	21%	4,360	21%	4,530	20%	4,700	20%	4,870	19%	5,040	19%
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	590	3%	590	3%	590	3%	590	2%	590	2%	600	2%
Wholesale Trade	360	2%	370	2%	390	2%	400	2%	410	2%	430	2%
Retail Trade	3420	17%	3,600	17%	3,780	17%	3,960	17%	4,140	16%	4,330	16%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1380	7%	1,510	7%	1,650	7%	1,780	7%	1,920	8%	2,050	8%
Services	4620	23%	5,170	24%	5,720	25%	6,270	26%	6,820	27%	7,370	28%
Federal Civilian Government	140	1%	140	1%	140	1%	150	1%	150	1%	150	1%
Federal Military Government	130	1%	130	1%	130	1%	130	1%	130	1%	130	0%
State and Local Government	2800	14%	2,970	14%	3,140	14%	3,310	14%	3,480	14%	3,650	14%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics. 2006 State Profile.

2.4 Housing

The housing stock in Habersham County is diverse, and there have been some notable general trends in recent years. First, the jobs/housing ratio declined slightly between 1990 and 2000, from 1.19 to 1.06, suggesting Habersham is becoming more of a bedroom community (see **Figure 2-9**). Second, between 1990 and 2000, larger multi-family housing developments (20+ units) were added to Cornelia, Demorest, and the unincorporated county, all of which previously had no units of this structure type. Nevertheless, multi-family units still comprised less than 1 percent of Habersham County’s housing stock in 2000 (see **Figure 2-10**). Only 10.4 percent of building permits granted between 2000 and 2005 were for multi-family housing, and almost none of these were in unincorporated Habersham County.

Figure 2-9
Jobs/Housing Balance for Habersham County

Category	1990	2000
Population	27,621	35,902
Average Household Size	2.59	2.57
Number of Households	9,966	13,259
Housing Units	11,076	14,634
Employment	13,172	15,492
Jobs/Housing Unit Ratio	1.19	1.06

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 2-10
Housing Units, By Type, 2000

	Habersham County		Alto		Clarkesville		Cornelia		Demorest		Mount Airy	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	14,634	100.0	321	100.0	684	100.0	1,672	100.0	575	100.0	255	100.0
Detached SFR	9,988	68.3	180	56.1	432	63.2	1,055	63.1	402	69.9	181	71.0
Attached SFR	134	0.9	0	0.0	37	5.4	34	2.0	2	0.3	2	0.8
Duplexes	261	1.8	12	3.7	91	13.3	43	2.6	33	5.7	6	2.4
3 to 9 units per structure	626	4.3	15	4.7	103	15.1	268	16.0	86	15.0	3	1.2
10 to 19 units per structure	81	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.3	41	2.5	5	0.9	0	0.0
20 or more units per structure	40	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	0.8	2	0.3	0	0.0
Mobile home/Trailer	3,480	23.8	112	34.9	19	2.8	217	13.0	45	7.8	63	24.7
Other	24	0.2	2	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census. Summary File 3. Table H30.

Mobile homes compose a significant share of the housing stock in Habersham County, 23.8 percent in 2000. As a result of this single-family detached homes accounted for a smaller share of total housing stock in 2000 (68.3 percent) than they did in 1990 (71.5 percent). This was especially the case in Alto. Demorest was the only city that did not see an increase in mobile homes as a share of total housing units. Overall, since single-family housing by far comprises the largest share of housing, followed by mobile homes, the demand for a larger and more diverse selection of multi-family housing units may increase as the Habersham County’s employment continues to diversify beyond manufacturing.

The overall condition of Habersham’s housing stock is considerably good. Only 8.2 percent of the county’s houses were built before 1939, with Demorest having the largest proportion (21.6 percent of its housing). Generally, the great majority of housing in the county was built between 1970 and 1989—36.4 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, 32 percent of total stock was built.

For the most part, residents in Habersham County tend to own the homes they live in. The ratio of owner-occupied units to renter-occupied units went from 76.7 percent in 1990 to 76.2 percent in 2000—fairly constant (see **Figure 2-11**). However, each municipality saw a decrease in their share of owner-occupied units during this time period. Alto and Mt. Airy in particular saw the largest drops; Mt. Airy saw a 4.7 percent drop to 79.5 percent and Alto saw an 8.4 percent drop to 65 percent. These decreases suggest that the affordability of home ownership is declining in these areas of Habersham County.

**Figure 2-11
 Tenure of Occupied Housing Units**

	1990		Percentage		2000		Percentage	
	Number		Owner	Renter	Number		Owner	Renter
	Owner	Renter			Owner	Renter		
Habersham County	7642	2324	76.7%	23.3%	10,107	3,152	76.2%	23.8%
Alto	171	62	73.4%	26.6%	191	103	65.0%	35.0%
Clarkesville	325	199	62.0%	38.0%	357	261	57.8%	42.2%
Cornelia	816	502	61.9%	38.1%	960	613	61.0%	39.0%
Demorest	248	149	62.5%	37.5%	298	205	59.2%	40.8%
Mount Airy	197	37	84.2%	15.8%	186	48	79.5%	20.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census and 2000 Census.

Considering the above, it is not surprising that median home values in Habersham County increased substantially between 1990 and 2000; a total of 58 percent county-wide. Mt. Airy was the municipality with the highest median property value (\$99,300), and Alto had the lowest (\$76,900) in 2000. However, median housing prices in Habersham are considerably less than those in Georgia and the United States (\$111,200 and \$119,600 in 2000, respectively). This data suggests that the cost of living in Habersham County is generally low, a factor that may be contributing to community’s appeal to retirees.

Figure 2-12
Median Value of Owner-occupied Housing Units (1990 & 2000)
Habersham County and Cities

	Habersham County	Alto	Clarkesville	Cornelia	Demorest	Mount Airy
1990	\$57,600	\$42,500	\$62,000	\$57,100	\$53,500	\$60,000
2000	\$99,700	\$76,900	\$98,100	\$88,300	\$84,300	\$99,300
Percent Change	58%	55%	63%	65%	63%	60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Table H76. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape File 3. H061A. 2000 Census. Summary File 3.

By 2030 the household population in the county is projected to reach 89,426 people, requiring 43,673 units (based on a projected 2.43 average household size for that year), which is an increase of 29,039 units from the existing 14,634 units in 2002 (see **Figure 2-13**).

Figure 2-13
Projected Number of Households for Habersham County and Incorporated Areas

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2029	2030	Increase from 2005-2030
Habersham County	14,965	18,662	22,373	26,352	32,903	38,489	39,922	24,958
Unincorporated	11,012	13,724	16,437	18,741	23,569	27,682	28,738	17,726
Alto	312	322	331	373	416	452	462	149
Clarkesville	732	898	1,251	1,576	1,934	2,245	2,304	1,572
Cornelia	1,545	1,605	2,179	3,079	4,067	4,928	5,154	3,609
Demorest	675	873	1,277	1,670	2,111	2,505	2,611	1,935
Mount Airy	266	298	396	518	648	755	782	516

2.5 Natural and Cultural Resources

Habersham County has a unique supply of natural and cultural resources, especially considering it is home to the Chattahoochee National Forest. There are many reasons to protect Habersham’s natural and cultural resources, not the least of which is the economic development that can arise from associated recreation and tourism industries. Approximately 22 percent of the county’s total land area is located in the national forest.

Overall Habersham County has the requisite protections in place for its rivers and river corridors, wetlands, floodplains, groundwater recharge areas, steep slopes, mountains, prime agricultural land, and endangered plants and animals and habitats. However, there are some protections that still need to be instated by the municipalities in order to protect Habersham’s environmentally sensitive areas. First, the cities of Clarkesville and Demorest currently do not have regulations to

protect wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, or water supply watershed areas in accordance with state minimum standards. Mt. Airy currently does not water supply watershed protection regulations in place to meet minimum state planning standards. In addition, Demorest does not have a floodplain management ordinance.

As the county continues to grow, environmentally sensitive areas should be protected to ensure Habersham’s natural beauty and healthy ecosystems are preserved. This is important in light of the other attractions that draw tourists and newcomers to the county. Habersham has a rich cultural history, with 34 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City of Cornelia is especially suited for Downtown Historic District designation, and it is already designated as a “Better Hometown” community which is overseen by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Further protection of historic structures could be promoted by conducting an updated historic resource survey and creating historic overlay districts. In addition, there is no known existing provision in the Habersham County Code of Ordinances to protect archeological sites through the development review process. This should be pursued, as there is a high probability of a number of sites in the area.

2.6 Community Facilities and Services

With population projected to grow by the year 2030, adequate planning should ensure that Habersham’s facilities and services are able to adapt to and accommodate increasing demand.

The largest issue in this regard is whether the water supply can keep pace with projected growth. The county’s Comprehensive Water Development Plan estimated that the unincorporated county will need an additional 3.2 million gallons per day of capacity by 2030 (see **Figure 2-14**). Steps are being taken to purchase water from Toccoa and to construct a pipeline to Stephens County. In the future Habersham should look to tap into the Savannah River Basin, which has fewer regulatory limitations than the Chattahoochee River Basin.

Figure 2-14

Habersham County Water Provision and Projected Demands						
YEAR	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population in Water Service Area	5,490	6,558	7,482	10,018	12,893	16,718
Population Served in Service Area	998	2,189	3,260	5,816	8,707	12,508
% of Population Served	18%	33%	44%	58%	68%	75%
Projected Water Demands without Conservation (MGD)						
<i>Annual Average Day</i>	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.9	1.3	1.9
<i>Peak Day</i>	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.6	2.4	3.4
Projected Water Demand With Conservation (MGD)						
<i>Annual Average Day</i>	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.2	1.7
<i>Peak Day</i>	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.5	2.1	3.1

* The methodology used to determine this data is described at the end of this section.

The county’s municipalities are not immune to water supply issues, and all will have to increase output to meet demand. Alto is currently working to add another well to its existing nine, Clarkesville has plans to increase its distribution system, Cornelia is designing a new treatment plant, and Mount Airy will need to find additional sources. Only Demorest is in position to meet future capacity if a permit to process water from Lake Yonah is approved.

Based on current plans and desires of the municipalities, it is unlikely there will be any expansion of the sewer system over the 20-year planning period (see **Figure 2-15** for existing systems). Alto and Mount Airy, depending on development, may have to construct their own central sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants. Sewer systems are helpful in preventing sprawl, as without them one-to-two-acre lots are necessary to accommodate adequate septic drain fields. The septic drain requirement thus requires more land consumptive and infrastructure extensive development.

**Figure 2-15
Municipal, Private, and Institutional Sewerage Systems**

Name	Permit Number	Average Day Flow (MGD)	Treatment Technique	Type	Receiving Stream
Apple Mt. Resort	GA03-887	0.8	Reuse	Private	Glade Creek
Apple Mt. Resort	GA03-772	0.75	Subsurface Stream	Private	Glade Creek
Clarkesville WPCP	GA0032514	.75	Trickling Filter	Municipal	Soque River
Cornelia WPCA	GA0021504	3.0	Activated Sludge/Trickling Filter	Municipal	Little Mud Creek
Demorest WPCA	GA0032506	0.4	Activated Sludge	Municipal	Hazel Creek
Habersham Central High	GA0033952	.02	Activated Sludge	Institutional	Licklog Creek
Lee Arrendale Prison	GA0022209	.25	Activated Sludge	Institutional	Hudson River

The Habersham County School System is also feeling the pressures of rapid development, as yearly enrollment increases of 200+ students are not uncommon (see **Figure 2-16**). Expansions to school capacity are planned over the 20-year planning period to help alleviate this problem. In terms of higher education, Piedmont College could be used to attract retirees and new residents, as well as promote economic development. The cultural offerings a college community can provide, as well as training for local workers, are large benefits for those relocating to the area and should be marketed. For instance, at North Georgia Technical College, which currently enrolls over 2,000 students, there are numerous offerings for non-traditional students, ESL courses, and a Quick Start training program available to all manufacturing facilities in the area. Technical and industrial programs are available as well.

**Figure 2-16
Habersham County School System Enrollment 2001-2006**

School Year	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Enrollment	5615	5854	5922	6147	6424	6608
Additional Students		239	68	225	277	184
% Increase		4%	1.2%	3.8%	4.5%	2.9%

Source: *Three-Year Technology Plan*, Habersham County School System

2.7 Intergovernmental Coordination

In order to adapt to projected growth, the county and municipalities should continue to have an open line of communication with each other and surrounding communities to ensure that proper agreements are in place between jurisdictions, regional authorities and the state government to ensure adequate delivery of public services to citizens.

The Habersham County school board should be included as developments are reviewed for approval, since new housing usually produces new students. The school board should also coordinate with the county's land use planning efforts in order to seek ways to reduce busing costs by building new housing close to educational facilities. School placement can have a major impact on local governments and because of this they should be an active partner in these decisions.

Finally, the county and its municipalities should consider adopting similar development ordinances to reduce the need for annexations and to obtain consistent degrees of environmental and cultural resource protection.

2.8 Transportation

The road system in Habersham County is generally good; only 339 out of its 1,045 miles of road were unpaved as of 2003. However, some issues still remaining with Habersham's road system include a need to resurface SR 348 and SR 365, and to upgrade bridges to withstand heavy loads on concrete trucks using the major routes in Habersham County (see **Figure 2-17** for a list of proposed improvements). There is also an opportunity in the city of Demorest to widen US 441 and create a bypass from SR 365 to confront increasing traffic congestion.

**Figure 2-17
Proposed Improvements**

Project ID	Type Work	Description	Existing Lane	Proposed Lanes	Length (miles)	Total Funding
1580	Turn Lanes	SR 15/US 441 Median Turn Lanes from SR 17 to Tallulah Park	4	5	3.77	\$4,878,000
6447	Pedestrian Crossings	SR 385/US 411 @ Piedmont College Pedestrian Bridge	NA	NA	0.4	\$441,000
6450	Signals	Upgrade Traffic Signals @ various locations in Habersham/Stephens	NA	NA		\$1,311,000
7269	New Construction	Industrial Park Rd Extension - Local Access Rd	NA	NA	0.65	\$952,000
7351	Signals	SR 15 @ one location in Habersham & SR 17 @ 3 locations in Stephens	NA	NA	1.6	\$400,000
132100	Widening	SR 105/US441BU from Cannon Bridge Rd to Walnut St/Cornelia	2	6	2.74	\$19,721,000
M003568	Resurface & Maintenance	SR 17 from CR 179/Rennie Hames Rd to White County Line	NA	NA	6.79	\$882,267
M003590	Resurface & Maintenance	SR 356 Level Surface in Habersham & White Counties	NA	NA	10.7	\$588,883
M003591	Turn Lanes	SR 365 Deceleration Lane and Drive to DOT Property	NA	NA	51.7	\$99,565

Downtown areas experience traffic congestion in Habersham because they are also the only routes through the county. The amount of curb cuts in the downtown areas exacerbates the congestion problem, and newer suburbs have poor connectivity, meaning that local traffic cannot be separated from through traffic. The problem increases during tourist season, when traffic volume can be 200% higher than normal. Strip development has also created congestion on the main tourist and commercial routes in the county, which are US 23/441, SR 17, SR 105, and SR 107.

3 Community Visioning

3.1 Introduction

As a part of Habersham County’s Joint 2029 Comprehensive Plan Update (Plan), the County and partnering localities formed and implemented a robust community engagement program. Community engagement strategies were originally outlined in the Community Participation Program (CPP), transmitted to the Georgia DCA and Northeast Georgia RDC in June 2007, and continued to evolve throughout the planning period to accommodate changing community needs. The successful engagement of the community is a major contributing factor to the implementation of a Comprehensive Plan. Public engagement not only ensures that the plan is in line with core community values and desires, but also leads to community buy-in, ensuring that the community’s vision is brought to fruition.

3.2 Working with the Public

The Habersham County and cities CPP was both varied and strategic in its approach. Diverse members of the community were engaged in the planning process through various activities:

- Steering Committee Meetings
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Visioning Workshops
- Community Visioning Questionnaire
- Community Presentations
- Open House

Figure 3-1. Community Involvement Timeline

Public Hearings for Transmittal of the Community Assessment and CPP	
May & June.....	2007
Stakeholder Interviews Held	
Summer.....	2007
Visioning Workshops	
August 16, 23, & 30.....	2007
Open House	
May 8, 2008.....	2008
Public Hearings for Transmittal of the Community Agenda	
June.....	2008
Public Hearings for Adoption of the Community Agenda	
Fall.....	2008

The timeline highlights major Plan milestones that incorporate community participation or engagement.

The majority of these activities took place in the summer of 2007, culminating with an Open House, in early May 2008. A summary of each of these activities is outlined in the sections that follow.

Steering Committee and Community Leadership

The proactive involvement of several Habersham County community leaders enriched the community engagement process. To initiate this grassroots leadership, a Community Steering Committee (CSC), composed of a diverse group of community stakeholders, was established and actively engaged in the planning process. The CSC members were originally identified by the committee co-chairs of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, a committee established by the Habersham County Commission.

The resulting CSC included over 25 members of the community. The primary activities of these committee members were to (1) provide feedback on major elements of the plan throughout the planning process, (2) proactively participate in public meetings, and (3) act as champions of the plan. Over the planning period, these members took on an increasingly prominent role in the plan, including coordinating interaction among localities involved in the plan and providing critical support in the development of the Community Agenda components. The committee included members of the local planning commissions, elected officials, city/town staff, members of major authorities, and other citizens representing key agencies in the county, including the Soque Watershed and Piedmont College. Members represented a cross-section of all jurisdictions participating in the Plan. A complete list of Steering Committee members is listed in the Appendix.

Stakeholder Interviews

To capture the local knowledge and experience of community members, over 40 one-on-one interviews were scheduled with community stakeholders. List of interviewees were provided by each local government participating in the plan. The distribution of interviews across jurisdictions roughly represented the jurisdiction's population in relation to the overall planning area. As such, the greatest percentage of interviews was held with community members associated with unincorporated Habersham County. Clarkesville and Demorest represented the next highest percentage of persons interviewed. Interviews were held both in person and over the phone to accommodate the needs and preferences of community members.

Interviewees were asked to identify ways the community has changed for better and for worse; to identify and prioritize issues in the community; to help identify options for funding community needs; and to provide any additional information that could be helpful for the Plan’s success. The interviewees provided a great quantity of valuable information for the Plan. The most prevalent themes from the interviews included, but are not limited to, the items listed in **Figure 3-2**. Please see the Appendix for a full list of interviewees.

Figure 3-2
Prevalent Themes from Stakeholder Interviews

- Need to consolidate services across jurisdictions, and potentially consolidate governments in the long-term
- Need to protect the area’s natural resources
- Desire to preserve the small town feel
- Potential to increase tourism
- Utilize positive resources in the community, including Piedmont College and North Georgia Tech
- Create a more walkable community, particularly near downtown Clarkesville and Cornelia
- Need to improve existing infrastructure, particularly roads
- Address and develop a strategic plan for the area’s water supply and resources
- Make economic development and creation of quality jobs a priority
- Develop quality housing developments that compliment the natural landscape

Visioning Workshops

Visioning workshops were held during August 2007 in different communities throughout Habersham County in conjunction with the County’s Joint Comprehensive Plan. The workshops served multiple purposes:

1. To inform the public about the Comprehensive Plan, including the planning process, major plan elements, and its purpose;
2. To gather community input on major issues and opportunities as well as community preferences; and
3. To begin building consensus around a unified community vision and plan for the future, both on a county-wide and city-level basis.

The workshops were designed in an interactive nature to achieve these purposes.

Workshop Activities

Each of the visioning workshops covered the same material and followed a similar format. As a result, community members were urged to attend one of the three workshops. Beyond informal questions and answers with project staff, the meetings generally followed the below agenda:



Workshop attendees listen to an overview of the comprehensive planning process

Statistics:

- Three workshops
- Held on Thursdays of August 2007
- All meetings held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- 163 recorded attendees

1. Overview of Comprehensive Planning Presentation
2. Summary of Community Assessment Presentation
3. Priority Setting Exercise
4. Community Preference Survey and Discussion
5. Closing Remarks
6. Map Exercise

Attendees from all workshops regularly cited and prioritized similar concerns across the county's communities. Brief results from each workshop activity follow.

Priority Setting Activity

The priority setting exercise was the first major opportunity for community input at each workshop. This activity focused on policy needs that would help carry-out the community's vision for the future. Attendees were separated into small discussion groups to accomplish this task.¹ The brainstorming sessions allowed all attendees to express their perspectives and opinions on community priorities over the upcoming years. Each group discussed various topics and prioritized those topics that were discussed. The items listed in **Figure 3-3** reflect some priorities that groups determined were the most important to pursue.



Community Preference Survey

Habersham County and its cities are projected to experience notable growth in the upcoming 20 years, which is linked to many community design concerns. Meeting attendees at all workshops participated in a community preference survey to address such design concerns. The following types of questions were addressed through this activity:

- What type of housing development do we need and where?
- What should new office and retail look like?
- What type, if any, of mixed-use design is appropriate for our communities?
- How can new industrial uses best fit in with Habersham County's character?

This task was accomplished in two ways, depending on meeting attendance level:

¹ Due to limited turnout, one large group was used for the priority setting exercise at the first visioning workshop.

1. **Attendees completed a self-led tour of design boards** (*Workshops 2 and 3*). For each design board, participants were asked to choose one of four images. Each participant voted by placing a sticker on his or her preferred image, registering his or her vote. Each community in the county had its own color coded voting sticker to facilitate the tabulation of individual community results. Due to the time constraints of the meeting, limited discussions of the boards followed the voting period.



Meeting attendee votes on his favored design for rural housing.

2. **Participants used an electronic keypad voting system** (*Workshop 1*). Attendees reviewed multiple images of structure types and voted on what they would like to see most in their community. For each summary slide, participants were asked to choose one of four images. Keypad voting allowed attendees to see instant results. To further understand these voting responses, community members were encouraged to express characteristics that they did and did not like about particular structures.

A summary of these comments and results is included in the Appendix. Some favorable qualities that were mentioned repeatedly by attendees included the following: privacy, sidewalks, trees, sense of community, traditional building design, landscaping, open space, historic characteristics, an overall sense of permanence, and good aesthetics.

Map Exercise

Several enlarged maps of Habersham County's cities and unincorporated areas were on display as attendees left the workshop. Using colored stars, attendees were asked to vote on the following before they left for the night: favorite place (other than your house), best place for a new subdivision, best place for a major employer, and places in need of revitalization. **Figure 3-4** shows those areas that were repeatedly chosen by meeting attendees. Overall results have been used to help refine character areas initially identified in the Community Assessment and assist in delineating future land uses.

Figure 3-4: Repeated Selections from Map Exercise

Favorite Place	Best Place for a New Subdivision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Washington St., downtown Clarkesville ▪ Georgia St. and Central Ave. in Demorest ▪ Northwest portion of county, west of GA 197 ▪ Northeast portion of county ▪ Downtown areas of Clarkesville ▪ Piedmont College in Demorest ▪ Northeast portion of unincorporated County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West of Cornelia city limits ▪ West of Swain St. in Clarkesville ▪ Northern area of Demorest that is undeveloped ▪ Southwest area of county, south of 384 ▪ West of US 23, just west of Alto ▪ Just west of Hwy 115, just outside of Clarkesville ▪ East of US 441, just south of Demorest
Best Place for a Major Employer	Best Place for Revitalization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southern tip of County, along GA 15 ▪ Just west of First St. in Mt. Airy ▪ Southern portion of Clarkesville ▪ Between Alto and Cornelia, east of US 23 ▪ Along GA 15, just southwest of Cornelia ▪ On GA 365 in southern tip of county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Just south and west of Clarkesville city limits ▪ Areas of Central Avenue in Demorest ▪ Parts of downtown Cornelia, near Main St. ▪ Downtown Clarkesville ▪ North of Duncan Bridge Road, just south of Cornelia ▪ Just west of US 441, between Clarkesville and Demorest

Community Visioning Questionnaire

A community questionnaire was produced and distributed to help ascertain what issues community members believe need to be addressed in the future. The questionnaire included a number of topics that addressed a broad range of issues (see **Figure 3-5**). The information gathered is important for determining community priorities. This information was used to help establish short and long-term planning goals.

Questionnaires were available beginning in August 2007 with the Comprehensive Plan Visioning Workshops as the main avenue for distribution. The surveys were also available at all participating municipalities and the County’s courthouse as well as interactively on the Habersham County website from August 15 to September 15, 2007.

- Figure 3-5**
Topics Included in Community Visioning Questionnaire
- population growth
 - economic development
 - housing
 - natural and cultural resources
 - transportation
 - quality of life/sense of place
 - intergovernmental coordination
 - community facilities and services
 - land use

A total of 312 community members participated in the questionnaire, representing various parts of the County and its municipalities. The majority of questionnaires were received from participants that resided in Unincorporated Habersham County (46 percent) and the City of Clarksville (31 percent). Other cities/towns that participated were Cornelia (10 percent), Demorest (6 percent), Mt. Airy (5 percent), and Alto (3 percent). The bulk of the participants have lived in the community for 10 or more years (50 percent) and 27 percent had lived in the area 5 to 10 years. A large number of the participants were over age 29, with 54 percent over 55 and 41 percent between 30 and 55.

The questionnaire results reflected the desire of Habersham County residents to maintain their community's rural character and protect its natural resources. The questionnaire answers complemented information obtained during other elements of the community participation program, including the Stakeholder Interviews and Visioning Workshops. A summary of overall questionnaire response is available in the Appendix.

Community Visioning Questionnaire

Habersham County along with the cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the towns of Alto and Mt. Airy are currently working together to update their **Comprehensive Plans**. The Comprehensive Plan is the community's blueprint for growth and development over the next twenty years. In addition to being required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Comprehensive Plan is the most important policy document for local governments and plays a vital role in implementing the community's vision for the future. Community involvement and input play a central role in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. To help articulate the community's vision for the future of Habersham County and its municipalities, the community is conducting this survey.

The following questions are designed to help frame the community's opinion about growth and development, the direction the community is heading and the vision for the future of Habersham County and the participating municipalities: Alto, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest, and Mt. Airy.

Part 1: Respondent Characteristics

(1) Where do you live?
 Alto Demorest Clarkesville Mt. Airy
 Cornelia Unincorporated Habersham Co. (see below)

If you reside in the unincorporated county, please list the development or nearest crossroads



Beginning exert from the Community Visioning explaining its importance

Workshop attendees begin the Questionnaire, while waiting for the meeting to start

Community Presentations

Upon request, the project staff was available to provide presentations to community groups regarding the Comprehensive Plan. One such presentation was given to Habersham County's Friends of Good Government in late May 2007. This meeting proved successful in engaging a broader range of stakeholders in the planning process, leading to greater participation at Visioning Workshops and overall community engagement in the comprehensive plan. The session consisted of an overview of the comprehensive planning process and the status of Habersham County's joint plan and was followed by a brief question/answer session.

Open House

An Open House was held on May 8, 2008 with over 110 individuals attending. The major recommendations from the Community Agenda were presented to the public followed by a "Town Hall" style question and answer session and then finally break out sessions with each participating municipality. This gathering provided an opportunity for the community to comment on the Community Agenda and also serves as a check/balance mechanism, ensuring that the plan is achievable and backed by the community.



The Open House provides an opportunity for the community to comment on the draft Community Agenda.

Comments and suggestions from the meeting were reviewed by the Project Management Team and the Community Steering Committee and used to modify the final planning documents as determined appropriate.

3.3 Summary

Habersham County's community engagement program has gained momentum over the course of the planning period. This increased participation is tied to various factors, but is specifically linked to strong direction by the community's leadership and increasing desire by the public to see their community develop in a positive way over upcoming years. The defining element of the Comprehensive Plan is the community's vision for the future. The vision is the foundation for the strategies and policies developed in the Community Agenda. It provides a clear image of what state and atmosphere the County and cities should be striding towards over the next 20 years. All policies and strategies outlined in the agenda will reflect some aspect of that vision for the future. The community participation process has provided a wealth of information for a joint vision for the County and its municipalities, laying a strong foundation for the policies and strategies laid out in the remaining components of the Community Agenda.

Please see the Appendix for the following community participation materials:

- A. Steering Committee Members
- B. Stakeholder Interviewees
- C. Community Preference Survey Results
- D. Community Visioning Questionnaire Summary



Participants prior to the second Visioning Workshop – Habersham County's community engagement program has gained momentum over the course of the planning period.

4 Joint Community Agenda

4.1 Joint Habersham Community Vision Statement

Introduction

People throughout Habersham County and its municipalities have shared a special quality of life due to the area's historic, cultural, and natural resources as well as a unique heritage. This appeal has consistently brought growth.

A Comprehensive Assessment predicts that our population will almost double by the year 2029. The magnitude of that increase, combined with the current pattern of sprawling residential and limited business and industrial growth, as well as many other growth-related issues and opportunities, put our future quality of life and our appealing rural character at great risk. The assessment forecasts that our current growth trends will result in the development of 82 percent of our by 2029, severely impacting our rural character, scenic beauty and natural resources.

The community responded to these projections with a resolve to manage growth in ways that maintains our rural character, protects our historic, cultural, and natural resources, and sustains our special quality of life.

The county, municipalities, authorities, organizations, groups, and citizens have worked together to form the community's vision, with the common goal of protecting and preserving our rich historical, cultural and scenic rural character.

Vision

As we move forward, we will:

*Continue our special, healthy, and safe quality of life.
Become even more appealing to prospective residents and tourists.
Provide a superior 'Sense of Place' in our region and state.*

*"As we move forward,
we will:*

- ❖ Continue our special, healthy, and safe quality of life,*
- ❖ Become even more appealing to prospective residents and tourists,*
- ❖ Provide a superior 'Sense of Place' in our region and state."*

We will accomplish the following:

- *Preserve rural character, unique small towns, scenic beauty and natural environment despite significant growth.*
- *Residential development will occur primarily near infrastructure, will provide a full range of housing choices, will include service businesses that are valuable to residents, and will create the advantages and charm of traditional neighborhoods.*

- *The county will have effective facilities, resources, and recruiting to compete for business and industry that will provide jobs and a more balanced tax base. Increasing the K-12 graduation rate and expanding development programs at our four-year institutions will create a stronger workforce. Close proximity to a full range of medical services will exist due to an expansion of facilities and services needed by the community*



- *Our area will be a magnet for tourism in the region with choices for communing with nature, participating in sports and other recreation activities, and having cultural experiences with friendly services and facilities. The protection and preservation of scenic corridors, mountains, streams, and farmland will maintain a rural character and enable increased tourism.*

- *Gateways and corridors will exist to manage current and future traffic increases and enable residents, guests and tourists to move safely and efficiently to their destinations. The Highway 365/441 corridor has limited access and will be safe, free from congestion and unsightly appearance, and will enable quality business development.*



- *Government jurisdictions will optimize service to the whole county through effective coordination. Consolidated services will reduce costs. Water systems will operate as one and sewer and water infrastructure will exist where jointly planned. Regulations that effectively manage growth will exist*

4.2 Issues and Opportunities for Habersham County Joint Community Agenda

In order to be effective, the Comprehensive Plan must identify and provide workable strategies for addressing the issues and opportunities facing the entire community. The Community Assessment to the Comprehensive Plan is the first step taken towards identifying the issues and opportunities facing Habersham County and the participating municipalities. The list has been modified and revised through the public participation sessions and the ongoing work of the Citizen Steering Committee. This final, locally agreed upon, list of issues and opportunities are common to all jurisdictions in Habersham County. Other issues and opportunities are addressed in separate sections for the municipalities as well as a section for those applicable to the unincorporated areas of the County.

The anticipation of major population growth and the aging of the population are underlying themes reflected in the issues and opportunities that follow. Between the years of 2005 and 2029, the population of Habersham County is projected to double, reaching nearly 89,000 in 2029. The greatest growth will occur in unincorporated areas of the county. With proper planning, growth can occur while maintaining the county's rural character. The higher presence of seniors and middle-aged individuals will likely drive a demand for different services, possibly including improved medical services, greater walkability, change in housing preferences, and access to religious institutions.

The following issues and opportunities list is organized according to the areas or "elements" of the Comprehensive Plan: economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, intergovernmental coordination/community services and facilities, transportation, and land use.

4.2.1 Economic Development

Issues:

- 1. Infrastructure Challenges and Needs.** The County lacks major water and sewer facilities that are necessary for increased residential and industrial growth. This lack of infrastructure and its coordination with growth may be the result of limited planning due both to unforeseen growth and the existence of eight separate delivery systems as well as limitations tied to water acquisition rights. Without improving the water and sewer infrastructure, growth of both industry and jobs will be difficult. Unless an integrated delivery system is created, total service can not be maximized.
- 2. Out Migration of Younger Population.** Habersham County and its municipalities are losing a notable percentage of their younger population, including recent college graduates, to out-migration. This population loss is tied to limited employment opportunities in the area. Retaining a greater percentage of this population should be one of the area's economic development priorities.

Opportunities:

- 3. Improved Graduation Rates and Better Prepared Workforce.** The School Board continues to work towards improving graduation rates throughout the county. High graduation rates are important for economic development, particularly in demonstrating the presence of a well-qualified workforce. Higher graduation rates can help attract higher paying employers to the county.
- 4. Tourism / Ecotourism.** Habersham County can serve as an increasingly important tourist destination due to its geographic location, rural character, natural beauty and small town charm. Located in close proximity to the Atlanta metropolitan area, visiting Habersham County is an easy alternative to the nearby urban environments. To support this industry, the county needs to actively preserve its natural landscape and facilitate the continuation and growth of local festivals and fairs. Further development of the County's ecotourism is especially appealing due to the Chattahoochee Natural Forest, which encompasses 22 percent of the county's land. Opportunities for tourism should be developed and marketed as a significant avenue for economic growth.
- 5. Need for Some Uniformity of Tax Incentives across the County.** The County and its municipalities should work collaboratively to consider what tax incentives should be promoted countywide. By doing this, the county will gain an advantage in attracting businesses.
- 6. Investment in Economic Development to Broaden Economic and Tax Bases.** The County needs to hire a Director of Economic Development and allocate significantly more of its budget to Economic Development, allowing the County to be more effective in developing infrastructure for and in selling its attributes as a home for new businesses and their employees. The economic base of the County remains heavily weighted in the manufacturing sector; however, the manufacturing industry is slowly declining, resulting in the loss of a significant number of jobs due to manufacturing's high share of total employment. Whereas manufacturing jobs will continue to play a vital role in the local economy, diversification of the economic base is essential for ensuring a healthy mix of jobs over time. Some focus should be given to other industries with potential for sustained growth over the next 20 years. For example, education and health services grew by 55.2 percent between 1995 and 2005. According to projections, services will account for 28 percent of the total jobs in the county in 2030. Residential Property taxes have become a disproportionate share of the County's tax base as manufacturing jobs, have been lost. A priority should be placed on replacing those industrial employers. Communities should seek a balance between jobs and housing, at about 1.5 jobs per household, to improve quality of life. A higher ratio reflects an employment center and a lower ratio reflects a bedroom community. Habersham County's jobs-housing ratio declined from 1.19 to 1.06 between 1990 and 2000. Although this partly suggests that Habersham is attracting more retirees, it also suggests there are not enough jobs for its residents.

7. **New Growth in Education and Health Services.** Encouraging growth in both education and health services is appealing as they both benefit the local population and projected population as well as being a major factor in the decision of companies to relocate to the county. Both Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College are valuable resources for workforce development for current and new employers. As the population ages, the demand for health services will increase. Practicing physicians are already in short supply and many residents now travel to Gainesville for medical services not available in Habersham County. Medical facilities should be improved and services expanded as necessary to keep up with growth and local needs.
8. **Consideration of Impact Fees.** Part of the area's effort to expand its infrastructure should include a concerted look at impact fees. Such fees can be used to effectively allocate the additional costs new development brings to the community to those developments that are creating the costs. Policies should be considered carefully as they can negatively affect a community's ability to attract businesses should more lax regulations exist in competing communities. Such policies may be more appropriate as the community's jobs and housing become more balanced.
9. **Proximity of Colleges.** As the area's economy works towards diversification, the existence of Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College is of high importance. The colleges give county residents an opportunity to further develop their education without leaving the area. This may also serve as an attractive feature for potential employers as well as retirees relocating to the area who appreciate the cultural advantages of as speakers and performances offered by the colleges.
10. **Alcohol with Dining.** Habersham County has a very limited number of entertainment opportunities and high-end restaurants. In fact, Cornelia is the only city in the county to offer such services, and only under expensive permit fees. These practices deter certain desired businesses from locating in the county, which impacts residents' quality of life.

4.2.2 Housing

Issues:

1. **Change in Housing Preferences tied to Demographic Shifts.** The demographic shifts anticipated to affect Habersham County as a whole may have greater impacts in the cities due to the greater number of services available. The 35 to 44 age group is projected to make up the largest share of population (17.7 percent) in 2029. This group is more likely to have a larger share of family households requiring single-family housing. The 65 and older age group makes up the second largest share of the population (15.9 percent) in 2029. Some in this group will prefer smaller lots with pedestrian friendly areas. Nearly 60 percent of Visioning Questionnaire respondents indicated their preference to retire in a single-family home on a large lot; however, one story structures and multi-family structures may be preferred in some cases where mobility is limited. Assisted living

centers may also have increased demand. Due to limited income, this group also may require greater affordable housing choices including a need for some additional subsidized housing options.

- 2. Special Housing Needs.** Discussions with local providers (city and county) of the need for more shelter space for those experiencing temporary job loss and other hardships. Currently the County has 4 shelter units for the homeless and an average waiting list of about six households. Coordinate development of shelter units with all jurisdictions.

Opportunities:

- 3. Workforce Housing.** Nationwide, paying more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs is considered cost burdened, and paying more than 50 percent of household income on housing costs is considered extremely cost burdened. For both renter and owner households, a notable percentage of Habersham households are paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. In 2000, 19 percent of households in owner-occupied units had housing costs above 30 percent of their household income. At the same time, 27 percent of all renter households were paying more than 30 percent of household income on rent. Workforce housing allows workers who are essential to the community's day-to-day operations (police, teachers, etc.) to live in the community where they work. A multifunctional taskforce (builders, bankers, realtors and businesses) should be formed to identify incentives for construction of this type of housing. Workforce housing provides affordable housing for those who are essential to the community's day-to-day operations (police, teachers, etc.). As growth occurs, it is important that these people are not priced out of the Habersham County community. Incentives for developers, along with other creative techniques, can help assure that a certain percentage of units are set aside for workforce housing.

4.2.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues:

- 1. Scenic Beauty and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas.** Habersham County and its municipalities are known for their natural beauty. The Blue Ridge Mountains, Chattahoochee National Forest, and Tallulah Gorge all contribute to this. The county contains numerous scenic vistas of mountain sides and unspoiled wilderness. Scenic beauty is the reason many have been attracted to the area and this will likely continue to draw residents and tourists to the county. It is projected that the county's population will double over the next 20 years. Steps should be taken to establish a network of scenic roads, greenways and open space for Habersham County that can incorporate the scenic and environmentally sensitive areas of Habersham County and its municipalities before growth closes in around them, and they are lost. The County's Character Area map should identify for the county and its municipalities those areas to protect from inappropriate development, thus ensuring that future development maintains the scenic quality of the county.

Opportunities:

- 2. Water Conservation.** Because availability of water will be critical for industrial and residential growth, the jurisdictions in the County need to collectively define and implement an aggressive program for water conservation. Successful implementation of such a program both allows existing supplies of water to serve more people and is critically evaluated when requesting more water withdrawal rights.
- 3. Identification of Historic Resources.** Habersham County has a well documented collection of historic resources from an early 1990s countywide historic resources survey. This data along with other compiled data from the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources is in an interactive web-based registry and geographical information system designed to catalog information about the natural, archaeological and historic resources (NAHRGIS) of Georgia (<https://www.itos.uga.edu/nahrgis/>). Because the countywide survey was completed approximately 15 years ago, a review and update of the survey is recommended to identify Habersham County’s architectural history. On the NAHRGIS database, approximately 261 sites countywide (including all municipalities) were identified as “appearing to meet National Register criteria”. Of these identified resources, a brief review of those resources should be conducted to identify exceptionally significant structures and the process to add them to the National Register of Historic Places should be undertaken.
- 4. Transferable Development Rights.** A coordinated effort between all jurisdictions will be needed to develop a system to manage TDRs, allowing rural, undeveloped land to be preserved while more dense development occurs as a result of transferring the development right.
- 5. Tallulah Gorge State Park.** The Tallulah Gorge has been considered one of the seven natural wonders of Georgia. It consists of a series of breath-taking waterfalls and was at one point nicknamed the “Niagara Falls of the South.” In its heyday, the Gorge attracted many visitors and supported large hotels in the City of Tallulah Falls. While technically not under the purview of this plan, as Tallulah Falls completed its Comprehensive Plan with Rabun County, its proximity to the planning area provides opportunities for unincorporated Habersham and its other municipalities. Ecological tourism to this site provides spillover effects in the form of increased tax revenue for the county. An opportunity exists to market the county for tourism to this and other scenic areas.
- 6. Encourage Public Private Partnerships to Address Environmental Concerns.** Habersham County and its municipalities have experienced the benefits of the proactive local environmental groups, including the Soque River Watershed Association. Area governments should continue to collaborate with these groups to help ensure that the area’s environmental assets are preserved over time.

7. **Habersham Historical Society & Museum.** Habersham County has one central location for its genealogical and historical collections at the Habersham Historical Society. The County and its municipalities should increase the use, support, promotion of, and assistance in building the society's and museum's collections.
8. **Storm Water Management.** The County and cities need to develop jointly a storm water management plan, with special focus on harvesting storm water for beneficial reuse.

4.2.4 Intergovernmental Coordination of Services and Facilities

Issues:

1. **Water Supply.** Insufficient water supply to keep pace with projected growth is a major issue within the county. The County and its municipalities have recently completed a 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to study and address this issue. The findings of this plan estimate that the unincorporated county will need to add an additional 3.2 million gallons per day (MGD) of capacity to serve demand in 2030. Steps are being made to go forward with recommendations of the plan, including the purchase of water from Toccoa and the construction of a pipeline to Stephens County. Ultimately the water systems in the county need to be interlinked and coordinated to the point that they appear as one system, not 8 systems.
2. **Police Service.** Habersham County currently has a low level of service for police protection in terms of officers per residents. The County currently has 0.8 officers per 1,000 residents, which is well below the national average of 2.3 officers per 1,000 residents¹. To improve this ratio to national standards the Sheriff's office will have to add a significant numbers of officers to its ranks. Consolidation of services between the municipalities and the County should be considered.
3. **Fire Service.** Improvements are needed to enhance fire service within the County. The Habersham County Fire Department's ISO ratings range from 6 to 10. 10 indicate little or no fire protection. The average response time for fire calls within the department is 8.5 minutes. This does not meet standards set by the National Fire Protection Service which advocate response times of 4 minutes or less. In anticipation of future growth, the department foresees the opportunity to construct additional stations to raise ISO ratings in class 10 areas. Consolidation of services between the municipalities and the County should be considered.
4. **Intergovernmental Agreements.** Many of the county's municipalities rely on the County for community services. As the county and its municipalities continue to grow and state and federal regulations change, the County needs to ensure that proper

¹ U.S., Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

agreements are in place with other local jurisdictions, regional authorities and the state government to ensure adequate delivery of public services to its citizens. As Habersham County and its municipalities work through the process of updating their Comprehensive Plans, needed changes in service delivery may be identified and the County's Service Delivery Strategy will need to be updated.

5. **School Overcrowding.** The Habersham County School System is currently experiencing rapid increases in student enrollment. In years past, the system would typically see increases of 30 to 50 students per year. In recent years, increases of over 200 additional students are not uncommon. These additional students have caused strain on the system and school overcrowding is common. Expansions of school capacity are planned over the 20-year planning period to help alleviate this problem.
6. **Coordinate Development and Education.** Review of development proposals should include the Habersham County School Board, as new housing usually produces new students. The School Board should also have a role in which to comment on impacts of rezoning applications. The School Board should also coordinate school planning with the County's land use planning efforts, seeking ways to reduce busing costs by building new housing close to educational facilities. Just as the School Board should have a say in where new development is approved, Habersham County should have a voice in where new schools are located. New schools require service by infrastructure and often drive residential development in the vicinity. School placement can have major impacts on local governments and because of this they should be an active partner in these decisions.
7. **Land Use Conflicts and Service Delivery Issues that result from Annexation.** The County needs to work closely with the various city and town councils to avoid potential land use conflicts and service delivery confusion, especially when annexations occur. It may be beneficial to establish "Spheres of Influence" for each municipality in Habersham County in which the county and affected municipality would be required to jointly review proposed annexations, infrastructure improvements, new developments and zoning or land intensity district changes.
8. **Develop a Joint Sign Ordinance.** Revision of all sign ordinances in the county for consistency between jurisdictions and for protection of scenic beauty needs to be a priority.

Opportunities:

9. **Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Renewal:** County officials need to work closely with the municipalities to help ensure that this important source of capital improvements funding is renewed effectively and equitably, and as a vehicle for implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

- 10. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Management.** Development of sewer and water infrastructure should be coordinated between jurisdictions, managed for efficient and reliable supply to customers, and interconnected to provide backup in emergencies.
- 11. Actively Participate in Local Regional Planning Efforts.** The Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center is continually undertaking new planning efforts that can and will have an impact on the future of Habersham County. The county needs to stay in touch with these efforts and actively participate in them.
- 12. Actively Participate in Appalachian Region Planning Efforts.** The county has been successful in receiving grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a federal-state partnership that works with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life. The county should continue to work with the ARC and look for opportunities to utilize assistance from the organization to increase job opportunities in the county and improve infrastructure.
- 13. Continuation of Quarterly Council of Governments Meetings.** Increased County/municipalities collaboration is largely tied to cooperation instigated by the quarterly Council of Governments meetings. All efforts should be made to continue these meetings and to include other relevant groups, including the School Board, the Hospital Authority, and the Industrial Development Authority. Better collaboration will lead to a stronger Habersham County over time.
- 14. Continued Enhancement of Recreational Facilities.** Habersham County has excellent recreational facilities, but with a doubling of population projected for the planning period, those facilities will need expanding, either on the current sites or on new sites. An opportunity may exist to accomplish expansion jointly with the School District and the municipalities.
- 15. Equitable Service Delivery.** Ensure that all services offered and provided by the county and the municipalities to citizens re equitable to all parties.

4.2.5 Transportation

Issues:

- 1. High Accident Rates.** There are many accidents on SR 15, SR 17, SR 105, SR 365, and SR 385.
- 2. County Transportation Planning.** Numerous road corridors in the county are rapidly approaching gridlock. Unless the 365/441 corridors become fully limited access, traffic congestion will become a detriment to new business, to commuters, and to tourist. Business 441 between Cornelia and Clarkesville has already reached that state. As a

consequence of strip development patterns, congestion occurs on the major routes such as US 23/441, SR 17, SR 105, and SR 197 which are the main tourist and commercial routes across the county and to the municipalities. Habersham County and its municipalities should consider completing a long-range, comprehensive transportation plan to prioritize issues and secure funding for projects. Currently, there is no up-to-date, long-term plan that directs these future projects.

- 3. Traffic Congestion in Tourist Season.** Peak tourism season (November) traffic volumes can be almost 200 percent higher than typical volumes during the off season. The County and its municipalities should provide appropriate information to residents and visitors alike to work towards avoiding major traffic congestions. Information may include alternate routes and non-peak travel times. Improvements in the County's ecotourism efforts could validate the appropriateness of a shuttle service for tourists traveling to the same destination.

Opportunities:

- 4. Manage Development on 365/441 Corridor.** The 365/441 corridor is a critical road in Habersham County. The road not only facilitates travel for residents but also is a major selling point for businesses choosing to locate in the county. To ensure the highway's long-term viability, it is essential that the road is converted to limited access. The County and its municipalities should work closely with GDOT and neighboring counties, including Stephens, Hall, Banks, and White County, to ensure that this project remains a top priority.
- 5. Regional Transportation Planning.** To ensure the proper coordination and execution of much needed transportation improvements, the County and the cities need to develop jointly an updated, county wide Transportation Plan that addresses the highway corridors, creates bypasses around the cities, designates truck routes and upgrades those county roads in the vicinity of major developments. The county needs to be actively involved in transportation planning at the Georgia Mountain Regional Development Center and Georgia Department of Transportation.
- 6. Frontage Roads along Main Corridors.** Community members highly support the use of frontage roads in the county. These roads will be particularly useful along major corridors such as 365/441, particularly as it is converted to a limited access road. Frontage roads minimize congestion on major corridors by providing parallel travel options and access to businesses or residences that would otherwise be cut-off due to conversion to a limited access roadway. The county should develop a joint plan with the municipalities to require all future development on this corridor to be on access roads, requesting DOT to not approve any new curb and median cuts.
- 7. Preserving / Developing Greenways and Bicycle Trails.** Habersham County needs to expand on the existing bicycle routes system and connect to other facilities such as the

recommendations should be followed by all jurisdictions to limit conflict and to grow in a uniform fashion.

6. **Greater Development Coordination in Region.** Commuting patterns indicate a strong economic integration between Habersham and surrounding counties. To help mitigate the effects of employer losses and increase potential for state and federal grants, the Banks-Habersham-Rabun County Joint Development Authority was formed. By encouraging these partnerships, Habersham County's workforce and residents will have an opportunity to achieve the optimal economic situation for both themselves and the county.

4.3 Joint Approach to Future Development Patterns

The Habersham community has defined the desired patterns for future development within the county and participating municipalities through the use of character areas. These are areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that among the different areas, incorporated and unincorporated within the community.

For the sake of a unified vision and joint planning, the community has agreed to work from the same “pallet” of 22 character areas. Some of these areas are found only in the unincorporated areas, others only in the municipalities, and a few cross over jurisdictional boundaries. Figure 4-1 provides a synopsis of the range of character areas used in the community and notes in which jurisdictions they are found. Figure 4-2 is the county-wide Future Development Map which depicts where different character areas are found throughout the entire community.

Figure 4-1: Character Areas of Habersham County

Character Area	General Description	Where Found
365 Corridor	Areas where steps will be taken to ensure that new development does not impede traffic flow along this high-capacity roadway or become an impediment to converting it to a limited access highway.	County Demorest
441 Throughway	The primary route for commuters, tourist, and commercial traffic into and out of the County from the north. The area will be maintained as a high speed throughway, while preserving adjacent open space and agricultural lands.	County
Business Park	Areas that are planned for developments housing offices, technology businesses and other green industry that is compatible with the adjacent land uses.	County Cornelia
Commercial	Areas containing a variety of retail uses in small buildings and strip malls.	County Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Mt. Airy
Developing Residential	Areas mostly located just outside or near municipal boundaries that are developing with suburban style single-family residences.	County Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Downtown	The heart of the cities and towns in Habersham County, these areas often contain historic structures and generally have a pedestrian scale. Uses include retail, service, offices, civic uses and in some instances residences.	Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest

Joint Community Agenda

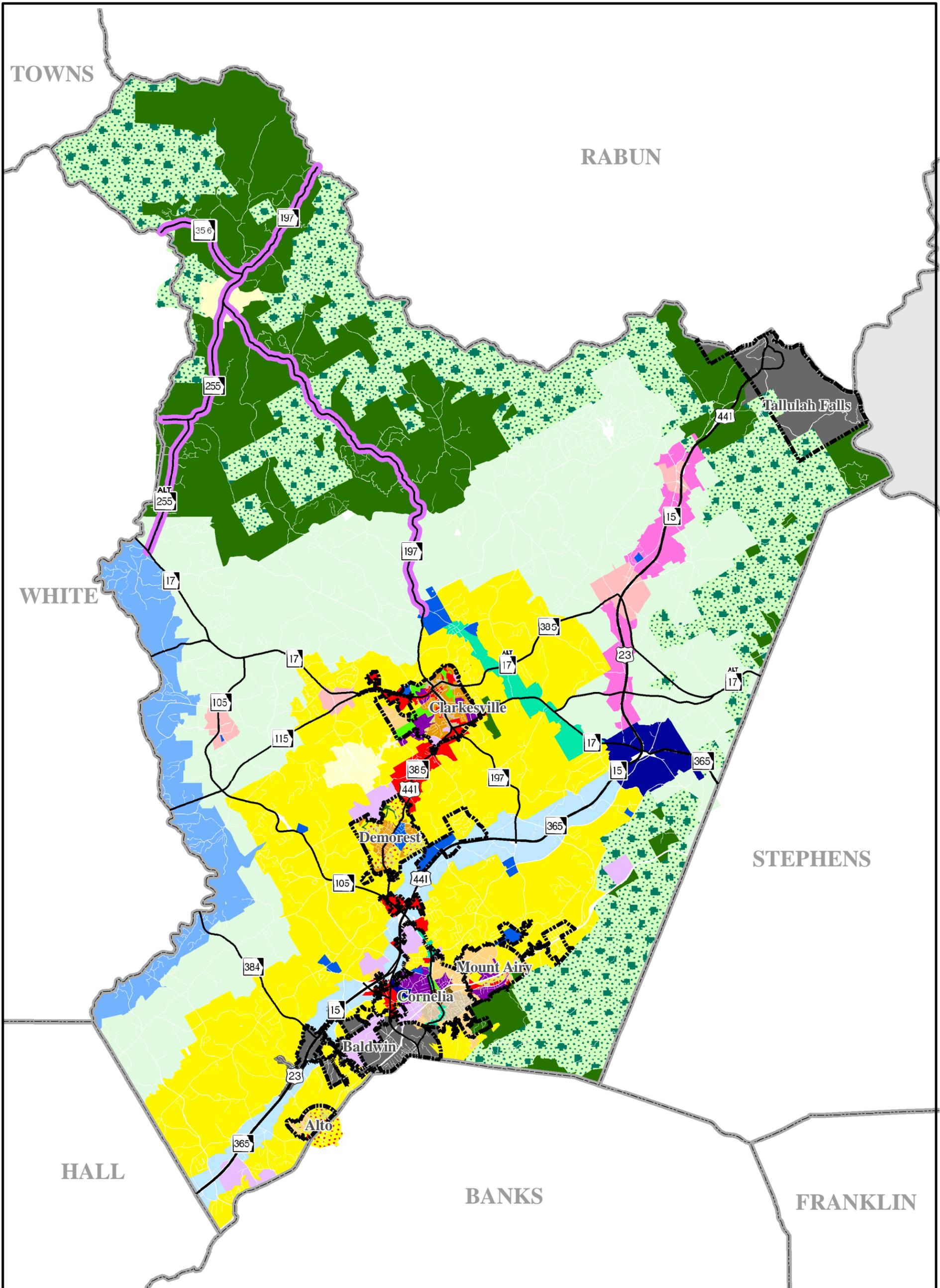
Character Area	General Description	Where Found
Education Center	School and college locations throughout the community.	County Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Gateway Corridor	Major transportation routes in county and municipalities where the focus will be on visually appealing development that provides visitors with a good first impression and traffic mitigation.	County Cornelia
Greenway	Areas of environmentally sensitive lands such as may be found along or near rivers, wetlands, lakes and ponds or those areas which may be used for greenspace or open space in the future.	Clarkesville Cornelia Mt. Airy
Historic Area	Areas of older structures that are or have the potential to be on the National Register of Historic Places.	Clarkesville Cornelia
Historic 441 Mixed Use Corridor	Old 441 Business Highway where there has been some disinvestment in older, no-longer-viable commercial uses but where there is great potential for regionally significant tourism redevelopment.	Demorest
Industrial / Institutional	These areas consist of existing or planned areas for industrialized uses and areas where larger more land intensive institutions are located.	County Clarkesville Cornelia
Mixed Residential	Areas with a mixture of housing types including single-family residences on lots of varying sizes and mobile homes.	Alto Clarkesville Demorest Mt. Airy
Neighborhood Business Center	Service activity areas located at or near highway intersections that provide a mixture of uses to serve commuters, tourist and nearby residential, rural and agricultural areas. These areas will continue to develop as local business hubs with planned commercial development encouraged while protecting adjacent rural and residential development.	County
Resource Conservation	These areas include scenic views, steep slopes, woodlands, meadows, environmentally sensitive areas and large parcels of actively farmed land, including those used for poultry and livestock production.	County Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Revitalization Area	Neighborhoods that have most of their original housing stock in place, but where housing conditions are worsening due to low rates of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance.	Clarkesville Cornelia Mt. Airy
River Protection Corridor	The Chattahoochee, Soque, Tallulah and Tugaloo River corridors which will be protected environmentally and scenically by an overlay district that restricts buildings and land disturbance activities that would endanger these water resources.	County
Rural Conservation	Unique rural neighborhoods with large lots and undeveloped land that help establish the rural character of the County.	County

Joint Community Agenda

Character Area	General Description	Where Found
Rural Village	Service activity areas located at highway intersections that provide a mixture of uses to serve passers-by and adjoining rural and agricultural areas.	County
Scenic Road Corridor	These corridors are noteworthy for their natural, scenic, and pastoral views.	County
Stable Neighborhood	Well established and maintained single-family residential neighborhoods.	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Mt. Airy
Traditional Neighborhood	These areas are comprised of older homes from the middle to late 20 th century, typified by single-story ranch style homes, split level and modern era architectural styles. These areas have well established yards, tree growth and landscapes.	Clarkesville Demorest

Although the core concepts of each character area are consistent regardless where it is located; existing development patterns, design traditions and preferences, and development regulations differ among the six separate jurisdictions that are party to this Joint Comprehensive Plan. Due to these differences, the means of implementing a particular character area may differ from government to government within the county. To accommodate these differences, a Future Development Map and accompanying narrative has been prepared for each separate jurisdiction participating in this plan. These may be found in the following sections of this document: 5.3 Unincorporated Habersham County, 6.3 Town of Alto, 7.3 City of Clarkesville, 8.3 City of Cornelia, 9.3 City of Demorest and 10.3 Town of Mt. Airy.

The future development narratives found in these sections include locally specific information for each character area shown on the jurisdiction’s Future Development Map, including what types, forms, styles, and patterns of development are to be encouraged in the area; a listing of the land uses, or if applicable for the locality, zoning categories that will be allowed in the area, identification of implementation measures that will be undertaken to achieve the desired development patterns for the area, and a listing of the Quality Community Objectives that will be pursued in the area.



**Habersham County 2029
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 4-1:
Habersham County
Future Development*



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 365 Corridor 441 Throughway Scenic Highway Corridor Gateway Corridor Rural Conservation Resource Conservation Greenway River Protection Corridor | <p>Future Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Village Developing Residential Stable Neighborhood Traditional Neighborhood Mixed Residential Historic Area Historic 441 Mixed Use Corridor Revitalization Area Education Center Business Park Neighborhood Business Center Commercial Downtown Industrial/Institutional Non participating jurisdiction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State & Federal Highways Local Roads National Forest County Lines City Limits |
|---|---|---|



May 2008

4.4 Implementation Strategies for Habersham County Joint Community Agenda

Introduction

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 4.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (one to five years), Mid-Range (five to ten years) or Long-Range (more than ten years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this plan, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Joint Short-Term Work Programs for County and participating municipalities (Section 4.6).

Jurisdictions and Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
<i>AAA (NEGA)</i>	Area Agency on Aging (North East Georgia Mountains)
<i>Alto</i>	Alto (Town of)
<i>APD</i>	Alto Police Department
<i>ARC</i>	Appalachian Regional Commission
<i>ASP</i>	Arrendale State Prison
<i>Baldwin</i>	City of Baldwin
<i>Banks</i>	Banks County
<i>BHRJDA</i>	Banks/Habersham /Rabun Joint Development Authority
<i>CoBHP</i>	Cornelia Better Hometown Program
<i>CIBCA</i>	Clarkesville Business & Community Association
<i>Clarkesville</i>	Clarkesville (City of)
<i>CIFD</i>	Clarkesville Fire Department
<i>CIPC</i>	Clarkesville Planning Commission
<i>CIPD</i>	Clarkesville Police Department
<i>CIPDD</i>	Clarkesville Planning and Development Department
<i>CIPWD</i>	Clarkesville Public Work Department
<i>Cornelia</i>	Cornelia (City of)
<i>CoBHP</i>	Cornelia Better Hometown Program
<i>CoBZD</i>	Cornelia Building and Zoning Department
<i>CoDDA</i>	Cornelia Downtown Development Authority
<i>CoFD</i>	Cornelia Fire Department
<i>CoHA</i>	Cornelia Housing Authority
<i>CoHRD</i>	Cornelia Human Resources Department
<i>CoPD</i>	Cornelia Police Department
<i>CoPB</i>	Cornelia Planning Board
<i>CoPUD</i>	Cornelia Public Utilities Department
<i>Demorest</i>	Demorest (City of)
<i>DPC</i>	Demorest Planning Commission
<i>DPD</i>	Demorest Police Department

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
FGG	Friends of Good Government
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GDATE	Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education
GDED	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDEH	Georgia Department of Environmental Health
GDFCS	Georgia Department of Family and Children Services
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
GDOL	Georgia Department of Labor
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
GHPD	Georgia Historic Preservation Division
GMRDC	Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center
GPED	Georgia Power Economic Development
GODD	Georgia Office of Downtown Development
GQSP	Georgia QuickStart Program
HCAA	Habersham County Airport Authority
HCA	Habersham County Attorney
HCBOC	Habersham County Board of Commissioners
HCCC	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
HCBOE	Habersham County Board of Education
HCBD	Habersham County Building Department
HCCES	Habersham County Cooperative Extension Service
HCIDA	Habersham County Industrial Development Authority
HCDED	Habersham County Director of Economic Development
HCFCFS	Habersham County Family & Children Services
HCFB	Habersham County Farm Bureau
HCFinD	Habersham County Finance Department
HCFD	Habersham County Fire Department
HCHS	Habersham County Historical Society
HCHRD	Habersham County Human Resources Department
HCITD	Habersham County Information Technology Department
HCLS	Habersham County Library System
HCM	Habersham County Manager
HCMC	Habersham County Medical Center
HCPC	Habersham County Planning Commission
HCPD	Habersham County Planning Department
HCRecD	Habersham County Recreation Department
HCRoD	Habersham County Roads Department
HCSD	Habersham County Sheriff's Department
HCSWD	Habersham County Solid Waste Department
HCTA	Habersham County Tax Assessor

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
<i>HCUW</i>	Habersham County United Way
<i>HCWA</i>	Habersham County Water Authority
<i>HCWD</i>	Habersham County Water Department
<i>Hall</i>	Hall County
<i>HWHBA</i>	Habersham / White Homebuilders Association
<i>Mt. Airy</i>	Mount Airy (Town of)
<i>MAPD</i>	Mt. Airy Police Department
<i>NTHP</i>	National Trust for Historic Preservation
<i>TNC</i>	The Nature Conservancy
<i>NEGHA</i>	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
<i>NGTC</i>	North Georgia Technical College
<i>NS</i>	Norfolk Southern Corporation
<i>Path</i>	The Path Foundation
<i>PC</i>	Piedmont College
<i>Rabun</i>	Rabun County
<i>SRWA</i>	Soque River Watershed Association
<i>Tallulah Falls</i>	Tallulah Falls (City of)
<i>TPL</i>	The Trust for Public Land
<i>USFS</i>	U.S. Forest Service
<i>USHUD</i>	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
<i>USSCS</i>	U.S. Soil Conservation Service

4.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Infrastructure Challenges and Needs.
2. Out Migration of Younger Population.
3. Improved Graduation Rates and Better Prepared Workforce.
4. Tourism / Ecotourism.
5. Need for Some Uniformity of Tax Incentives across the County.
6. Investment in Economic Development to Broaden Economic and Tax Bases.
7. New Growth in Education and Health Services.
8. Consideration of Impact Fees.
9. Proximity of Colleges.
10. Alcohol with Dining.

Economic Development has been identified as a priority by Habersham County and its municipalities. The current jobs-housing balance reflects a need for greater economic development to help even out the tax base and provide sufficient jobs for county residents. The

following strategies have been identified as those that will help create a sustainable economy over time.

ED-1. Infrastructure Challenges and Needs.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Appoint a Public Utility Cooperative, representing all jurisdictions in the county, to oversee water and sewer infrastructure and coordinate its development	<i>Short-Term</i>		<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest HCWD Mt. Airy HCWA HCBOD</i>
Identify jointly the existing sewer and water infrastructure and develop short and long-term countywide goals for sewer and water infrastructure expansion, with the intent of using infrastructure to steer growth. Sewer system development should consider its impact as a way to increase water withdrawal limitations.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Public Utility Cooperative</i>	<i>Alto Baldwin Cornelia Clarksville Demorest HCWD Mt. Airy HCWA HCBOD</i>
Review jointly the designs of sewer and water infrastructure by individual jurisdiction for consistency with the short and long goals of the Community Agenda	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Public Utility Cooperative</i>	<i>Alto Baldwin Cornelia Clarksville Demorest HCWD Mt. Airy HCWA HCBOD</i>
Ensure consistency in permitting process for sewer and water installations across jurisdictions.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy</i>	
Jointly maintain an inventory of areas in the county with sufficient water and sewer capacity to accept industrial, commercial and high density residential growth.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCWD Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCCC HCIDA</i>
Investigate the appropriateness of Infrastructure Development Districts (IDDs) and Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) as mechanisms for funding infrastructure expansions necessary to support new development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCDED</i>	<i>Alto Baldwin Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Mt. Airy</i>

ED-2. Out Migration of Younger Population.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work closely with higher education institutes to link academic programs and enrolled students with appropriate area industries, decreasing out migration and encouraging in migration.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>HCCC</i>	<i>NGTC PC GDOL</i>
Develop a business incubator for small start-up businesses.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCCC GDEcD</i>
Develop strategy for bringing higher paying jobs into county. This strategy should include identifying target industries to attract.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCDED HCCC HCIDA BHJDA</i>	<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy</i>
Survey younger resident and college population to identify additional attractions, facilities, activities, etc. that would encourage them to stay in the area over time.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCDED HCCC PC NGTC HCBOE</i>	<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy GDOL</i>

ED-3. Improved Graduation Rates and Better Prepared Workforce.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify students at risk of not completing high school and generate special programs to keep them on schedule for graduation. Establish appropriate performance goals for improving graduation rates. Meet annual performance goals for improvement in graduation rates. Establish and support Charter Schools to fit the varying educational needs of students.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCBOE</i>	<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy PC NGTC</i>
Develop strong English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the school system to keep growing minority population up to speed in school programs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCBOE</i>	<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy</i>
Link new and potential businesses in the community with nationally-acclaimed QuickStart program to help meet agency's labor force needs.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>NGTC HCCC GQSP</i>	<i>Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Match labor needs with training resources, particularly as the economy continues to diversify from its historical, agricultural and manufacturing base. Utilize the resources of Piedmont and NGTC for graduate, undergraduate and continuing education and retraining for adults.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDOL NGTC GQSP PC

ED-4. Tourism / Ecotourism.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Establish a Convention and Tourist Authority to manage tourism as a business enterprise.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCBOC</i>	Clarkesville Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Evaluate all programs for attracting tourists and develop an aggressive plan, including staffing needed to make tourism and ecotourism major contributors to the local economy. Utilize capability of PC and NGTC to host conferences and meetings bringing visitors to the area.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Tourism Authority HCDED HCCC	Clarkesville Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy PC NGTC
Market historic sites to visitors through separate campaigns (e.g. historic tours, resource pamphlet, etc.) Develop consistent and noticeable signage for historical resources.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Tourism Authority HCDED HCCC	GDEcD Clarkesville Habersham Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Complete National Historic Register Nominations as appropriate to bring recognition to special resources.	<i>Long-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCHS GHPD NTHP

ED-5. Need for Some Uniformity of Tax Incentives across the County.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an inventory of existing tax incentives for all area jurisdictions.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCDED HCIDA HCTA	Alto Cornelia Clarksville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy
Identify conflicting tax policies and identify ways to modify policies to develop a consistent business environment across jurisdictions.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCDED</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy

Joint Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Consider the extension of the Free-Port incentive outside of Clarkesville and Cornelia. Also consider TADS.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCCC HCDA
Identify and work towards passing appropriate incentives to help revitalize area towns and crossroads communities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia CIPDD Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDCA GDEcD

ED-6. Investment in Economic Development to Broaden Economic and Tax Bases.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a strategic plan for expansion of Industrial Parks needed for attracting new businesses. Use experienced individuals residing in the county as resources.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCDED HCIDA HCBOC	HCCC BHRJDA GDED GPED
Modify / develop recruiting materials for soliciting new businesses to the County, emphasizing both livability and potential for PC and NGTC to provide skilled workforce.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCDED HCIDA HCCC	NGTC PC
Develop a regional plan for economic development.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	BHRJDA	HCIDA

ED-7. New Growth in Education and Health Services.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with state medical schools to bring appropriate graduates to work at county medical facilities. Market the availability of Nursing graduates from Piedmont College.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCMC HCCC	Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy
Develop incentives to bring more medical specialists and needed doctors to the county.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCMC HCCC	
Continue expanding medical treatment facilities as needed for expanding population.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCMC	
Coordinate visions and strategic plans of HCMC, PC and NGTC to expand academic programs to fill local needs and obtain maximum synergy between these institutions.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	PC NGTC HCMC	
Encourage coordination efforts between educational institutions and local businesses to grow curriculum as needed for employee training & retraining	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCBOE PC NGTC HCCC	HCCC

ED-8. Consideration of Impact Fees.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
During this Comprehensive plan, Impact Fees are a means to support the policy that new development will be responsible for the financial burden it imposes on the community, with capability to exempt part or all of development projects that create extraordinary economic development and employment growth or workforce housing.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCIDA HCDED Banks BHRJDA
Analyze provision of services in Character Areas and the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan that affect service delivery, with the goal to determine the most effective use of Impact Fees.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	
Establish Capital Improvement Elements (CIE) and submit as amendments to this Comprehensive Plan for implementation of the Impact Fees selected.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

ED-9. Proximity of Colleges.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College to develop a broad array of appropriate night classes and other academic and cultural activities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	PC NGTC HCIDA HCCC	GMRDC GDATE Clarkesville Habersham Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Expand use of campuses for conferences and meetings bringing visitors to the area.	<i>Ongoing</i>	PC NGTC HCIDA HCCC	GMRDC GDATE Clarkesville Habersham Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Develop a facility-sharing policy, where appropriate, for both public buildings and college facilities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Clarkesville Habersham Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy PC NGTC	HCBOE

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop partnerships with area businesses for providing internships and on-the-job training.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCCC HCMC PC NGTC	

ED-10. Alcohol with Dining.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Analyze impact that the inability to have alcohol with dining results in: 1- High end restaurants unwilling to locate here; 2- Revenues lost when residents travel to other communities to be able to choose alcohol when they dine; and 3- Priorities of Tourism in this Plan being impeded.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCCC HCIDA Tourism Authority Cornelia
Schedule a referendum to be on the ballot in a regular election to allow the community the opportunity to decide whether customers should be able to choose to have alcoholic beverages while dining.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

4.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Change in Housing Preferences tied to Demographic Shifts.
2. Special Housing Needs
3. Workforce Housing.

Habersham County and its municipalities will experience notable population growth over the planning period. It is critical that all jurisdictions provide an appropriate mix of housing types to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population.

H-1. Change in Housing Preferences tied to Demographic Shifts.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Monitor ongoing population trends to determine the appropriateness of permitting new subdivisions. Communicate major anticipated developments to other area jurisdictions, including the Habersham County Board of Education.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto CoPB CIPC Demorest HCPC Mt. Airy	CIPDD CoBZD HCPD HCBOE HWHBA

Joint Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review and revise subdivision regulations to make sure that they reflect existing community character and do not infringe upon the natural attributes of the county.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CoPB CIPC Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	CIPDD CoBZD HCPD
Develop infill housing regulations in jurisdictions where no regulations exist for vacant lots and abandoned houses.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Mt. Airy Alto Demorest HCPD	GDCA
Encourage the development of senior housing in areas determined appropriate by the Future Development Map.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto CoPDD CIPD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	CoPB CIPC HCPD

H-2. Special Housing Needs.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Define the need for shelter space, in light of expanding population, and develop commitments with the appropriate agencies to provide the new space needed.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCUW Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	USHUD Area non-profits

H-3. Workforce Housing.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Appoint a special housing committee to study the availability of workforce housing and any threats to the existing affordable housing stock throughout the county.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HWHBA Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	NEGHA CoHA HCPD GPB CIPC
Reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing by reviewing effects of minimum lot requirements, allowance for granny flats, and other related policies, amending regulations as determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	HWHBA
Provide financial assistance programs for first-time and low-to-moderate income home buyers.	<i>Ongoing</i>	USHUD GDCA Local banks	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Provide credit counseling programs for homebuyers and current home owners, including pre-purchase counseling, mortgage default, post-occupancy counseling, and other related topics as deemed appropriate for existing and potential residents.	<i>Ongoing</i>	NEGHA CoHA GDCA USHUD NGTC	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy

4.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Scenic Beauty and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas.
2. Water Conservation.
3. Identification of Historic Resources.
4. Transferable Development Rights.
5. Tallulah Gorge State Park.
6. Encourage Public Private Partnerships to Address Environmental Concerns.
7. Habersham Historical Society & Museum.
8. Storm Water Management.

The natural and cultural resources of Habersham County are one of the area’s greatest assets for retaining a high quality of life and maintaining a healthy/balanced economy. Maintenance of these resources will set the county and its municipalities apart from other areas in the future as growth expands outward from nearby metropolitan areas. The area’s jurisdictions should pursue these strategies to secure this eco-friendly position and reputation in the region.

NCR-1. Scenic Beauty and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Provisions should be made in all area codes to allow for conservation subdivisions, as a practical and inexpensive way to create greenways, protect scenic beauty, and permanently protect open space in the subdivision process	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Mt. Airy Demorest Habersham	CIPDD CoBZD
Use character area mapping to update zoning and other regulations in the county to steer growth and encourage conservation.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCOBC	GEPD

Joint Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop and adopt a tree preservation ordinance, requiring the protection of a reasonable number of trees on lots that are being developed. Regulations should be constructed as to eliminate clear-cutting of lots throughout the county. Where preservation of existing trees is unreasonable, a tree replacement program should be required.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	CIPDD CoBZD HCPD
Identify, draft, and/or modify development regulations to protect scenic view, ridgelines and mountains and ecological resources. See CSF-13 Sign Ordinance	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCOB	GEPD TNC

NCR-2. Water Conservation.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an educational program for consumers on water and energy conservation targeted both at school children and adults. Emphasize plumbing and electrical retrofits, and grants for improvements.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCWA HCBOE GP HEMC NGTC SRWA	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy
Develop a countywide Water and Energy Conservation program for suppliers, including a countywide water loss tracking process and corrective measures as needed. To be adopted by all jurisdictions.	<i>Short-term</i>	HCWA HCBOE GP HEMC NGTC SRWA	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy
Review all codes to identify opportunities for innovative use of grey water, recycling, etc.	<i>Short term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

NCR-3. Identification of Historic Resources.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Update the countywide 1990s historic resources survey. By doing so, area governments will be able to identify resources now qualifying as historic that should be protected under local regulations.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	HCHS GHPD
Strengthen existing regulations to protect historic resources in the community. Smaller communities such as Mt. Airy and Alto may require the generation of new regulations.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GHPD HCHS

Joint Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an informational package regarding state and federal tax rebates and incentives for reuse and conversion of old buildings, for utilization by developers The Habersham Mill should serve as a working example of the effectiveness adaptive reuse in the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	BHRJDA HCIDA HCCC	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy GHPD
Review Habersham County sites listed on NARHGIS, and identify those structures and sites that are exceptionally significant structures. Take steps to add the above identified sites to the National Register of Historic Places.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	Alto CoPDD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	HCHS GHPD
Develop a housing rehabilitation program to assist those homeowners with historic homes and limited financial means to keep those sites in repair. Governments should work together to identify potential funding sources, including state and federal grants, that can help fund these programs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GHPD NEGHA CoHA USHUD
Complete National Historic Register Nominations as appropriate to bring recognition to special resources.	<i>Long-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCHS GHPD NTHR

NCR-4. Transferable Development Rights

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Obtain the state and experienced resources to help design the process for implementing TDRs, including appropriate processes for selling, purchasing, and banking development rights.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDCA GMRDC GDED HCFB
Approve the necessary regulations to implement TDR's and authorize the agencies needed for implementation	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

NCR-5. Tallulah Gorge State Park.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
As a part of its efforts to increase ecotourism, the county should better market Tallulah Gorge State Park as a resource for both residents and tourists. These efforts should be correlated with other efforts to increase marketing of the county and its cities unique resources to tourists.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>Clarkesville</i> <i>Cornelia</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>Habersham</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDNR</i> <i>Rabun</i> <i>Tallulah Falls</i> <i>GDEcD</i>

NCR-6. Encourage Public Private Partnerships to Address Environmental Concerns.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work collaboratively with the Soque River Watershed Association to develop a long-term strategy for preserving and best-utilizing the Soque River for community enjoyment.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>Clarkesville</i> <i>Cornelia</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>Habersham</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>SRWA</i>
Work with area recycling and “clean and green” groups to help eliminate debris on roadways and within environmentally sensitive areas, such as parks, bodies of water, and other community spaces.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>CIPWD</i> <i>Cornelia</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>HCSWD</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>NPS</i> <i>GEPD</i>

NCR-7. Habersham Historical Society & Museum.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Support efforts by the Habersham Historical Society by sharing facilities, providing staff support, and championing programs and initiatives, when appropriate.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>Clarkesville</i> <i>Cornelia</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>Habersham</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCHS</i> <i>HCBOE</i> <i>PC</i> <i>NGTC</i>
Work with the Historical Society to develop marketing materials that show the historical character of the county’s municipalities and unincorporated areas.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>Clarkesville</i> <i>Cornelia</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>Habersham</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCHS</i> <i>HCCC</i> <i>GDEcD</i> <i>GHPD</i>

NCR-8. Storm Water Management.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a county wide plan for storm water management, its beneficial reuse and return to the streams. Fund and implement Plan	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>Clarkesville</i> <i>Cornelia</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>Habersham</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GEPD</i> <i>USSCS</i> <i>SRWA</i>

4.4.4 Intergovernmental Coordination of Services and Facilities

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Water supply.
2. Police Service.
3. Fire Service.
4. Intergovernmental Agreements.
5. School Overcrowding.
6. Coordinate Development and Education.
7. Land use conflicts and service delivery issues that result from annexation.
8. Develop a Joint Sign Ordinance.
9. Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Renewal.
10. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Management.
11. Actively Participation in Local Regional Planning Efforts.
12. Actively Participate in Appalachian Regional Planning Efforts.
13. Continuation of Quarterly Council of Governments Meetings.
14. Continued Enhancement of Recreational Facilities.

The community visioning process showed the community’s overall support for greater intergovernmental coordination between the county and other area jurisdictions. The implementation strategies below will help lead to more efficient, coherent, and collaborative services in the county and its municipalities.

CSF-1. Water Supply.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Maintain priority on purchasing water from Toccoa, including joint investments that potentially could result in the county receiving 25 million gallons per day.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOC HCWA	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Complete a detailed study regarding the feasibility of building or enlarging a water storage reservoir in Habersham County as an alternative should purchased water not be possible.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOC HCWA	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy
Establish the appropriate mechanism for all jurisdictions to act as one in efforts to obtain permits for water withdrawal, reservoir construction and maintenance, etc.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto Baldwin Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy Tallulah Falls	

CSF-2. Police Service.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Commission a professional study, preferably with Carl Vinson Institution of Government, to examine the benefits of consolidation of services to handle the increasing services accompanying the projected growth in population indicated in the Comprehensive Plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallulah Falls
Analyze the results of the study and decide if the community would benefit from consolidation of services. Develop a plan to accomplish any decision to consolidate service	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallulah Falls

CSF-3. Fire Service.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Commission a professional study, preferably by Carl Vinson Institute of Government, to examine the benefits of consolidation of services to handle the increasing services accompanying the projected growth in population indicated in the Comprehensive Plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallulah Falls
Analyze the results of the study and decide if the community would benefit from consolidation of services. Develop a plan to accomplish any decision to consolidate service.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallulah Falls

CSF-4. Intergovernmental Agreements.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
The County and municipalities will establish an urban service boundary beyond which water and sewer infrastructure will not be provided in order to maintain rural character. Service Delivery Areas of municipalities are and will continue to be inside the boundary.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Baldwin Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy Tallulah Falls	
Update the Service Delivery Strategy for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, to clearly establish service boundaries and to record agreements as changes occur with the provision of services.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GMRDC GDCA

CSF-5 and CSF-6. School Overcrowding & Coordinate Development and Education.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Support the HCBOE efforts to develop a construction plan for additional schools needed as the population doubles in 20 years. These plans should be coordinated with anticipated infrastructure development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCBOE
Develop a process by which the School Board has a voice in all major permitting and variance decisions that will have an impact on the local school system and affected local governments have a voice in the location of new schools and related facilities. These procedures should be outlined in formal procedural documents.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOE HCBOC Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Mt. Airy	GMRDC HCPC CIPC CoPB

CSF-7. Land Use Conflicts and Service Delivery Issues that Result from Annexation.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review and coordinate zoning in areas planned for annexation in order to prevent annexation due to shopping for regulations	<i>Short-term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	
Within the Urban Service Boundaries, the county and cities/towns Planning Staff will jointly review any changes in land use or potential developments.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	GMRDC GDCA

CSF-8. Develop Joint Sign Ordinance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a sign ordinance that is consistent across political boundaries, that provides appropriate communication for businesses, but that protects the scenic beauty of the county. Employ needed legal assistance to assure enforceability of resulting ordinance.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	GMRDC

CSF-9. Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) Renewal.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a public outreach campaign to communicate the benefits of SPLOST to community members. This campaign should include local newspapers, city/county websites, and signage at facilities that benefited from SPLOST funds.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOE Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

Joint Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Use SPLOST funds to implement this Comprehensive Plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOE Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

CSF-10. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Management.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Study management options for water and sewer infrastructure in Habersham County, with the goal being that water systems operate as if they were one.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	HCWA Baldwin Tallulah Falls
Evaluate the physical condition of the water and sewer systems in the county, forecasting the capital requirements for the 20 year planning period and develop a cost effective plan for maintaining and expanding those facilities, whether jointly or singly	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallulah Falls
Develop and implement a program for fully interconnecting the existing and planned water systems of Habersham County, allowing continuity of service during emergencies.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallulah Falls

CSF-11. Actively Participation in Local Regional Planning Efforts.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Through the Council of Governments, area governments should maintain communication regarding ongoing planning efforts including zoning, area plans, and changes in development regulations.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GMRDC HCBOE HCIDA

CSF-12. Actively participate in Appalachian Region Planning Efforts.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Regularly monitor opportunities for grants and other assistance that is available at the through the Appalachian Regional Commission.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCFD	

CSF-13. Continuation of Quarterly Council of Governments Meetings.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Continue and expand the Quarterly Council of Governments meetings. Consider meeting on a more regular basis and including Commissions and Authorities, such as Habersham County Board of Education, the Hospital Authority, and the Industrial Development Authority, where appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	Tallulah Falls Baldwin
Create a council of County / City Managers to assist coordination between jurisdictions	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>All jurisdictions</i>	

CSF-14. Continued Enhancement of Recreational Facilities.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a strategic plan to continue developing the county's recreational facilities and programs. Both future location of facilities and program content should be evaluated. The County, municipalities and Board of Education should participate jointly in that plan. Consider the need for a Recreational Authority.	<i>Short-term</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest HCRcd Mt. Airy HCBOE	<i>HCPD</i>
Work with the Board of Education to determine the potential to open school recreational facilities to the public during hours when school facilities are not in use. Create an intergovernmental agreement to spell-out any arrangements	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOE Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest HCRcd Mt. Airy	
Identify land that is suitable for additional recreational facilities, and pinpoint funding sources, including public/private partnerships, partnering with Board of Education and intergovernmental coordination that can help reduce the costs of land acquisition.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCRcd</i>	Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Mt. Airy
Evaluate existing and planned services jointly to ensure equity in fees and tax consideration in services to citizens.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCBOC Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Mt. Airy	

CSF-15. Equitable Service Delivery.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Evaluate existing and planned services jointly to ensure equity in fees and tax consideration in services to citizens.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCBOC Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Demorest Mt. Airy	

4.4.5 Transportation

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. High Accident Rates.
2. County Transportation Planning.
3. Traffic Congestion during Tourist Season.
4. Manage Development on 365/441 Corridor.
5. Regional Transportation Planning.
6. Frontage Roads along Main Corridors.
7. Preserving / Developing Greenways and Bicycle Trails.
8. Public Transportation.

The adequacy of an area’s transportation infrastructure plays an important role in its quality of life and ability to sustain a healthy economy. A growing population and limited transportation funding will require innovative strategies for making needed transportation improvements countywide.

T-1. High Accident Rates.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review and implement, where possible, the recommendations of the Committee that is now studying high vehicular accident areas of the county.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCRD HBCOC</i>	<i>Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy Baldwin</i>

T-2. County Transportation Planning.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Update the Comprehensive Transportation Plan for the entire county, based, in part, on this Comprehensive Plan. Coordinate efforts with the GMRDC and GDOT.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto CIBZD CoBZD Demorest HCRD Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GMRDC GDOT</i>

T-3. Traffic Congestion during Tourist Season.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Include information regarding best travel routes for visitors on tourism websites throughout the county.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>Alto CIPDD CoBZD Demorest HCRD Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDEcD GDOT</i>

Joint Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with GDOT to put in electronic signage along 365/441 regarding traffic congestion as traffic levels increase in the County.	<i>Long-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy GDOT	GMRDC
Publicize major festivals and events in local newspapers to provide residents with advanced notice regarding major traffic	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	

T-4. Manage Development on 365/441 Corridor.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a Master Plan for the entire 365/441 corridors to manage access, including implementing development and sign standards for the corridor character areas. Coordinate efforts with Hall County, the GMRDC and present plan to GDOT. Pursue faster implementation of GDOT's plans for these corridors	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy HCRD HCPC HBCOC	Baldwin Hall GMRDC GDOT
Work closely with GDOT and other area governments to ensure that 365/441 develops as a limited access freeway, thereby facilitating efficient traffic flow while not harming the area's rural character.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto Cornelia Demorest HCRD Mt. Airy	GDOT Hall Baldwin

T-5. Regional Transportation Planning.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Establish regular meetings with transportation staff and officials to improve lines of communication.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest HCRD Mt. Airy	GDOT GMRDC HCPD
Plan for increasing tourist traffic to area's state and national parks. Increase road capacity to allow for efficient flow of people without negatively impacting the environment.	<i>mid-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	GDOT USFS

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Consider the viability of a shuttle service from downtown areas to major ecotourism sites during peak tourist season. A shuttle system would minimize road congestion and limit air pollution associated with multiple cars going to the same destination.	<i>Long-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	HCCC HCDED

T-6. Frontage Roads along Main Corridors.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Create frontage roads, where possible, along 365 and 441 as it is changed to limited access. Maintain rural character through buffers and landscaping, while allowing commercial and industrial development on the access roads.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	Alto Cornelia Demorest HCRD Mt. Airy	GDOT Hall Baldwin

T-7. Preserving / Developing Greenways and Bicycle Trails.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Utilize the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to identify key areas to put bicycle lanes and routes throughout the county.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	GMRDC GDOT SRWA
Continue implementing trail system (begun in Clarkesville) to areas throughout county, allowing space for both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Connect trails to existing sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure. Continue implementing the rails to trails plan for the abandoned Tallulah Falls rail bed.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDOT GDOT SRWA
Develop bicycle facility standards (see DCA Model Code 2-6) to ensure adequate facilities are available for bicyclists.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDCA HCPD CIPDD CoBZD SRWA

T-8. Public Transportation.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Evaluate the need and feasibility of public transportation in Habersham County as population increases.	<i>Long-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDCA HCPD CIPDD CoBZD

4.4.6 Land Use

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Focus Industrial Development along 365.
2. Need for better Land Use / Transportation Coordination.
3. Varying Development Regulations
4. Coordination of Growth with Existing and Future Infrastructure
5. Use the Comprehensive Plan as the Guide to Making Land Use Decisions.
6. Greater Development Coordination in the Region.

The strategies identified here apply county-wide and should be considered in all character areas identified in the Future Development Maps for all of the participating jurisdictions.

LU-1. Focus Industrial Development along 365.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Focus Industrial Development along 365 and expand infrastructure as needed to encourage that growth.	Short-Term	Habersham Cornelia Demorest Alto	<i>BHRDDA HCIDA Baldwin</i>
Develop regulations to require visual buffers along 365 to preserve existing rural views and screen areas that are being developed on access roads.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto CIPDD CoBZD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCPC CoPB CIPC</i>

LU-2. Need for Better Land Use / Transportation Coordination.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Require review of all proposed development by the appropriate transportation officials as part of the approval process. Where road improvements are needed, require developers to fund those improvements.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto CIPDD CoBZD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy</i>	
Modify all land use ordinances to assure connectivity between similar types of development. Consider Performance Zoning in lieu of Specification Zoning.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto CIPDD CoBZD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy</i>	

LU-3. Varying Development Regulations.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Coordinate all updates to development regulations with other county jurisdictions. At minimal, a notification should be sent to other jurisdictions to inform them of an anticipated time frame for completing such changes.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	GMRDC
Consider creating unified countywide zoning and land use. Revamp zoning systems if and when determined a favorable policy for the county. Consider Performance Zoning in lieu of Specification Zoning.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GMRDC
Develop incentives (such as improvements to public facilities and services as well as streamlined regulations) to encourage infill subdivisions versus sprawl-pattern development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CIPDD CoBZD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	
Consider sharing or consolidating 911 mapping, planning and Building Inspection services	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy	GDCA HCPC CIPC CoPB

LU-4. Coordination of Growth with Existing and Future Infrastructure.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Check for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan when making decisions to expand sewer and water infrastructure. Particular attention should be given to the Future Development Map when making such decisions.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPC Mt. Airy	HCPC CoPB CIPC
Establish a Council of Planning Departments of municipal and County Planning Staff to discuss proposed changes in infrastructure, land use, annexations, incentives for infill where infrastructure exists, etc.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPD Mt. Airy	Baldwin Tallah Falls HCWA
Refer to Future Development Map when making permitting and variance decisions, particularly as it relates to sufficient infrastructure to support proposed growth.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Alto CoBZD CIPDD Demorest HCPC Mt. Airy	HCPC CoPB CIPC

LU-5. Use the Comprehensive Plan as the Guide to Making Land Use Decisions.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Follow the Comprehensive Plan when making all decisions regarding permitting, new developments, variance, and map amendment requests.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>CIPDD</i> <i>CoBZD</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>HCPD</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCPC</i> <i>CoPB</i> <i>CIPC</i>
Provide the Habersham County School Board with up-to-date Future Land Use Maps as appropriate. These maps should be a basis for determining locations of new schools and related facilities.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>CIPDD</i> <i>CoBZD</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>HCPD</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCBOE</i> <i>CoPB</i> <i>CIPC</i> <i>HCPC</i>

LU-6. Greater Development Coordination in the Region.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Advise adjacent county jurisdictions of all updates to development regulations and plans for infrastructure expansion.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i> <i>CoBZD</i> <i>CIPDD</i> <i>Demorest</i> <i>HCPD</i> <i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GMRDC</i>
Actively support the Banks / Habersham/ Rabun Joint development Authority	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>HCBOC</i>	<i>GDED</i>

4.5 Policies for Habersham County Joint Community Agenda

Policies are developed to provide ongoing guidance and direction to elected officials of the jurisdictions in Habersham County. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the community vision and addressing the jurisdictions' issues and opportunities. The policies included here are general in nature and should be used as guidance by all jurisdictions participating in this plan, specifically during budget, permitting, and zoning decisions.

These policies are organized around the six major elements of the plan:

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

4.5.1 Economic Development

- We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our communities' economy in terms of job skill requirements, linkage to existing businesses, and creation of a diverse mix of industries to ensure the sustainability of the local economy.
- We will encourage infrastructure development that facilitates economic growth and provides needed resources for potential businesses while protecting our scenic beauty and natural resources.
- We will jointly design, permit and coordinate operation of sewer and water infrastructure.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will promote tourism / ecotourism opportunities in the county focusing on natural resources, including fishing and hunting opportunities, hiking and sightseeing.
- We will build our economic development in cooperation with the education and training programs at Habersham Central High School, North Georgia Technical College and Piedmont College to help prepare the area's workforce for employment opportunities and minimize out migration of the younger population.

4.5.2 Housing

- We will seek to balance the supply of housing and employment in our community and consider their location in relation to each other, insuring that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community.
- We will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- We will encourage the development of housing options for senior citizens
- We will actively promote rehabilitation of older housing units to preserve the quality and quantity of the existing housing stock.
- We will work jointly with non-profit agencies to assure an adequate supply of temporary shelter for those in need.

4.5.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- The protection and conservation of our community’s scenic beauty, natural, cultural and historic resources will play an important role in the decision-making about future residential and business growth and development.
- We will minimize inefficient land consumption and encourage more compact urban development in order to preserve green / open space and natural resource areas.
- We are willing to explore new ways to preserve open space and conservation areas by amending the development regulations.
- We will encourage public/private partnerships to address environmental concerns
- We will work with the Soque River Watershed Association to ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources, while balancing the recreational opportunities of that resource.
- We will promote enhanced recycling initiatives and reduced roadside litter.
- Support the efforts of the Habersham Historical Society to preserve and promote the county’s historic resources.

4.5.4 Intergovernmental Coordination of Services and Facilities

- We will work jointly to ensure equity exists in Service Delivery agreements and delivery of services.
- We will work collaboratively to ensure the ongoing approval of vital funding such as SPLOST.
- We will establish the appropriate mechanism for all jurisdictions to act as one in efforts to permit water withdrawal, reservoir construction and maintenance.
- We will achieve efficient costs for water and sewer infrastructure through service delivery areas inside an urban service boundary established to protect areas of rural character.
- We will maintain high-quality police and fire services, considering sharing of services and facilities when mutually beneficial.
- We will coordinate infrastructure development to reduce costs and to minimize sprawl development.
- We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions and maintain an open communication channel to develop solutions for shared county and regional issues.
- We will work jointly with developers to assure that new growth pays for itself (in terms of public investment in infrastructure and services to support the development) to the maximum extent possible.
- We will engage in cooperative planning between the local governments and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities and the location of new residential and commercial developments.
- We will modify and update the Service Delivery Strategy as service needs change and alternative arrangements are established.
- We will monitor opportunities for grants and other assistance available through the Appalachian Regional Commission.
- We will encourage collaboration between jurisdictions to create County-wide zoning

regulations.

- We will jointly plan annexations to avoid service conflicts and to minimize annexations just to avoid regulations.
- We will continually improve recreational facilities as population expands

4.5.5 Transportation

- We will participate in local and regional discussions / planning focused on improving the area's transportation infrastructure network, especially the 365/441 corridors.
- Support efforts to increase accessibility to the County from major interstates and other regionally important roads that support economic development efforts.
- We will consider creative strategies for addressing traffic concerns related to tourism
- We will promote actions to increase safety at major at-grade road intersections throughout the County.
- We will jointly implement a county wide transportation plan to alleviate traffic bottlenecks impacting local business districts, especially business 441.
- We support creation and ongoing maintenance of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- We will maintain an open mind when considering potential transportation improvements as growth occurs, such as public transportation.

4.5.6 Land Use

- We will promote the coordination of land development and infrastructure development, avoiding uncoordinated growth that can place unnecessary strains on Community resources and the environment.
- We will follow the Comprehensive Plan and the associated Future Land Use Map in decisions on zoning, conditional use variances and subdivision development.
- We will require all new development to be evaluated for its impact on all infrastructure – water, sewer, roads, schools, etc.
- An impact fee system will be utilized to have new growth be responsible, to the extent possible, for the financial burdens it will impose on the community.
- We will encourage county wide zoning and subdivision regulations.
- We will promote placing commercial development in the 365 corridor while maintaining the scenic beauty of the county's major transportation corridor.
- We support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
- We encourage mixed-use developments and increases in residential density in areas where environmental constraints and available infrastructure can satisfactorily accommodate the increased density.
- We support redevelopment of vacant property over growth in undeveloped areas whenever possible.
- We support the preservation of agricultural and environmentally sensitive land, retaining the rural character of the County.
- Work collaboratively with all jurisdictions to ensure that regional land use issues and

4.6.1 Joint Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the joint community vision.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Economic Development				
ED-1 Establish a Public Utility Cooperative	2009-13	TBD	HCBOC & municipalities	self funded
ED-1 Complete joint sewer/water expansion plan	2010-13	\$ 300,000	Public Utility Cooperative	EPD grant / utility revenues
ED-2 Establish programs for high risk students	2009	N/A existing staff	HCBOE	TBD
ED-2 Expand ESOL programs	2009	N/A existing staff	HCBOE	TBD
ED-3 Complete a strategic plan for the industrial park	2009	N/A existing staff	HCDED / HCIDA / HCBOC	consult with state agencies
ED-3 New business recruiting	2010	\$ 50,000	HCDED / HCIDA / HCCC	HCIDA budget
ED-4 Recruiting medical specialists	2010	\$ 10,000.00	HCMC / HCCC	HCMC budget
ED-5 Establish Convention & Tourist Authority	2010	\$ 150,000	HCBOC	Grant & tourist tax
ED-5 Develop a marketing strategy for historic sites	2010	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	consult with DCA & RDC
ED-6 Develop strategy to create higher paying jobs	2009	N/A existing staff	HCDED	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
ED-6 Survey young professionals and develop a plan to retain them as residents	2009	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
ED-7 Determine use of impact fees	2011	N/A done in house	HBCOC / HCDED / HCFinD	consult with DCA & RDC
ED-7 Establish CIE for impact fees	2011	N/A existing staff	HBCOC / HCDED / HCFinD	consult with DCA & RDC
ED-8 Expand curriculum for community oriented education and conferences	2009-10	NA existing staff	PC / NGTC / HCDED	N/A
ED-8 Develop facility sharing policies	2009-10	N/A existing staff	PC / NGTC / all jurisdictions	N/A
ED-9 Define benefits for alcohol w/dining	2009	N/A existing staff	Tourist Authority / HCCC	N/A
ED-9 Ballot measure for alcohol w/dining	2010	N/A existing staff	appropriate jurisdictions	N/A
ED-10 Identify existing tax incentives	2009	N/A existing staff	HCDED / HCTA	N/A
ED-10 Identify and resolve conflicting tax policies	2009	N/A existing staff	HCDED	N/A
ED-10 Extend Freeport exemption to all jurisdictions	2009	N/A existing staff	appropriate jurisdictions	N/A
ED-10 Identify appropriate incentives for revitalization	2009	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions in consultation with state agencies	N/A
Housing				
H-1 Revise SD regulations re. housing preferences	2009-10	N/A existing staff	all Planning Departments	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
H-1 Develop and adopt infill housing regulations	2009-10	N/A existing staff	all Planning Departments	N/A
H-2 Determine availability of workforce housing	2009	N/A existing staff	Building Departments	N/A
H-2 Reduce barriers to workforce housing	2009	N/A existing staff	all Planning Departments	N/A
H-3 Define need for Shelter Space	2009	N/A existing staff	HCUW	N/A
Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources				
NCR-1 Revise codes for Conservation SD	2009-10	N/A existing staff	all Planning Departments	N/A
NCR-1 Update zoning re. Character map	2009-10	N/A existing staff	all regulatory jurisdictions	N/A
NCR-1 Develop and adopt a tree ordinance	2009-11	\$ 75,000	all jurisdictions	Gen Fund, shared expense
NCR-1 Develop and adopt ordinances to protect scenic views	2009-10	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
NCR-2 Develop and implement a water/energy conservation education program for consumers	2009	N/A existing staff	HCWA	HCWA budget
NCR-2 Implement water/energy conservation and a water loss tracking system for suppliers	2009	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
NCR-2 Identify and implement innovative opportunities for water recycling	2009	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
NCR-3 Complete an updated Historic Resources survey	2011	N/A existing staff	HCHS	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
NCR-3 Strengthen regulations to protect historic resources	2012	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
NCR-3 Identify incentives available and implement a program for rehabilitating both publically and privately owned historic structures	2011	N/A existing staff	HCCC	N/A
NCR-4 Design TDR process	2011	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	consult state agencies
NCR-4 TDR implementation	2012	\$ 20,000	all jurisdictions	Grants
NCR-6 Soque River preservation	2011-13	N/A existing staff	SRWA	N/A
NCR-7 Develop a marketing plan featuring historic character of the County	2010	N/A existing staff	Tourist bureau	N/A
Intergovernmental Coordination of Services and Facilities				
CSF-1 Develop a SPLOST education program	2009-13	N/A existing staff	HCFD / all jurisdictions	N/A
CSF-1 Develop a plan to use SPLOST for Comprehensive Plan implementation	2009-13	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
CSF-2 Implement water purchasing plan	2009-13	\$ 2,000,000	HCBOC / HCWA	Bonds
CSF-2 Develop and implement a water reservoir plan	2009-13	\$ 20,000,000	HCBOC / HCWA	Bonds
CSF-3 Undertake a police service needs study	2010	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	consult Carl Vinson Institute
CSF-3 Police service consolidation	2011	N/A	all jurisdictions	N/A
CSF-4 Undertake a fire service needs study	2012	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	consult Carl Vinson Institute
CSF-4 Fire service consolidation	2013	N/A	all jurisdictions	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
CSF-5 Determine options for management of sewer & water system	2009-10	N/A existing staff	Public Utility Cooperative	N/A
CSF-5 Develop a sewer & water capital improvement plan	2010-11	N/A existing staff	Public Utility Cooperative	Public Utility Cooperative budget
CSF-7 Establish Urban Service boundary	2009	N/A existing staff	Council of Governments	N/A
CSF-7 Revise service delivery strategy	2009	N/A existing staff	Council of Governments	N/A
CSF-8 Coordinate development & education	2009	N/A	HPCP / HCBOE	N/A
CSF-8 Develop a construction plan to alleviate projected school overcrowding	2010	N/A existing staff	HCBOE	N/A
CSF-10 Quarterly Council of Governments	2009-13	N/A	HCBOC	N/A
CSF-10 Establish council of Jurisdiction Managers	2009	N/A existing staff		N/A
CSF-11 Coordinate local annexation procedures	2009	N/A	HCPD/ municipalities	N/A
CSF-12 Develop and adopt a joint sign ordinance	2009-10	\$ 25,000	HCPD/ municipalities	shared General Funds
CSF-14 Develop a plan for enhanced recreation facilities	2010	N/A existing staff	HCRD	N/A
CFS-14 Joint use of school facilities	2010	N/A	HCBOE / HCBOC	N/A
CSF-15 Analyze services to determine whether exiting and planned services are equitable to all parties. Identify and make adjustments to any specific services to provide equity.	2009	N/A existing staff	HCBOC/municipalities	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Transportation				
T-1 365/441 corridor master plan	2009-10	\$ 20,000	HCPD/HCE/ municipalities	State/Federal Grant
T-2 Establish Council of regional transportation staff	2009	N/A existing staff	HCRD/ municipalities/GDOT	N/A
T-3 Implement recommendations for high accident rate intersections and roads	2009	TBD	Blue-ribbon committee	TBD
T-4 Revise County Transportation Plan	2010	\$ 40,000	HCE / HCRD	State Transportation Grant
T-7 Develop plan for county wide trail system	2009-13	N/A existing staff	all jurisdictions	N/A
General Planning & Land Use				
LU-1 Establish Council of Planning Depts.	2009	N/A	all jurisdictions	N/A
LU-3 Revise land development ordinances to focus Industrial development on 365	2009-10	N/A existing staff	Council of Planning Depts.	N/A
LU-3 Establish requirements for visual buffers on 365	2009-10	N/A existing staff	Council of Planning Depts.	N/A
LU-4 Modify CLDR to allow road connection between developments	2009-10	N/A existing staff	Council of Planning Depts.	N/A
LU-5 Develop unified zoning / land use ordinances	2009-10	N/A existing staff	Council of Planning Depts.	N/A
LU-5 Develop a plan to incentivize Infill housing & subdivisions	2009-10	N/A existing staff	Council of Planning Depts.	N/A
LU-5 Shared planning/mapping/inspection	2009	share existing staff	Council of Governments	N/A

5 Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

5.1 Unincorporated Habersham County Vision Statement

Introduction

This statement provides information regarding the unincorporated area’s role and support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan. We will work within our direct responsibility and in joint efforts with the municipalities to successfully achieve the joint overall vision for the Habersham County community. We understand the community expects us to optimize the county’s overall resources, not individual jurisdictions.

The joint overall vision statement for the Habersham community and the additional detail in the following statement constitutes the vision of the unincorporated area:

Vision

As we grow, we will:

*Preserve the characteristics that provide a very special quality of life.
Create a more superior ‘Sense of Place’ in our region and state.*

“As we grow, we will:

- *Preserve the characteristics that provide a very special quality of life.*
- *Create a more superior ‘Sense of Place’ in our region and state.”*

We will accomplish the following:

Retain rural character, scenic beauty, historic and cultural resources, and natural environment.

- *Residential growth will occur primarily within an urban service boundary where sewer and/or water infrastructure exists or is possible either directly by the county or by agreement with a municipality. A full range of housing choices and traditional neighborhood service businesses will be available, with other necessary services in close proximity.*
- *Residential choices in rural and conservation area will be provided in ways that will protect the area’s rural character, scenic beauty, and natural resources.*

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- *Mountain, stream, and tree protection will exist through regulations that are tailored to preserve scenic beauty and natural resources effectively in our areas. Roads and streets in rural and conservation areas will rarely be widened in order to retain rural character for sports, recreation, and cultural experiences.*
- *Farming will be protected and thrive with continuity of use fostered by family oriented subdivisions, transferable development rights, and conservation easements. Both existing and new compatible uses for farmland will be utilized and encouraged. The quantity of farms will increase by attracting others to a stable farming area.*
- *Those who visit, work or reside in this beautiful scenic rural area should feel a 'Sense of Place' that is superior in the region and the state. Scenic corridor protection and gateway corridors protect those characteristics. Highway 365/441 corridor will be safe, free from congestion and unsightly appearance, and will enable quality business development through access management measures.*

We will strengthen our economy through growth management based on a community vision that provides direction for both public investment and private initiative. Additional revenues, lower costs, more efficient infrastructure, a more balanced tax digest, and reduced pressure to raise property taxes are the results of this Plan.

- *Tourism will increase significantly from aggressive advertising and promotion of natural beauty, sports, recreation, and cultural experiences. The county will lead a joint effort to provide and support the resources to manage tourism as a major source of increasing revenues for Habersham.*
- *Habersham is a special tourism destination with friendly services and facilities and serves as a gateway to other attractions in the region. We will be a superior 'get-away place' that will bring meaningful increases in sales tax and other revenues as a result of tourism. Businesses that serve and sell products to tourists will prosper.*
- *Major improvement in our economic development effort will be achieved through plans, skills, and more effective leadership. A more balanced tax digest will result from effective recruiting of more businesses to relocate or expand here. Special quality of life choices for prospective employees will play a major role.*
- *Improving the K-12 graduation rate and expanding programs at our four-year colleges will build a stronger work force for employers. More of our young people will want and be able to stay and work here.*
- *Infrastructure investments will be more efficient due to better planning and development regulations that reduce sprawling growth. Operating and maintenance costs will also benefit. Those who initiate growth will pay more of the new costs.*

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- *Costs will be reduced through consolidating services duplicated in municipalities and the county.*

Translating the Vision to Plans and Implementation

Achieving the Vision requires both plans and implementation measures outlined in the information that follows for the unincorporated part of the Community Agenda. We are committed to implementing and using the Comprehensive Plan to make Land Use decisions.

We also commit to pursuing the form of government that best meets the Vision of the unincorporated area and the Overall Community Vision. We recognize that any consolidation of services begins the journey to a different form of government that needs to develop from collective efforts to implement the joint plan.

5.2 Issues and Opportunities for Unincorporated Habersham County

Introduction

In order to be effective, the Comprehensive Plan must identify and provide workable strategies for addressing the issues and opportunities facing the community. The Community Assessment, the first half of the Comprehensive Plan Update, was the first step taken towards identifying the issues and opportunities facing Habersham County and the participating municipalities. The list was modified and revised through the public participation sessions and the ongoing work of the Citizen Steering Committee. This final, locally agreed upon list of issues and opportunities is for the unincorporated County only. Unique issues and opportunities exist for each of the county's cities/towns. An additional set of joint issues and opportunities was also developed to reflect countywide concerns.

The following issues and opportunities list is organized according to the areas or "elements" of the Comprehensive Plan: population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, intergovernmental coordination, transportation, and land use.

5.2.1 Economic Development

Opportunities:

- 1. Planned Industrial Park Growth.** The Habersham County Industrial Authority is working to improve and expand the industrial park facilities available to incoming industries. New facilities have already caused the movement of two major plants, one from Florida and one from a neighboring county.
- 2. Habersham County Airport.** Expansion of the runway has increased the utility of this facility, and jet fuel will soon be available. In addition to the two recently built hangers, more hanger space would add further attractiveness to the County as a home for small, low environmental impact manufacturing facilities.
- 3. Business / Office Park.** The desirability of Habersham County as a place to live, coupled with the resources and graduates of Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College, make the county a logical home for companies that are predominantly office- and technology-based. A speculative office park needs to be developed as a magnet for businesses that are office-based and high technology / research based companies.
- 4. Abatement Ordinance.** Ordinances need to be developed to preserve the attractiveness of the county to potential businesses, residents and tourists. Vehicles, manufactured homes, and signs that are abandoned all detract from the scenic beauty of Habersham County.
- 5. Expand Farming Industry.** Grow farming to retain that major Habersham business enterprise.

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persistens) is known to be found in the county and is an endangered species on the verge of extinction. The Small Whorled Pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*) is listed as threatened within the United States. Several fish species found in Habersham are listed as threatened in Georgia. Future development throughout the county should be directed in areas that do not contain these rare species. Critical animal and plant habitats should be preserved wherever possible.

Opportunities:

5. **Chattahoochee National Forest.** Approximately 22 percent of the county (39,199 acres) falls within the Chattahoochee National Forest. The National Forest is a major asset for the county and municipalities. It attracts many visitors to the County each year, which enjoy the park's trout fishing, whitewater streams, abundant wildlife, hiking trails, and camping opportunities. Environmental tourism to the park contributes to the economic vitality of the community and should be actively promoted.
6. **Protection of Scenic SR 197 and County Roads in Northern Habersham.** Habersham County is home to many scenic vistas and views due to its location in the foothills of the North Georgia Mountains. The portions of Highways 197, 255, 356 and New Liberty Road north of Hardman Road provide outstanding views to visitors and residents alike. The County should work to preserve the scenic characteristics of these roads and create development regulations that would protect views along these roads.

5.2.4 Community Services and Facilities

Issues:

1. **New County Jail.** The County jail is nearing capacity. A new facility will be needed with the increase in incarceration rate as population grows.
2. **Need for Additional County Staff.** The County needs to complete a strategic staffing analysis to allow acceptable levels of service with double the population. That analysis should take into account the possibility of sharing staff with other jurisdictions.

Opportunities:

3. **Recycling to Extend Landfill Life.** The projected life of the County Landfill is 20 years. By developing an aggressive approach to recycling, the life of the landfill can be extended and the challenge of building a new facility delayed.

5.2.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues:

1. **Management of Authorities and Commissions.** The rapid growth projected for the county will force more of the county's business to be accomplished through authorities and commissions, with the Board of Commissioners providing direction and oversight but retaining final authority. For that style of government to work, the charter and responsibility of county authorities and commissions needs to be clearly defined.

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encourage mixed-use and additional connectivity between uses in appropriate areas. Additionally, there is a lack of development standards for tree preservation.

3. **Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement.** Many instances of code violations exist within the county. Violations bring down the property values of adjacent properties and contribute to neighborhood decline.
4. **Need for Additional County Staff to Address Development.** The County needs more planners, GIS analysts and code enforcement officers. These additional personnel can devote time to the proper planning, design and upkeep of the environment within the county.

Opportunities:

5. **Protect Natural Resources within Developments.** Conservation and agricultural subdivision ordinances provide a practical and inexpensive way for Habersham County to create greenways, protect scenic beauty and permanently protect open space in the subdivision process. Conservation subdivisions can provide an incentive for development that would set aside appropriate amounts of open space and greenways in areas adjacent to residential development. This development technique permits the clustering of currently allowable density, which benefits developers, and increased green space, which benefits residents. If these greenway and open space areas are concentrated where scenic vistas, streams, lakes, steep slopes or other environmentally sensitive areas exist, a conservation subdivision does ‘double duty’ by allowing development and permanently protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
6. **Reserve Land for Commercial and Industrial Growth.** Within the Future Land Use Plan, the County has the opportunity to designate areas for commercial and industrial growth. Industry should be limited to areas that can be conveniently served by infrastructure and buffered properly from residential uses.
7. **Encourage Mixed Use.** Ordinances that allow mixed use will encourage, but control, mixed use, creating village and traditional neighborhoods, fostering a strong sense of place.
8. **Infill Development.** Reward development that uses open land between existing developments and links the infrastructure between those developments near the municipalities.

5.3 Future Development in Unincorporated Habersham County

5.3.1 Introduction

The Future Development Map is a vital tool that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decision in unincorporated Habersham County. The Future Development Map is on the community's vision for the future and was developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

The county has elected not to complete a Future Land Use Map, the map associated with pervious comprehensive planning processes. Traditionally, Future Land Use Maps were short range planning tools which tied the desired land uses of the community's future vision to a jurisdiction's zoning or land development. Text has been included in the narratives accompanying the Future Development Map to provide this guidance. The County will be updating its Land Development Ordinance as a follow-on activity to the comprehensive plan update; the guiding language of this ordinance must be amended to directly relate zoning decisions to the Future Development Map.

5.3.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of unincorporated Habersham County. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the county. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The county's character areas are described and defined individually in the following narratives and are mapped in Figure 5-1. The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

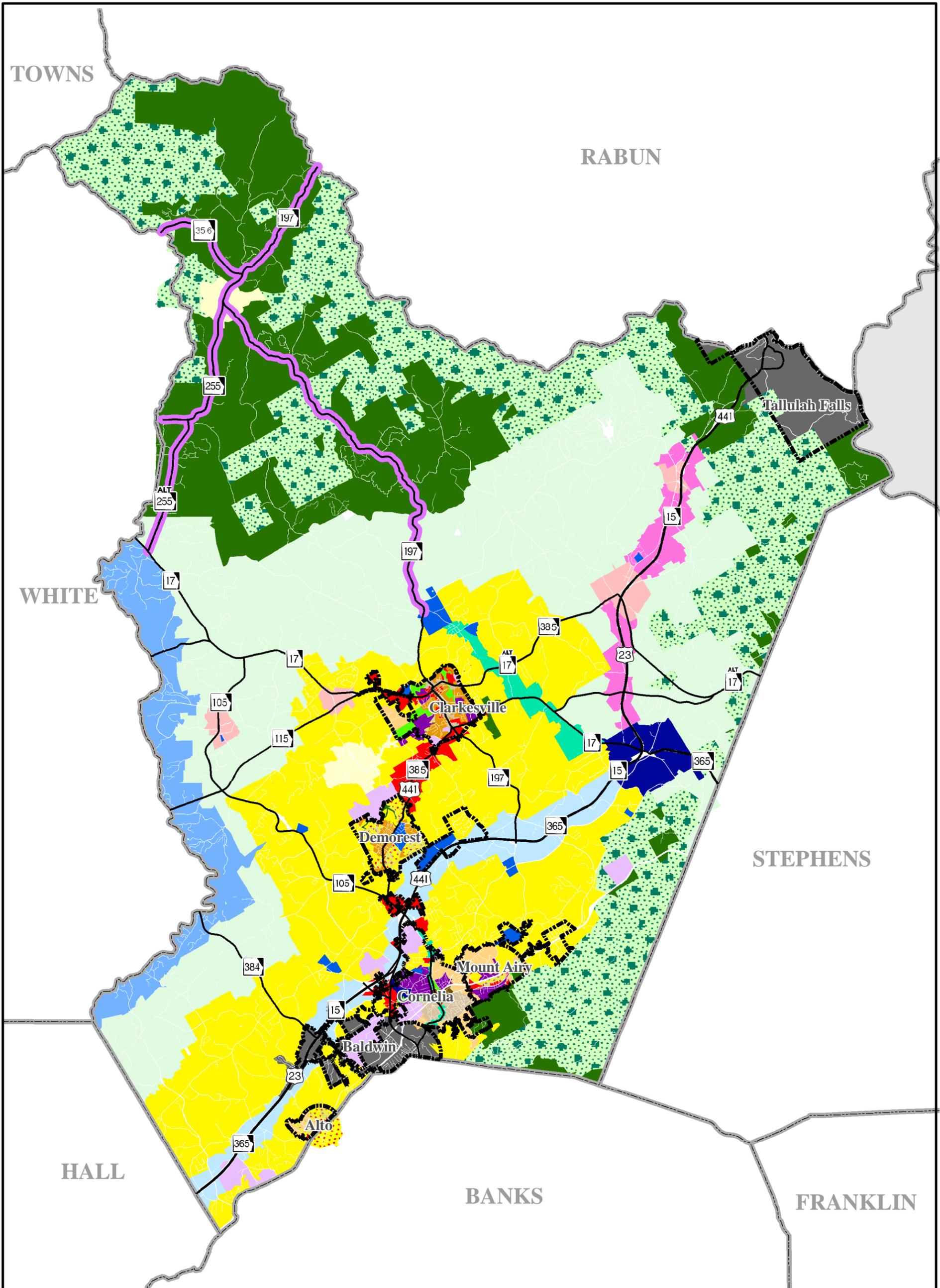
- Siting and configuration of lots.
- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county and municipalities.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for changes to development regulations and development of design guidelines where appropriate.



**Habersham County 2029
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 5-1:
Habersham County
Future Development*



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 365 Corridor 441 Throughway Scenic Highway Corridor Gateway Corridor Rural Conservation Resource Conservation Greenway River Protection Corridor | <p>Future Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Village Developing Residential Stable Neighborhood Traditional Neighborhood Mixed Residential Historic Area Historic 441 Mixed Use Corridor Revitalization Area Education Center Business Park Neighborhood Business Center Commercial Downtown Industrial/Institutional Non participating jurisdiction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State & Federal Highways Local Roads National Forest County Lines City Limits |
|---|---|---|



May 2008

Resource Conservation

Existing Character Description: This area includes the most scenic views in the County, steep slopes, woodlands, meadows, and large parcels of actively farmed land, including those used for poultry and livestock production. The area is sparsely settled with rural roadways that have minimal visual and environmental impact. A large portion of this area is within the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Vision for the Area: Habersham County will protect this area’s unique combination of cultural, environmental, and natural resources in order to preserve the rural character of undeveloped and farmed lands, the predominant scenic mountains and ridges of the county, the headwaters of the Soque River Watershed, and the appeal of the county’s oldest settlement area. Farming, including developing compatible trends such as vineyards and organic products, is encouraged. Public areas will serve as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations, and historic and cultural sites shall be protected.

Appropriate Land Uses¹: Forestry practices, outdoor recreation, agriculture and related residences, including family subdivision, and agricultural conservation subdivisions. Other divisions of land for residential development will be restricted to 20 acre parcels.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage US Forest Service to give priority to recreation and scenic impact when implementing Best Management Practices.



- Encourage farming through various financial incentives and use of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) programs, and Conservation easements and restrictive covenants.
- Allow residential development only as 20 acre lots, in agricultural conservation subdivisions or as family subdivisions.
- Modify existing Mountain/Ridge Protection Ordinance for more application to this area.
- Widen roadways in this area only when absolutely necessary and then carefully design improvements to have minimal visual and environmental impact.
- Identify historical and cultural sites and specify measures for their protection including available grant funds.
- Develop a comprehensive tourism strategy for Habersham County to foster tourism for the local economy with emphasis for the potential for this area.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Open Space Preservation.
- Heritage Preservation
- Regional Identity.
- Environmental Protection.

¹ Habersham County does not currently have zoning, but relies on a system of cumulative land use intensity districts to regulate the use of land.

Rural Conservation

Existing Character Description: Unique rural neighborhoods and undeveloped land that help establish the rural character of the County. These areas have low pedestrian orientation and accessibility, large lots (2 ½-20 acres), open space, pastoral views, and a high degree of building separation.

Vision for the Area: Preserve the rural atmosphere of these areas and ability to farm while accommodating new residential developments using rural cluster or conservation subdivision design principals that incorporate significant amounts of open space. The regional rural character is enhanced by encouraging compatible architectural styles, fostering a regional network of green space and trails, preserving cultural and historic sites.

Appropriate Land Uses: Agriculture, small family and hobby farms, conservation subdivisions, planned residential development with significant open space. Traditional residential subdivisions should have lot sizes greater than 2 ½ acres.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage farming through financial incentives, TDR programs, conservation easements, and restrictive covenants.



- Allow residential development with lots of no less than 2 ½ acres or in Conservation Subdivisions & Planned Developments having significant open space.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Open Space Preservation.
- Heritage Preservation.
- Regional Identity.
- Environmental Protection.

Developing Residential

Existing Character Description: Areas where pressure for typical residential subdivision development are greatest (due to availability of water and/or sewer service, or proximity to the municipalities). These areas are inside the urban service boundary, mainly situated on the fringes and immediately outside of the county's municipalities and as infill areas between existing subdivisions.

Vision for the Area: Residential development is encouraged and promoted in moderate to high density consisting of traditional residential subdivisions for single and multifamily housing. New developments are master-planned with 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. Connectivity occurs between each development, allowing good vehicular and pedestrian/bike access to retail/commercial services as well as connecting to adjacent properties and subdivisions. Compatible architecture styles are encouraged to maintain the regional character. Wherever possible, regional networks of green space and trails are developed. Street design fosters traffic calming, e.g. narrower residential streets, on-street parking, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Existing trees are preserved in new developments or replaced.

Appropriate Land Uses: Uses in these areas should be predominantly residential with scattered civic buildings and small hubs of commercial and service business development to serve adjacent neighborhoods. Residential development will vary from single family homes on lots of 1/3 - 2 1/2 acres to condominiums, townhouses and apartments. Mixed use development is encouraged in the



form of planned urban developments and planned residential developments.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop policies for decentralized waste treatment.
 - Establish the urban service boundary.
 - Expand sewer and water infrastructure into these areas on a priority basis.
 - Modify Comprehensive Land Development Resolution to encourage mixed use and higher density residential development.
 - Implement a tree preservation ordinance.
 - Modify CLDR to encourage Rails to Trails organization and greenways.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Traditional Neighborhoods.
- Infill Development.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Housing Choices.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Growth Preparedness.
- Environmental Protection.

River Protection Corridor

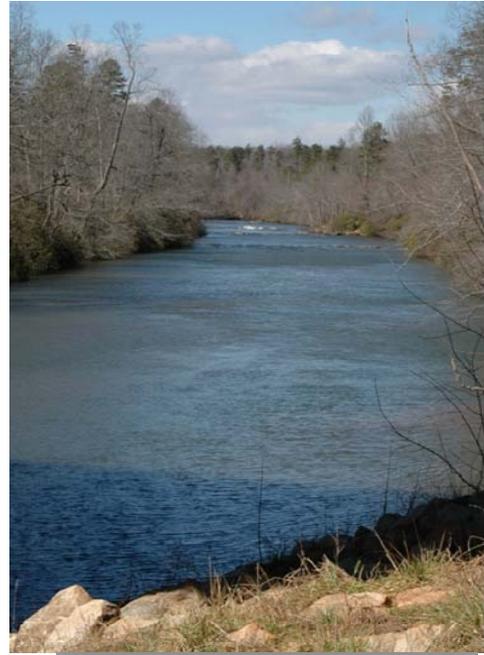
Existing Character Description: The Chattahoochee, Soque, Tallulah and Tugalo River corridors should be protected environmentally and scenically by an overlay district that restricts buildings and land disturbance activities that would endanger these water resources.

Vision for the Future: Protect the sensitive environmental and unique scenic nature of Habersham County's rivers both as critical water resources and as recreation areas. Efforts will be made to maintain public access. Passive recreation areas and trails are encouraged in the vicinity of these resources to increase their attractiveness to residents while strengthening the county's tourism potential.

Appropriate Land Uses: Recreation and other low density, low-impact development that meets the criteria contained in the overlay district regulations.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - An overlay district will be created to manage the development activities of the underlying land use districts, protect water quality, and encourage recreation and tourism.
 - Replace current River Protection Corridor ordinance with overlay



district, based on input from the Habersham County Water Authority, the Upper Chattahoochee River Keeper and Soque Watershed Association. State of Georgia requirements will serve as minimum.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Character Area:

- Environmental Protection.
- Regional Identity.
- Regional Cooperation.

Rural Village

Existing Character Description: Service activity areas located at highway intersections that provide a mixture of uses to serve passers-by and adjoining rural and agricultural areas such as Batesville and Habersham Mill Village.

Vision for the Future: Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating small retail and commercial nodes with attractive character that serve the vicinity of the village and tourists, but that are compatible with the surroundings. Architectural styles should maintain the regional rural character, “franchise” or “corporate” architecture is not appropriate. The quaintness of these villages should be preserved.

Appropriate Land Uses: Mixed residential and commercial uses. “Strip” style development is not appropriate.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Create special overlay district to protect these villages from sprawl and limited commercial and residential encroachment into adjacent undeveloped lands.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Sense of Place.
- Heritage Preservation.



Neighborhood Business Center

Existing Character Description: Service activity areas located at or near highway intersections that provide a mixture of uses to serve commuters, tourist and nearby residential, rural and agricultural areas, such as at Hollywood, Turnerville, Fairview, 115/17/ Habersham Mill Road intersections.

Vision for the Future: Existing unincorporated communities continue to develop as local business hubs, providing job opportunities in a work, live, play environment. Planned commercial development is encouraged while protecting adjacent rural and residential development. Traffic reduction is achieved by residents being able to obtain some services and products nearby.

Appropriate Land Uses: Mixed residential and commercial uses such as motels, restaurants, and service businesses and some light manufacturing.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Create special overlay district to protect these villages from sprawl or residential and business encroachment into adjacent undeveloped lands.



- Create access management standards to limit impact of commercial development on roadway efficiency.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Heritage Preservation (*particularly the historic integrity of the Hollywood and Turnerville villages*).
- Sense of Place.
- Appropriate Businesses
- Employment Options.

Business Park

Existing Character Description: Major intersection (Arrendale)

Vision for the Future: Planned commercial developments housing offices, technology businesses and other green industry that is compatible with the adjacent rural and residential area.

Appropriate Land Uses: Offices, technology parks, and large low impact businesses and industries with supportive commercial uses

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Utilize transitional planning to allow certain services or businesses which provide some of the daily needs of the employees of this park as well as residents adjacent to the park.
 - Zone to assure that the correct type of business locates in this center.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Employment Opportunities.
- Appropriate Business.

Education Center

Existing Character Description: These areas are located around North Georgia Technical College, Piedmont College, Habersham Central High School, and other primary and intermediate education centers located in the county such as 365/Demorest-Mt. Airy, Level Grove/ Old Athens Highway.

Vision for the Area: The vision for these areas is to create an appropriate environment around our major educational facilities. The impact of automobiles on pedestrian and bicycle traffic is minimized by constructing sidewalks and bicycle paths to connect campus areas to surrounding neighborhoods. Limited infill retail and office development is encouraged that complements school needs. Development strategies are coordinated between local governments and the School System. School traffic is coordinated with local traffic to mitigate congestion. Development is compact in form centered around the school campus cluster.

Appropriate Land Uses: Residential and commercial uses appropriate for locating next to a school area; businesses such as neighborhood stores, small restaurants, service stations and similar uses.



Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Rezone land adjacent to schools allowing only residential and commercial uses appropriate to that area.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Educational Opportunities.

Scenic Road Corridor

Existing Character Description: Scenic corridors are located along highways in the northern portions of the County - Highway 197 north of NGTC, New Liberty/ Oakey Mountain/ Raper Mountain north of Hardman Road, 255/Alt 255, 356. These corridors are noteworthy for their natural, scenic, and pastoral views.

Vision for the Area: Maintain the scenic and rural character of selected roads while accommodating new development along the corridor. Residential development and all other construction is clustered and screened in such a way as to preserve rural views from the corridor. Businesses serving local residents should be clustered in Rural Villages. Small cottage industries enhancing tourism are encouraged. Historic and cultural sites are preserved.

Appropriate Land Uses: Agriculture, residential development with visual buffers and greenspace, conservation districts and easements.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop a Scenic Vista Overlay Ordinance to protect rural view scapes and limit inappropriate development.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Open Space Preservation.
- Heritage Preservation.
- Sense of Place.

Gateway Corridor

Existing Character Description: Major transportation route (Highway 17 from Arrendale interchange to Clarkesville,) that has sufficient right-of-way and restricted cross traffic to be expanded into a route bypassing the cities but allowing tourist/visitors access to the scenic / recreational portions of the county.

Vision for the Area: A bypass is developed and maintained around the Demorest and Clarkesville business districts to relieve those areas from through traffic. Adjacent open and agricultural land is preserved. Subdivisions and clustered mixed use development so long as primary access to development is not from the gateway corridor. Landscaped buffers are required to shield view of development from the gateway corridor right-of-way protecting the rural vistas.

Appropriate Land Uses: Residential in the form of conservation subdivisions and commercial uses in master planned developments that do not directly access the gateway corridor.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:



- Develop overlay district to assure adequate right-of-way, protect corridor from excess local traffic through the limitation of curb cuts, and protect viewsheds through landscape buffer requirements.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Transportation Alternatives.
- Growth Preparedness.

365 Corridor

Existing Character Description: Land adjacent to Highway 365 from the southern county line to the Arrendale interchange where Highways 441, 365 and 17 intersect.

Vision for the Future: Proactive steps are taken within the corridor to ensure that new development does not impede traffic flow along this high-capacity roadway or become an impediment to converting it to a limited access highway. Strict access management and inter-parcel access regulations are developed and adopted by the unincorporated county and the municipalities that border the highway. Opportunities to extend I-985 or completely restrict new access points are explored and implemented. The roadway continues to provide high-speed travel for commuters traveling outside of the county for work, truckers transporting goods to and from local industries, and county visitors.

Appropriate Land Uses: Agriculture plus commercial and industrial development that are set back sufficiently for future highway expansion and developed on access roads. Visual buffers are required to protect scenic value.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:



- Develop overlay district regulations to assure adequate right-of-way, and protect the corridor from excess local traffic through access management standards.
- Require development of access roads as a condition for future commercial development along the corridor.
- Request DOT to restrict further curb and median cuts.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Growth Preparedness.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Regional Cooperation.

441 Throughway

Existing Character Description: Highway 441 bypass from Arrendale interchange to Tallulah Falls, is the primary route for commuters, tourist, and commercial traffic into and out of the County from the north.

Vision for the Area: Maintain 441 bypass as a high speed throughway, while preserving adjacent open space and agricultural lands, as well as historic features along old 441. Commercial developments and residential subdivisions that create an excess of local traffic are required to use access roads. Conservation subdivisions and other clustered mixed use development is allowed, using other roads for access. Development is buffered from view from the roadways protecting rural scenery. The proposed route of the former Tallulah Falls railway has been protected to allow for conversion to a recreational trail. .

Appropriate Land Uses: Agriculture, conservation covenants and easements, developments such as conservation subdivisions, clustered mixed commercial and residential use, all visually screened and on access roads

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:



- Develop overlay district regulations to assure adequate right-of-way, and protect the corridor from excess local traffic through access management standards.
- Require development of access roads as a condition for future commercial development along the corridor.
- Request DOT to restrict further curb and median cuts.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Transportation Alternatives.
- Growth Preparedness.

Commercial

Existing Character Description: Business 441 from Cornelia to Clarkesville.

Vision for the Area: Major commercial development area including a hospital and medical park, associated businesses and other business development serving the adjacent municipalities. The proposed route of the former Tallulah Falls railway has been protected to allow for conversion to a recreational trail. .

Appropriate Land Uses: Commercial
Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop alternative routes to remove through traffic from this corridor.
 - Build turning lanes, where right-of-way exists.
 - Habersham County, Demorest and Clarkesville should jointly develop plans for commercial development, annexation and traffic management in this corridor.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Employment Opportunities.
- Regional Solutions.

Industrial / Institutional

Existing Character Description: These industrial areas consist of manufacturing facilities, warehouses, quarries and distribution facilities on level sites having close access to, truck routes and state and federal highways, railroads, utilities, and space for expansion. The Habersham County Industrial Park is a significant and growing area of industrial land uses in the southern portion of the county. It is located adjacent to the Habersham County Airport. The institutional area is the Arrendale State Prison.

Vision for the Area: Identified industrial areas are provided with adequate infrastructure and designated truck/rail access routes that are safe and where heavy vehicles can maneuver with minimal noise, vibration, and intrusion of trucks in residential areas. Industrial site design provides adequate room for expansion and the development of ancillary business and employee services. Landscaped entrances and grounds are encouraged, environmentally sensitive areas protected, and surrounding neighborhoods buffered. Truck docks and waste handling areas are screened from public view. The intrusion of obnoxious uses into industrial parks is discouraged. Institutional uses are buffered from view through extensive landscaping to avoid negatively affecting adjacent property values.

Appropriate Land Uses: Industrial

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the



2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:

- Establish strong design standards for these areas to ensure that the aesthetic qualities of the built environment are reflective of the community's vision for the future and the image it wishes to portray to visitors.
- Identify additional areas for new industrial parks.
- Develop needed infrastructure to support industrial expansion.
- Expand recruiting program for small, clean industrial employers
- Institutional expansion is coordinated with surrounding neighborhood organizations to minimize conflicts.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Employment Opportunities.
- Appropriate Businesses.

5.4 Unincorporated Habersham County Implementation Strategies

Introduction

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 5.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Term (one to five years), Mid-Term (five to ten years) or Long-Term (more than ten years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Short-Term Work Program of Habersham County (Section 5.6) – linking appropriate short-term items to the 2009 to 2013 Short-Term Work Program. *Please also see Joint Implementation Strategies, which are also applicable to Unincorporated Habersham County as well as all other jurisdictions participating in this plan.*

Jurisdictions and Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
AAA (NEGA)	Area Agency on Aging (North East Georgia Mountains)
Alto	Alto (Town of)
APD	Alto Police Department
ARC	Appalachian Regional Commission
ASP	Arrendale State Prison
Baldwin	City of Baldwin
Banks	Banks County
BHRJDA	Banks/Habersham /Rabun Joint Development Authority
CoBHP	Cornelia Better Hometown Program
CIBCA	Clarkesville Business & Community Association
Clarkesville	Clarkesville (City of)
CIFD	Clarkesville Fire Department
CIPC	Clarkesville Planning Commission
CIPD	Clarkesville Police Department
CIPDD	Clarkesville Planning and Development Department
CIPWD	Clarkesville Public Work Department
Cornelia	Cornelia (City of)
CoBHP	Cornelia Better Hometown Program
CoBZD	Cornelia Building and Zoning Department
CoDDA	Cornelia Downtown Development Authority
CoFD	Cornelia Fire Department
CoHA	Cornelia Housing Authority
CoHRD	Cornelia Human Resources Department
CoPD	Cornelia Police Department
CoPB	Cornelia Planning Board

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
CoPUD	Cornelia Public Utilities Department
Demorest	Demorest (City of)
DPC	Demorest Planning Commission
DPD	Demorest Police Department
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHA	Federal Highway Administration
FGG	Friends of Good Government
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GDATE	Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education
GDED	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDEH	Georgia Department of Environmental Health
GDFCS	Georgia Department of Family and Children Services
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
GDOL	Georgia Department of Labor
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
GFC	Georgia Forestry Commission
GHPD	Georgia Historic Preservation Division
GMRDC	Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center
GPED	Georgia Power Economic Development
HCAA	Habersham County Airport Authority
HCA	Habersham County Attorney
HCBOC	Habersham County Board of Commissioners
HCCC	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
HCBOE	Habersham County Board of Education
HCBD	Habersham County Building Department
HCCES	Habersham County Cooperative Extension Service
HCIDA	Habersham County Industrial Development Authority
HCDED	Habersham County Director of Economic Development
HCFB	Habersham County Farm Bureau
HCFinD	Habersham County Finance Department
HCFD	Habersham County Fire Department
HCHS	Habersham County Historical Society
HCHRD	Habersham County Human Resources Department
HCITD	Habersham County Information Technology Department
HCLS	Habersham County Library System
HCM	Habersham County Manager
HCMC	Habersham County Medical Center

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
<i>HCPC</i>	Habersham County Planning Commission
<i>HCPD</i>	Habersham County Planning Department
<i>HCRoD</i>	Habersham County Roads Department
<i>HCSD</i>	Habersham County Sheriff's Department
<i>HCSWD</i>	Habersham County Solid Waste Department
<i>HCTA</i>	Habersham County Tax Assessor
<i>HCUW</i>	Habersham County United Way
<i>HCWA</i>	Habersham County Water Authority
<i>Mt. Airy</i>	Mount Airy (Town of)
<i>MAPD</i>	Mt. Airy Police Department
<i>Municipalities</i>	Alto (Town of), Clarkesville (City of), Cornelia (City of), Demorest (Town of), Mt. Airy (Town of)
<i>NEGHA</i>	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
<i>NGTC</i>	North Georgia Technical College
<i>PC</i>	Piedmont College
<i>TPL</i>	The Trust for Public Land
<i>USFS</i>	U.S. Forest Service
<i>USHUD</i>	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
<i>USSCS</i>	U.S. Soil Conservation Service

5.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Planned Industrial Park Growth.
2. Habersham County Airport.
3. Business / Office Park.
4. Abatement Ordinance.

Habersham County has experienced notable population growth over recent years. This growth has not been paralleled with an equivalent growth in jobs. With this in mind, one of the County's primary focuses over the planning period should be the improvement of its economic base through a strategic economic development plan and related activities.

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

ED-1 Planned Industrial Park Growth.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Hire a full-time Director of Economic Development. Assign comprehensive long range planning responsibilities, including economic development	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBOC HCM	HCIDA
Review development regulations to ensure that adequate buffers are required between major industrial sites and nearby land, to preserve the rural nature of the county and protect residential settlements from incompatible land uses.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD	HCPC
Formulate a plan for expansion of infrastructure to designated sites for industrial development and seek funding, through grants, bond initiatives, or other cost sharing pacts, to offset costs to the taxpayers.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCBOC HCIDA HCWA	GMRDC GPED GDED
Work with all appropriate state/private agencies to ensure that the county's sites are being marketed to companies considering locating to similar sites both within and outside of the state.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCDED HCIDA	GDED GPED BHRJDA HCCC GMRDC HCCC
Accelerate the search for additional sites for a larger Industrial Park with good road and rail access.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCIDA HCDED BHRJDA	HCPD HCPC

ED-2. Habersham County Airport

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Conduct a study for long range upgrades to and expansion of the existing airport to accommodate larger aircraft utilized by corporate clientele with a parallel study of constraints to growth due to present and future development around the existing airport property. Evaluate feasibility of current site over twenty years.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCAA HCIDA	FAA
Develop a strategic plan for airport growth that parallels growth plans of the Industrial Development Authority.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCAA	HCBOC HCIDA
Determine the method to be used for funding airport facility expansion.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCDFD HCBOC	GDED

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

ED-3. Business /Office Park.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a concept plan for a Business/Office Park and an approach to implementation	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCDED HCIDA	HCPD HCPC HCCC
Identify funds, grants, or private partnerships to purchase and develop designated lands to suit clients interested in relocating to our area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCDED HCPD HCIDA	HCFD HBCOC GDED GPED
Work with the relevant state/private agencies to ensure the county's Business / Office Park is being marketed to companies considering locating to similar sties both within and outside of the state.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCDED HCIDA	GDED GPED BHRJDA HCCC

ED-4. Abatement Ordinance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review existing Abatement Code to determine sections needing to be modified. Assign rewrite to staff and County Attorney.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBBD HCPD HCDED HCA	HBCOC
Hire or reassign staff needed to consistently enforce County Code.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCM	HBCOC
Review and adopt a published Property Maintenance Code to assist with problems that arise from aging structures, increasing population growth and the differing opinions of residents on acceptable living standards for the citizens of the County.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCA	HCPC HBCOC
Develop and implement an education campaign to inform residents of new codes.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD	HCPC HBCOC

ED-5. Expand Farming Industry.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Evaluate tax and other incentives to retain existing farming operations.	<i>Short Term</i>	HBCOC	HCDGD HCTA HCCES HCFB
Modify regulations that would impede adoption of newer farming technologies and innovative products.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HBCOC	HCCES HCFB

5.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Property Costs.
2. Housing Code.

Habersham County has experienced a notable increase in demand for low cost residential housing over recent years, which has led to an increase in manufactured homes as the most affordable housing for low and moderate income families. Additionally, dilapidated buildings and substandard rental property are being occupied. The County should update its regulations to assure that uninhabitable structures, especially rental property, are not occupied and that abandoned manufactured homes are properly removed as determined appropriate..

H-1. Property Costs.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
County Land Development Resolution is biased toward single family houses on large lots. Rewrite the ordinance to allow a greater diversity of residential products, especially apartments, town houses and condominiums that use less land per dwelling.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCPD HCPC</i>	<i>HCBOC</i>
Coordinate sewer and water infrastructure development with the Land Use Plan. Ensure that changes to the Land Use Plan accommodate multifamily residential development.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCPC HCWA</i>	<i>Municipalities</i>

H-2. Housing Code

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement a Housing Code that regulates number of occupants plus health and safety standards for rental living units.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCBD HCPD HCPC HCBOC</i>	<i>Municipalities NEGHA USHUD</i>
Modify Abatement Ordinance and Land Development Resolution to assure proper disposal of uninhabitable or abandoned dwellings.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCBD HCA</i>	<i>HCBOC Municipalities</i>
Encourage local non-profits and churches to coordinate and provide house repair and rehabilitation service to the elderly and low income residents unable to pay for needed house maintenance.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>HCUW</i>	<i>Local Nonprofit Organizations USHUD</i>

5.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas
2. Conservation of Agricultural Land to Preserve Ability to Farm and Rural Character
3. Protection of Historic and Archeological sites
4. Chattahoochee National Forest.
5. Protection of Scenic SR 197 and County Roads in Northern Habersham.

With a large percentage of land already protected within the Chattahoochee National Forest, Habersham County has the ability to retain its natural resources and beauty while allowing for appropriate development. The strategies listed below with help in these efforts, but many strategies must be applied on a countywide basis (see Joint Implementation Strategies).

NCR-1. Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Revise the Mountain / Ridgeline Protection Ordinance to include mountains and ridges in the Resource and Rural Conservation Character Areas.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	HCFB USFS
Review and revise, if needed, the restrictions on steep slope development in the Land Development Resolution.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	USSCS
Expand the River Protection Corridor Ordinance to include the Soque River and to better protect both rivers as critical water sources including remapping the flood elevations.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	GDEH GEPD USSCS
Develop a partnership with the Habersham County Board of Education to educate students about the county's natural resources and the ways to protect them.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCBOE	

NCR-2. Conservation of Agricultural Lands / Ability to Farm / Rural Character.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement the Resource Conservation and Rural Conservation Character Areas in the northern portion of the County by defining zoning districts to allow only compatible development in those areas, by developing an Agricultural Conservation Subdivision Ordinance, and by encouraging Conservation Easements / Covenants.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	HCFB HCCES DCA GMRDC

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Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a Rural Village overlay district to protect Batesville and Habersham Mill Villages from inappropriate development.	<i>Short-term</i>	HCPD HCPC HBCOC	Local Residents DCA GMRDC
Adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) legislation. Coordinate TDR legislation with development regulations.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HBCOC	GDCA HCFB
Develop informational programs to assist the farming community in implementing new farming ventures (vineyards, organic, etc.) and obtaining Conservation Covenants / Easements and any other incentives to continue farming.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCTA HCFB HCCES	

NCR-3. Protection of Historic and Archeological Sites.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete survey of County's historic resources.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCBBD HCA HBCOC	HCHS HCPC GHPD
Create local historic preservation ordinance and adopt local historic district.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCBBD HCA HBCOC	HCHS HCPC GHPD
Modify County Building Code, as needed, to protect historical buildings, include structural standards and guidelines as determined appropriate. Include the local designations needed to support the National Register of Historic Places.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCBBD HCA HBCOC	HCHS HCPC GHPD
Review and modify, if needed, the Land Development Resolution to assure protection of archeological sites discovered or potentially disturbed by development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HBCOC	GHPD GDNR

NCR-4 Threatened or Endangered Plants and Animals.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an informational booklet on endangered species in Habersham County for public distribution.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCCES NGTC SRWA	GMRDC
Add a section to the County web page to educate the public about endangered species in the County	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCCES NGTC SRWA	GMRDC

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NCR-5. Chattahoochee National Forest.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop jointly with the Chattahoochee National Forest a plan for increasing and publicizing tourist opportunities in that resource	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCCC</i>	<i>USFS</i>
Coordinate road expansions with USFS and GDOT that will improve public access to the Chattahoochee National Forests.	<i>ongoing</i>	<i>HCRoD</i>	<i>USFS GDOT</i>

NCR-6. Protection of Scenic SR197 and County Roads in Northern Habersham.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a Scenic Road Overlay District for portions of SR 197, 255, 255A, 356 and New Liberty/ Oakey Mountain/ Raper Mountain Roads north of Hardman Road in the Resource Conservation Character Area. This district's goals will be to preserve the scenic characteristics of those roads.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCPD HCPC HCOB</i>	<i>HCRoD</i>

5.4.4 Community Facilities and Services

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. New County Jail
2. Need for Additional County Staff.
3. Recycling to Extend Landfill Life

Habersham County has or soon will have a shortage of facilities and staff to meet the needs of the growing population. As all needs cannot be met under existing revenue sources, the County will need to prioritize needs and identify additional strategies for managing the increased funding driven by increasing growth. Sharing services/facilities with other area governments is included the Joint Community Agenda

CFS-1. New County Jail

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Construct a new jail to meet the needs of an increasing incarceration rate. A new facility should have the capacity to house 300 inmates at one time.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCSD</i>	<i>APD CoPD CIPD DPD MAPD</i>

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CFS-2. Need for Additional County Staff.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete an analysis of staff needs within all county departments. Develop a prioritization system for identifying those staff needs that are most critical to successful administration of the county's services and programs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCHRD</i>	
Complete a salary study to make sure County is offering competitive pay and benefits to attract qualified candidates.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCHRD</i>	
Hire additional staff as determined appropriate. Look at opportunities for sharing staff between local jurisdictions where activities/services are otherwise redundant.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCHRD HCM</i>	<i>Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy</i>

CFS-3. Recycling to Extend Landfill Life.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Expand recycling program to extend the life of the County landfill beyond the 20 year planning period.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCSWD</i>	<i>All municipalities</i>
Update Solid Waste Management Plan by October 2009 to comply with state requirements.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCSWD</i>	<i>All municipalities</i>

5.4.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Management of Authorities and Commissions
2. Citizen Involvement.

Although most intergovernmental coordination issues and opportunities are discussed in the joint county document, Habersham County should play a leading role in intergovernmental coordination. Two major activities related to this role are management of authorities and commissions and citizen involvement.

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IC-1. Management of Authorities and Commissions

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Determine clearly the responsibility and authority of each body appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Review and approve bylaws, selection criteria & process, and term limits of members.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCBOC HCM</i>	
Require each body to draft by-laws, selection criteria & process for members and term limits, for approval by the HCBOC.	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>All Authorities / Commissions</i>	

IC-2 Citizen Involvement.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a public outreach campaign to inform community members of the costs and benefits of various development regulations and programs that are designed to conserve land.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCPD HCPC</i>	
Develop a mechanism for keeping the citizens better informed of proposed developments, and encourage more active participation in the project review process.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCPD HCPC</i>	
Work closely with local newspapers, via press releases and other informational sources, to encourage the discussion of growth management techniques in the public realm.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>HCPC HCPD HCBOC</i>	

5.4.6 Transportation

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Bridge Upgrading.
2. Roads in Need of Paving and Resurfacing.
3. Re-striping to Improve Safety
4. Traffic Mitigation.

Over recent years, the County has experienced increased congestion and additional wear on its roads, largely as a result of increased population. The County needs to work with appropriate local and state entities to ensure that existing infrastructure is constructed, repaired and preserved as needed.

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T-1. Bridge Upgrading.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop and implement a maintenance plan for upgrading county bridges in need of repair.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCRD</i>	<i>GDOT</i>
Replace bridge on CR332, old Gainesville Highway.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>HCRD</i>	<i>FHA</i>

T-2. Roads in Need of Paving and Resurfacing.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement a 10 year plan for paving and resurfacing existing roads. Update biennially	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCRD</i>	<i>GDOT</i>
Inventory substandard roads which have insufficient right-of-way for improvement and which will not accommodate increases in traffic due to projected growth. Develop a plan to acquire the needed right-of-way for future improvements	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCRD HCED HCPD</i>	<i>GDOT HBCOC</i>

T-3. Re-striping to Improve Safety.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement the plan to keep all paved County roads legibly striped. 5 year cycle.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCRD</i>	<i>GDOT</i>

T-4. Traffic Mitigation.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a strategy to monitor increasing traffic congestion. This strategy should be coordinated with countywide efforts to develop a comprehensive transportation plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCRD</i>	<i>GDOT Alto CoBZD CIPDD DPD Mt. Airy</i>
Design a bypass route connecting the Arrendale interchange with SR 197N and SR17N, bypassing downtown Demorest and Clarkesville. Build by the end of the Planning period, following these three phases: Planning study: Preconstruction: Construction:	<i>Short-term Mid-Term Long-Term</i>	<i>HCRoD HCPD GDOT</i>	<i>CIPD DPD</i>
Designate truck routes to minimize unnecessary truck traffic through downtown business districts	<i>Mid-Term</i>	<i>HCRoD HCPD GDOT</i>	<i>All municipalities</i>
Review and modify subdivision regulations to require stub streets and interconnectivity between adjacent subdivisions.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>HCPD HCPC</i>	<i>HCRoD</i>

5.4.7 Land Use

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Sprawl Development Pattern
2. Outdated Development Regulations
3. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement.
4. Need for Additional County Staff to Address Development.
5. Protect Natural Resources within Developments.
6. Reserve Land for Commercial and Industrial Growth.
7. Encourage Mixed Use.
8. Infill Development.

Growth will continue to encroach into rural areas of the county as the county’s population doubles over the upcoming 20 years. To prepare for this growth, it is essential that the County adequately inform the public of growth management plans, implement regulations and create incentives for private entities to preserve the county’s natural resources. To effectively enforce codes, review development plans, and adjust policies, the County will need to hire additional staff and think innovatively about ways to protect its rural character.

LU-1. Sprawl Development Pattern.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop incentives through development regulations to encourage development in areas of the county with existing infrastructure, including roadways, schools, water and sewer.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	HCCC HCIDA All Municipalities
Increase the minimum lot size in the active agricultural areas of the county to help preserve the area’s agrarian industry.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	
Support conservation easements / covenants in rural areas of the county.	<i>Ongoing</i>	HCPC HCPD	

LU-2. Outdated Development Regulations.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop new Zoning Ordinance that allows growth to be steered into appropriate areas Replace old mapping district concept with progressive zoning concepts.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC HCA	All Municipalities
Develop and approve Future Land Use Map based on new Zoning Ordinance.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD	HCPC HCBOC

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LU-3. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review code enforcement policies and implement management practices to ensure that consistent enforcement is applied across the county.	<i>Short-Term</i>	H CBD H CM	H CPD
Develop a stream-lined system for community members to report alleged code violation. As an element of this, create a consistent response system, increasing the validity of the community's code enforcement procedures.	<i>Short-Term</i>	H CBD H CM	

LU-4. Need for Additional County Staff to Address Development.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Hire additional planners and GIS analysts as identified by priority staff needs (see ED-4 and CSF-3).	<i>Short-Term</i>	H CPD H CHR D H CM	

LU-5. Protect Natural Resources within Developments.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Revise the County's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance to include incentives for connectivity of future greenway systems.	<i>Short-Term</i>	H CPD H CPC H CBOC	
Draft and implement an Agricultural Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.	<i>Short-Term</i>	H CPD H CPC H CBOC	
Develop other incentives to encourage the setting-aside of green space in non-residential areas.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	H CPD H CPC H CBOC	G DCA G DNR
Adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) legislation. Coordinate TDR legislation with development regulations.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	H CPD H CPC H CBOC	G DCA H CFB

LU-6. Reserve Land for Commercial and Industrial Growth.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Designate areas suited to future commercial development with appropriate zoning classification and plan infrastructure installation in the area. This re-zoning will be initiated by the County instead of private lenders.	<i>Mid-Term</i>	H CIDA H CPD M CPC H CBOC	G PED H CWA

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LU-7. Encourage Mixed Use.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Revise Land Development Resolution to encourage mixed use.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	

LU-8. Infill Development.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Define incentives that reward infill development between existing subdivisions and provide connectivity of roads and other infrastructure. Include these in new land development regulations.	<i>Short-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	
Encourage the reconsideration of existing subdivisions (e.g. changing them to planned residential or cluster type developments) as a marketing opportunity to both promote infill and allow mixed residential types and appropriate commercial	<i>Mid-Term</i>	HCPD HCPC HCBOC	

5.5 Unincorporated Habersham County Policies

Introduction

Policies are developed to provide ongoing guidance and direction to Habersham County officials. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the county's vision and addressing issues and opportunities. The policies are general in nature and should be used, in particular, during budget, permitting, and zoning decisions.

These policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

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

5.5.1 Economic Development

- We will continue to invest in and support growth of industrial and business parks as well as the airport in support of the joint effort to develop the county's economy.
- We will help encourage an influx of businesses and tourists by implementing and enforcing an Abatement Ordinance that preserves the scenic character of the county.
- We will encourage new compatible agricultural uses of farmland and promote Habersham as a stable location for farming businesses and jobs.

5.5.2 Housing

- We will modify Land Development Ordinances to reduce land costs per residence by encouraging higher density where infrastructure exists or can be created.
- We will adopt a housing code that assures renters of safe and healthy living space.
- We will encourage local non-profits to assist home repairs and renovation of existing homes for those who cannot afford home maintenance.

5.5.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- We will promote the protection and maintenance of environmentally sensitive areas such as ridgelines, green / open space, river and scenic road corridors with ordinances that regulate new development.
- We will protect farming and the rural character of the area through new ordinances and policies.
- Actively promote the preservation of historic properties throughout the County to conserve the County's cultural resources heritage and unique attributes.
- Promote efforts to preserve trees in the area through our ordinances.

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- We will work to redirect development pressure away from agricultural areas in order to conserve farmland and to protect and preserve this important economic component of our community without depriving the farming community of the value of their land.

5.5.4 Intergovernmental Coordination of Community Facilities and Services

- We will manage the activities of the Commissions and Authorities appointed by the Board of Commissioners.
- We will protect rural character and efficiency in water and sewer infrastructure costs by the establishment and enforcement of an urban service boundary.
- We will continue to hire the required staff and build the facilities needed to maintain service levels with a rapidly expanding population.
- We will extend the life of the existing landfill by supporting the expansion and ongoing improvements to recycling services.

5.5.5 Transportation

- We will upgrade bridges, repave and restripe county roads on an ongoing basis to maintain safety and drivability of our roads.
- We will sponsor and promote planning for a bypass of the Demorest and Clarkesville business districts and give high priority to funding its development.
- Discourage development on unpaved roads and continue to plan for right of way acquisition and paving of unpaved roads.

5.5.6 Land Use

- We will encourage development of a rational network of commercial nodes (rural villages and neighborhood business centers) to meet the service needs of citizens while avoiding unattractive and inefficient strip development along major roadways.
- Our community will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
- We will support revising the County's zoning ordinance to allow growth to occur where it can be supported efficiently with infrastructure.
- We will provide the staff necessary to manage the development process and enforce county regulations.
- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place by preserving the rural character of our community and providing the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the community.
- We will encourage protection of natural resources within developments by use of conservation subdivisions and similar methods to preserve green space.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- We support redevelopment of vacant property over growth in undeveloped areas whenever possible.

We encourage citizen involvement in decisions about land use.

5.6.1 Unincorporated Habersham County Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the community’s vision for the unincorporated county.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Economic Development				
ED-1 Hire Dir. of Economic Development	2009	\$ 110,000	HCBOC	General Fund
ED-1 Ensure buffers around industrial development	2009	N/A	HCPD	N/A
ED-1 Purchase additional land for Industrial Park	2009-13	\$ 7,000,000	HCDED / HCIDA / BHRJDA	Grants & Bonds
ED-2 Feasibility study of airport site	2009-10	\$ 100,000	HCAA / HCIDA	SPLOST / Grants
ED-2 Strategic Plan for airport growth	2011-13	\$ 25,000	HCAA	General Fund
ED-2 Funding for airport expansion	2011-13	\$ 150,000	HCFD / HCBOC	Private / SPLOST
ED-3 Concept plan for Business/Office Park	2009-10	\$ 200,000	HCDED / HCIDA	Economic Development Grant / General Fund
ED-3 Funding/land for Business/Office Park	2010-13	\$ 3,500,000	HCDED / HCIDA / HCPD	Economic Development Grant / Bonds
ED-4 Modify Abatement Ordinance	2010-11	to be completed by staff	H CBD / HCA	N/A
ED-4 Expand Code enforcement staff	2011-13	\$ 175,000	HCM	EPD Grant / General Fund
ED-4 Adopt Property Maintenance code	2009-10	N/A	HCPD / HCA	N/A

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Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
ED-5 Identify and evaluate all incentives to encourage farming	2009	N/A	HCDED	N/A
Housing				
H-1 Revise CLDR regulations to allow for higher density development	2009-10	\$ 20,000	HCPD / HCPC	General Fund
H-2 Adopt Housing Code	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCBP / HCPD	N/A
Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources				
NCR-1 Revise mountain/ridgeline ordinance	2009-10	\$ 2,000	HCPC / HCPC / HCBOC	General Fund
NCR-1 Review/revise slope tables in CLDR	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
NCR-1 Expand River Protection Corridor	2011-13	\$ 100,000	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	FEMA grants
NCR-1 Partnership for natural resources education	2009	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCBOE	N/A
NCR-2 Implement Resource/Rural Conservation Areas	2009-10	TBD	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	TBD
NCR-2 Rural Village Overlay	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
NCR-2 Develop regulations for a TDR	2009-10	\$ 10,000	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	Grant
NCR 2 Support active farming	2009	N/A	HCPD / HCTD / HCFB / HCCES	N/A
NCR-3 Protect historic buildings	2012-13	\$ 50,000	HCBP / HCA / HCBOC	Grant
NCR-3 Modify CLDR to protect archeological sites	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
NCR-5 Publicize National Forest for tourism	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCCC	N/A

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Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
NCR-6 Scenic road overlay district regulations	2009-10	\$ 5,000	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	General Fund
Intergovernmental Coordination of Facilities and Services				
IC-1 Define responsibility of Auth./ Comm.	2009	to be completed by staff	HCBOC	N/A
IC-1 Develop by-laws, appointments by HCBOC	2009	N/A	all Authorities & Commissions	N/A
IC-2 Public Information regarding revised CLDR	2009	\$ 5,000	HCPD / HCPC	General Fund
IC-2 Public Involvement in developments	2009	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC	N/A
IC-2 News reporting - growth & development		to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
CFS-2 Complete analysis of staff needed	2009	to be completed by staff		N/A
CFS-2 Complete salary study	2009	to be completed by staff	HCHRD	N/A
CFS-3 Update Solid Waste Management Plan	2009	to be completed by staff	HCHRD	N/A
CFS-3 Establish a recycling program	2010	\$ 300,000	HCSWD	EPD Grant / General Fund
Transportation				
T-1 Bridge upgrading	2009-13	\$ 1,500,000	HCRD / USFS	\$300m/yr, SPLOST & GDOT
T-2 10 year road paving plan & implement	2009-13	\$ 11,000,000	HCRD / USFS	\$1.7mm/yr, SPLOST
T-3 Road restriping plan & implement	2009-13	\$ 500,000	HCRD	\$100m/yr, FHA grants
T-4 Strategy to monitor traffic congestion	2011-12	to be completed by staff	HCRD	N/A

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Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
T-4 Planning for bypass of Clarkesville	2010-13	\$ 500,000	HCE	State & Federal Grants
T-4 Modify regulations for street connectivity	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC	N/A
General Planning & Land Use				
LU-1 Zone to use existing infrastructure	2009-10	N/A	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
LU-1 Increase lot size in Conservation Areas	2009-10	N/A	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
LU-2 Develop a new zoning ordinance	2009-10	\$20,000 legal expense with staff generated documents	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	General Fund
LU-2 Update future land use map	2009-10	\$ 15,000	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	General Fund
LU-3 Consistent code enforcement	2011-12	\$ 90,000	HCB D / HCM	General Fund
LU-3 Establish system for public reporting code violations	2011	to be completed by staff	HCB D / HCM	N/A
LU-4 Hire a Land Use Planner / GIS analyst	2009-11	\$ 175,000	HCPD / HCHRD / HCM	General Fund
LU-5 Revise Conservation subdivision regulations	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
LU-5 Implement Agricultural Conservation Subdivision	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A
LU-7 Implement PUD/PRD/PCD ordinances	2009-10	\$ 10,000	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	General Fund
LU-8 Define incentives for infill subdivisions	2009-10	to be completed by staff	HCPD / HCPC / HCBOC	N/A

5.6.2 Unincorporated Habersham County Report of Accomplishments

The following table identifies the status of those items included in the Habersham County 2003-2008 Short Term Work Program.

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Land Use and GIS					
Update Subdivision Regulations	X				Completed June 18, 2007
Revise Comprehensive Land Development Resolution to include Mountain Protection & River Corridor Protection	X				Adopted in 1999
Adopt a Unified Development Ordinance		X			County staff preparing draft documents and waiting completion of Comp. Plan to present changes to the BOCC
Adopt Resolution with the Intent to Enforce Georgia Minimum Codes.	X				Completed.
Adopt Resolution to Create Administrative Procedures to Enforce Georgia Minimum State Code	X				Completed.
Develop County Georgia Information System		X			Ongoing. Data layering has been prepared by ITOS and ESRI for the Tax Assessors Office and Building & Planning. Requires further investment in personnel costs to fully implement system.
Designate GA 197 and New Liberty Road from Clarkesville to Batesville as a Scenic Route				X	Reviewed and not considered needed at this time.

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Floodplain Mapping		X			Planning staff contacting FEMA-Region 4 to have Habersham County re-mapped.
Update Land Use Maps.		X			This is ongoing. Should be tied in with the completion of the GIS system.
Update Current and Future Land Use Maps on GIS		X			Ongoing
Update Zoning Map on GIS	X				Completed
Create Uniform Utility Code for Development and Construction				X	never completed
Update Comprehensive Plan		X			Ongoing
Review Drainage, Erosion and Sedimentation Control, and Flood Hazard Issues and update Code as necessary		X			Ongoing
Revise Comprehensive Land Development Resolution to include planned unit development standards.		X			Planned development ordinance drafts are currently being reviewed and prepared to go the BOCC
Economic Development					
Plan new Technology Park.		X			Researching property
Airport Expansion.		X			Environmental planning and airport master plan updates are on-going for parallel taxi-way
Three phase water system to include water treatment plant.				X	Study partially completed
Wastewater Treatment Study.		X			
Farmers Market				X	

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Community Facilities					
New Recreation Site in southern Habersham. Acquire land and develop plan.	X				Land acquired and conceptual plan prepared
South Habersham Recreation Site Phase I, II, & III		X			Money allocated in SPLOST 5 for Phase I
Emergency Medical Services Headquarters Building	X				EMS moved into facility at Hospital
Two additional Fire Stations (Amy's Creek & Orchard)		X			Expansion of Amy's Creek complete in development stage - Orchard Station dropped
Courthouse Renovation				X	Not funded
Multi-use Airport Building Expansion		X			Hangar under construction
Road System Improvements		X			
Open Cell 3, Landfill	X				Completed 2005
Operation E-911 Service		X			Remodeling in process
Satellite Library at North end of Habersham County using existing facilities				X	never completed
Natural and Historic Resources					
Archeological Risk Needs Assessment				X	never completed
National Register Nominations for eligible Historic Properties	X				completed years ago
Continue development of the Greenways Plan and acquisition of property rights				X	never completed

Unincorporated Habersham County Community Agenda

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Review existing drainage study and implement revisions to the Code to further protect residential areas		X			Updated environmental section of the Code in 2003 and made land development permits required for single family developments
Housing					
Review Zoning Ordinance to ensure manufactured homes remain compatible with single-family residential zones		X			Comprehensive Land Development Resolution is being redrafted in compliance with the new Comp Plan
Review need for affordable housing and rehabilitation program		X			Ongoing

6 Town of Alto Community Agenda

6.1 Town of Alto Vision Statement

Introduction

The Town of Alto is a community that has a proud heritage of hard working, close-knit families with strong ties to the local railroad. It was originally known as Longview, until the Atlanta & Richmond Air Line Railway (now known as Norfolk Southern) built a depot and named it Alto. On December 16, 1895, the Town of Alto was incorporated in Banks and Habersham Counties.



Alto was a major shipping point for cotton and peaches.

There were a number of stores, a school, a cotton gin and a warehouse.

In the 1960s, the first well was drilled and the Town began its water system. We now have 10 operational drilled wells and a backup connection to the City of Demorest. We have close to 1,000 water customers at this time. Our largest customer is also our largest employer, Mount Vernon Mills. On January 1, 2007, we established a full-time police force to protect and serve our community.

“We will continue to develop our neighborhoods, celebrate our cultural diversity and foster the family-oriented qualities upon which the Town was founded.”

The Mayor and Town Council of Alto in consideration of the future growth management and development, and in accordance to the concerns of our residents, set forth the following vision statement.

Vision

From the beautiful natural surroundings to the diversified culture and the strong community spirit, the Town has much to offer its current and future residents. We have a strong desire to promote the growth and economic development through improved zoning and annexation strategies in order to attract new businesses and industry. We will continue to develop our neighborhoods, celebrate our cultural diversity and foster the family-oriented qualities upon which the Town was founded. It is our desire to maintain a safe, attractive and healthy environment that promotes the well-being of all our citizens.



6.2 Issues and Opportunities for the Town of Alto

Introduction

Effectively implementing Alto's vision will require a well-defined implementation program. The first step in developing this implementation program is the identification of core community issues and opportunities. These issues and opportunities form the basis for the community's long and short-term action plan, which begins in Section 6.4 and is carried through to the Short Term Work Program, Section 6.6. Issues and opportunities were first drafted in the analysis phase of the Comprehensive Plan (see *Community Assessment*) and then later refined through public discussions, input from elected officials, and analysis by Comprehensive Planning staff. These items are organized under key planning areas:

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

6.2.1 Economic Development

- 1. Increased Training Opportunities for Workforce.** In 2000, 41.6 percent of Alto's employed residents worked in production, transportation, and material moving occupations. This data suggests that there may be a lack of diversification in the skill-sets of residents of Alto. The North Georgia Technical College provides an opportunity for job training that can help diversify the skills of Alto's workforce.
- 2. Sewer Infrastructure.** Alto lacks major sewer facilities that are necessary for increased industrial growth. The town should identify a strategic means of developing a more advanced sewer system over time.
- 3. Main Street Redevelopment.** Alto currently has a limited number of stores, services, and small businesses. Redevelopment of downtown properties could help attract additional retail and services to the community. Currently there are more than 140 acres for sale along the railroad that could easily turn into a large-scale redevelopment project. The community should develop incentives to encourage this type of reinvestment on its core downtown street and surrounding area.
- 4. Recruitment of More Industries and Jobs.** The town should work towards recruiting more businesses. Currently there are a limited number and variety job opportunities for residents. The town should work with the county's Development Authority to develop appropriate strategies for diversifying job opportunities and recruiting more industries such as Mount Vernon Mills.
- 5. Maintenance of Community Appearance.** The community involvement process identified the need for stricter code enforcement in the town. A well-kept community appearance will help draw new businesses and residents to the town.

6.2.2 Housing

1. **Affordable Housing.** Of participating municipalities, Alto had the highest percentage of cost-burdened renter households: 32 percent of all renter households paid more than 30 percent of income on rent. This data suggests that Alto needs more affordable housing options.
2. **Greater Housing Diversity.** Over one third (35 percent in 2000) of Alto’s housing units are manufactured/mobile homes, which is the highest percentage for all jurisdictions in the Comprehensive Plan study area. Greater housing diversity may help improve the quality of housing for those current and potential residents with low to moderate incomes. In particular, the emergence of larger minority groups in the community may necessitate other housing types that fit their lifestyles. The Town has also identified an increasing trend toward home ownership, which should help guide permitting for single family homes in the future.
3. **Encouragement of Housing Rehabilitation over Major New Construction.** Alto’s population is projected to increase at a slower pace than the County over the next 20 years, increasing to about 1,185 in 2029.¹ This suggests a need for neighborhood preservation and rehabilitation versus a heavy reliance on new construction efforts. Alto has recently made strides in addressing this issue through the following actions: (1) Adoption of the 2003 Edition of International Property Maintenance Code; (2) Enforcement of the State’s minimum standards; and (3) the hiring a part-time building inspector.

6.2.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

1. **Documentation of Historic Resources** – On the Natural, Archaeological, Historic Resources Geographic Information System (NAHRGIS) database, approximately 10 sites were identified as “appearing to meet National Register criteria” within the town limits of Alto. Exceptionally significant structures should be documented and the process to add them to the National Register of Historic Places should be undertaken.

6.2.4 Community Facilities and Services

1. **Water Supply.** Sufficient water supply to keep pace with projected growth is an issue within the town. The county and its municipalities have recently completed a 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to study and address this issue. The findings of this plan estimate that the town will need to add an additional 1.0 MGD of capacity to serve demand in 2030. Alto currently relies on a system of wells for their water supply, and groundwater supplies are insufficient to meet future demand.

¹ This population projection is based on past population trends in the town of Alto and is coordinated with projected population growth for Habersham County. These numbers are a projection and are by no means a certain outcome. The Town has expressed some desire to adjust these numbers based on new population growth documented by the town. Current projections are based on available U.S. Census data.

2. **Sewer Infrastructure.** No sewer system has been established in Alto. As the area's population grows, this infrastructure will be particularly important, especially in providing higher density housing and attracting more industry.
3. **Increase in Cultural Diversity.** Approximately 20 percent of the town's population was of Hispanic origin in 2000, a dramatic increase from 1990 (when it was 1.4 percent). Ongoing demographic changes will require the Town to develop unique approaches to this increase in the town's cultural diversity.
4. **New Police Department.** The town opened its first police department in 2006. Since that time, the town has seen a notable decline in vandalism and increase in code enforcement. The police department brings additional resources to the town that can help maintain and improve the quality of life.

6.2.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

1. **Create an Annexation Policy.** It would benefit Alto to develop an annexation policy to define when annexation is or is not in its best interest. The Town should work closely with Habersham and Banks Counties as well as state and regional planning agencies to ensure that new community facilities and services built in close proximity to Alto support the needs of local residents and businesses, are compatible with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, and are consistent with the Service Delivery Strategy when land is annexed.

6.2.6 Transportation

1. **Limited Pedestrian Network.** Alto has a poorly connected and incomplete pedestrian network. The town also lacks a sidewalk installation and repair program and identification of future funding sources. Currently, pedestrians are forced to walk along the railroad in core downtown areas. In addition, many pedestrian crossing locations lack safety improvements such as crosswalk striping, refuges, and signals. The small size of Alto facilitates pedestrian travel, and the Town should ensure that pedestrians are safe by investing in needed infrastructure.
2. **Railroad Crossing Safety.** Some railroad crossings lack safety improvements. In particular, the town is in need of a railroad crossing that includes flashing lights and arms to protect approaching travelers. The Town should work closely with Norfolk Southern Railroad as well as Habersham and Banks County to resolve these issues.
3. **Radial Road Network.** Due to the radial configuration of the road network, cross county traffic passes through the cities; most traffic congestion within Alto is located in residential and commercial corridors.
4. **Maintenance of Existing Roads.** Despite the need for new roads, traffic lights, and other facilities, maintenance of existing roads should be a top priority. The Town should follow a clear prioritization policy for repaving and repairing existing roads and related transportation facilities.

6.2.7 Land Use

1. **Lack of Tree Ordinance.** A tree ordinance is needed to prevent the clear-cutting of lots for development. The Town currently has no mechanism to preserve existing trees on developing parcels. Without tree ordinances new subdivisions are often devoid of mature trees and decades are required for the establishment of tree canopy.
2. **Community Green Spaces are Needed.** Aside from a small playground co-located with Town Hall, there is no community greenspace. Areas for community parks and greenspace should be identified for the future.
3. **Protection of Natural Resources.** Alto has recently improved the protection of its natural resources due to code/ordinance adoption and enforcement. The Town should continue to pursue progressive measures to ensure that its natural resources are sufficiently protected as future development occurs.
4. **Create an Annexation Strategy.** In the past, Alto has missed out on opportunities to increase its tax base by annexing nearby land. By developing a strategy to annex land, Alto will be more successful at such attempts in the future. A particular focus should be given to annexing land northward, along the 365 corridor; however, community facility and service provision should be considered in the annexation process.

6.3 Future Development in Alto

6.3.1 Introduction

The Future Development Map is a vital tool that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in the Town of Alto. The Future Development Map is on the community's vision for the future and was developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level and includes the entire area within and surrounding the Town. Some of these character areas also cross over into unincorporated Habersham County in an effort to reduce land use and development conflicts at town's limits. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

Like Habersham County, the Town of Alto elected not to complete a Future Land Use Map, the map associated with previous comprehensive planning processes. Traditionally, future land use maps were short range planning tools which tied the desired land uses of the community's future vision to a jurisdiction's zoning or land development. Text has been included in the Character Area Narratives accompanying the Future Development Map to provide this guidance. The Town will be working on a Zoning Ordinance as a follow-on activity to the comprehensive plan update; the guiding language of this ordinance should directly relate zoning decisions to the Future Development Map.

6.3.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Habersham County and its municipalities, including the Town of Alto. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the town. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The town's character areas are described and defined individually in the following narratives and are mapped in Figure 6-1.

The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

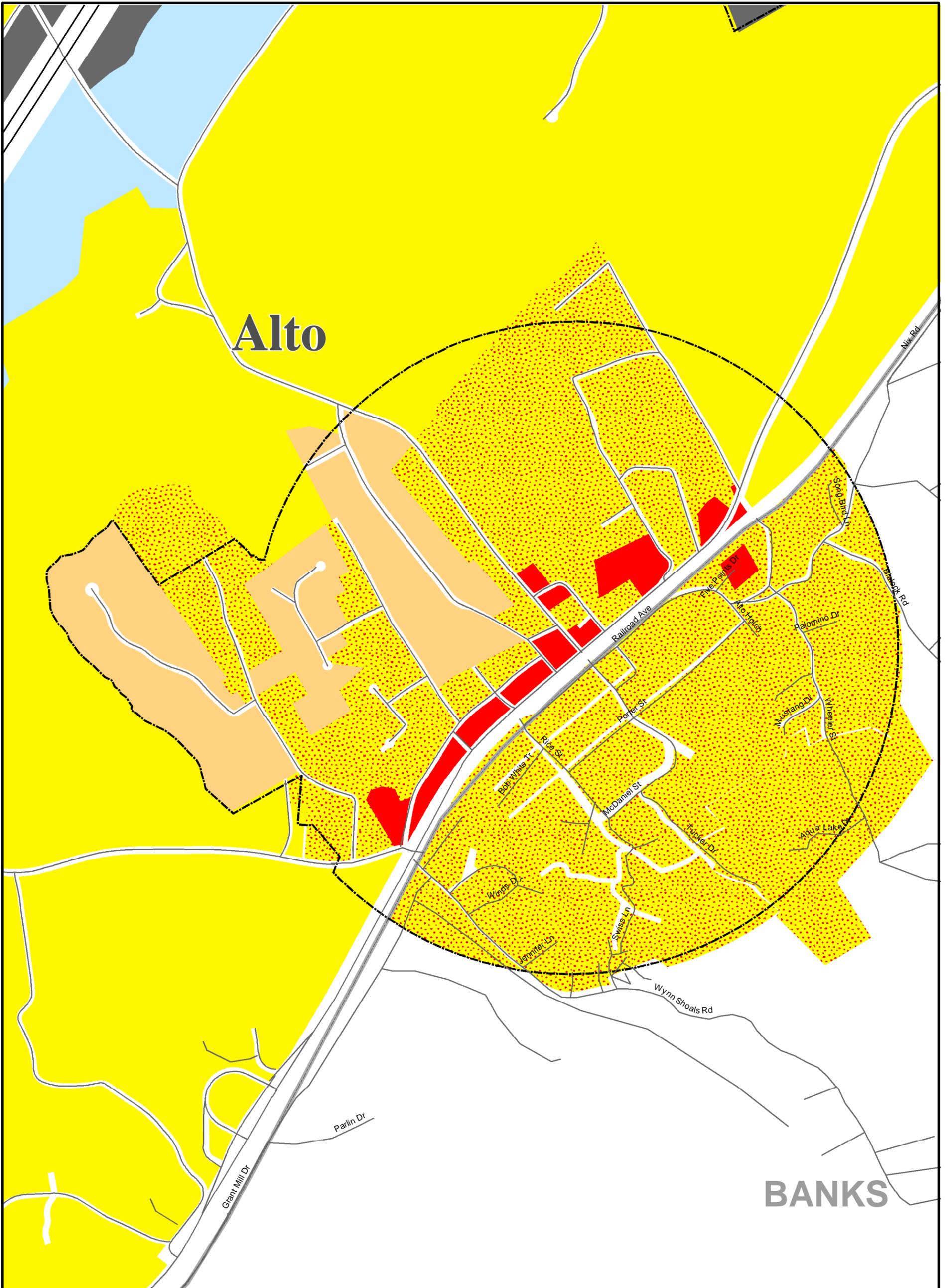
- Siting and configuration of lots.

Town of Alto Community Agenda

- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

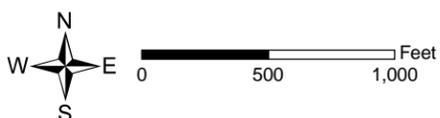
The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county and municipalities.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for changes to development regulations and development of design guidelines where appropriate.



**Habersham County 2029
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 6-1: City of Alto
Future Development*



Future Development

- 365 Corridor
- Developing Residential
- Stable Neighborhood
- Mixed Residential
- Commercial
- Non participating jurisdiction

- State & Federal Highways
- Local Roads
- County Lines
- City Limits



May 2008

Mixed Residential

Existing Character Description: The City of Alto will work to upgrade current homes and houses to present a clean, healthy neighborhood. The City will strive to maintain a safe, pleasant neighborhood by reducing traffic on back streets to better serve the community, and will work to add sidewalks in many areas.

These areas are found throughout Alto and are comprised of a mixture of single-family homes and manufactured housing of varying styles and levels of quality.

Vision for the Area: The mixed residential areas in Alto will enjoy a high level of home ownership and include a combination of manufactured housing and detached single family homes. The residential areas will be family – friendly neighborhoods.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: The land use categories to be allowed are low to medium density with mixed mobile homes and houses.

Zoning Classifications: N/A Town does not have zoning.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Implement neighborhood watch programs.
 - Protect residents from incompatible land use activities by enforcing current ordinances.



- Encourage new housing and development by giving incentives for upgrading from manufactured homes to stick built homes.
- Encourage the maintenance and improvement of current housing.
- Reduce cut-through traffic on residential streets.
- Identify appropriate areas and add sidewalks where feasible to encourage walk-ability and increase neighborhood connectivity.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Sense of Place.
- Infill Development.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Housing Choices.
- Growth Preparedness.

Commercial

Existing Character Description: The downtown core of Alto, this area includes a collection of historic and modern buildings housing a small number of commercial uses. Due to the location of the railroad access to this area is limited and a number of storefronts are vacant.

Vision for the Area: A vibrant, safe, walkable downtown area with a mixture of business serving the needs of the residents of Alto.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Allow strip malls with multiple suitable family-oriented stores, restaurants, service stations.

Zoning Classifications: N/A Town does not have zoning.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage and support new businesses.
 - Encourage the construction of new commercial buildings and restoration of old buildings for modern commercial uses.
 - Add sidewalks for better pedestrian travel.



- Develop access management standards for the area to maintain acceptable traffic flow and safety.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Growth Preparedness.
- Appropriate Businesses.
- Infill Development.
- Sense of Place.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Heritage Preservation.

Stable Neighborhood

Existing Character Description:

Established residential subdivisions predominantly located in the vicinity of Cornwall Place Road. The areas are relatively well-maintained and have a consistent aesthetic with similar lot sizes and housing types.

Vision for the Area: The area will continue to be well-maintained pockets of affordable, owner-occupied housing. These will be sought after family-oriented neighborhoods.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: low to medium density single-family detached houses

Zoning Classifications: N/A Town does not have zoning.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Implement buffers for non-residential uses to protect residents from incompatible land use activities.
 - Maintain the current lot sizes, through zoning enforcement.
 - Maintain the quality of the neighborhoods through aggressive code enforcement.



- Assess sidewalk condition on a regular basis and make repairs as necessary.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Choices.
- Sense of Place.

6.4 Town of Alto Implementation Strategies

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 6.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (one to five years), or Long-Range (more than five years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this plan, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Short-Term Work Programs of the Town of Alto (Section 6.6) – linking appropriate short-term items to the 2009 to 2013 Short-Term Work Program. *Please also see Countywide Implementation Strategies, which are also applicable to Alto as well as all other jurisdictions participating in this plan.*

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
<i>Alto</i>	Alto (Town of)
<i>APD</i>	Alto Police Department
<i>Baldwin</i>	Baldwin (City of)
<i>Banks</i>	Banks County
<i>Clarksville</i>	Clarksville (City of)
<i>Cornelia</i>	Cornelia (City of)
<i>Demorest</i>	Demorest (City of)
<i>GDATE</i>	Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education
<i>GDCA</i>	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
<i>GDED</i>	Georgia Department of Economic Development
<i>GDOL</i>	Georgia Department of Labor
<i>GDOT</i>	Georgia Department of Transportation
<i>GEPD</i>	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
<i>GFC</i>	Georgia Forestry Commission
<i>GHPD</i>	Georgia Historic Preservation Division
<i>GMRDC</i>	Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center
<i>Habersham</i>	Habersham County
<i>HBJDA</i>	Habersham Banks Joint Development Authority
<i>HCCC</i>	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
<i>HCHS</i>	Habersham County Historical Society
<i>HCRoD</i>	Habersham County Roads Department
<i>HCRecD</i>	Habersham County Recreation Department
<i>HCWD</i>	Habersham County Water Department
<i>Mt. Airy</i>	Mount Airy (Town of)
<i>NEGHA</i>	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
<i>NGTC</i>	North Georgia Technical College
<i>NS</i>	Norfolk Southern Corporation
<i>NTHP</i>	National Trust for Historic Preservation
<i>OL</i>	Operation Lifesaver
<i>Path</i>	The Path Foundation
<i>PC</i>	Piedmont College
<i>Tallulah Falls</i>	Tallulah Falls (City of)

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
<i>TPL</i>	The Trust for Public Land
<i>USDARD</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
<i>USEPA</i>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<i>USFS</i>	U.S. Forestry Service
<i>USHUD</i>	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

6.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Increased Training Opportunities for Workforce.
2. Sewer Infrastructure.
3. Main Street Redevelopment.
4. Attraction of More Industries and Jobs.
5. Maintenance of Community Appearance.

Limited population and infrastructure restrain the town’s ability to bring in additional services and retail as well as jobs for residents. Economic development efforts should focus on developing the town’s labor force, improving the downtown area, and maintaining the community’s positive image to residents, neighbors, and visitors.

ED-1. Increased Training Opportunities for Workforce

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop stronger partnership with North Georgia Technical College to connect local residents with training opportunities. <i>Town to place flyers and brochures at City Hall for upcoming classes.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>NGTC GDATE GDOL</i>
Survey community residents to determine training needs and desires. <i>The Town has hired Angela Steedley to poll community.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDATE</i>
If deemed appropriate, hold in-town training workshops to help increase labor force skills.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDATE NGTC</i>
Connect all appropriate new businesses in area to the county’s Quick Start program.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCCC NGTC GQSP</i>

ED-2. Sewer Infrastructure.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a long-term strategy for either developing or joining nearby sewerage systems. <i>Open discussions with local cities about connecting with their sewer systems. Research cost for Alto to develop its own system.</i>	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCWD Baldwin</i>

ED-3. Main Street Redevelopment.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a redevelopment plan for the revitalization of the Main Street District. <i>Consider inclusion of mini-mall area as part of plan.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDCA GDEcD</i>
Develop incentives to help attract developers and businesses to downtown area. <i>Contact the Habersham Chamber of Commerce and GMRDC for assistance.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HBJDA GDED GMRDC</i>
Work towards creating a pedestrian walkway between retail stores to improve shopping environment.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	

ED-4. Recruitment of More Industries and Jobs.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop incentives to help attract developers and businesses to downtown area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HBJDA GDED</i>
Develop stronger partnership with North Georgia Technical College to connect local residents with training opportunities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>NGTC GDATE GDOL</i>
Create a database of needed services/businesses/jobs in the community along with strategies to attract those to the town.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCCC GDED</i>
Encourage entrepreneurship opportunities, such as the development of a family-style restaurant. Provide support where possible.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCCC</i>

ED-5. Maintenance of Community Appearance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop mechanisms for maintaining community appearance that require limited to no additional funding. <i>New mechanisms should complement recent “trash and junk accumulations” ordinances passed by the Town as well as efforts instigated by the Town’s building inspector.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDCA</i>
Develop an educational campaign for community members regarding existing codes and benefits of positive community appearance. Continue to address code violations and approve growth and development permits that meet Town’s code and goals.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCBOE</i>
Combine appropriate code enforcement efforts with regular patrolling of the Police Department when appropriate. <i>Patrolling should ensure that no incompatible structures or land uses exist in developed areas.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>APD</i>	<i>Alto</i>

6.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Affordable Housing.
2. Greater Housing Diversity.
3. Encouragement of Housing Rehabilitation over Major New Construction.

Over the planning period, Alto’s housing strategies should focus upon the preservation of existing housing structures and its affordable housing stock. Development of new units should focus upon increasing the area’s housing diversity and encouraging infill units.

H-1. Affordable Housing

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a financial assistance program to help low-income renters pay deposits and/or first and last month’s rent.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>NEGHA GDCA USHUD</i>
Create a long-term strategy for attracting low-income housing developers to the community, utilizing the incentives of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and other state/federal programs to help bring them in to the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>NEGHA GDCA USHUD</i>

H-2. Greater Housing Diversity

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review and update manufactured housing regulations and update as determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>USDARD</i>
Develop provisions for mixed-uses in the downtown core of Alto, encouraging new structures incorporate housing above new retail/commercial. <i>Contact USHUD and USDARD for assistance and pursue grants to utilize as development incentives.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>USHUD USDARD</i>

H-3. Encouragement of Housing Rehabilitation over Major New Construction.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop regulations to guide the design of infill housing development so that new structures fit with the existing character of the neighborhood. <i>The Town Council will review infill design to make sure it is keeping with regulations.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDCA</i>
Identify and apply for grant programs that could help residents with repairs to aging housing structures, including DCA, HUD, and other related programs.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>USHUD GDCA NEGHA</i>

6.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Documentation of Historic Resources.

Alto’s historic resources will help maintain the community’s small town character and unique history. The Town will prioritize this cultural resource issue and collaborate with other jurisdictions in the county on other joint environmental concerns.

NCR-1. Documentation of Historic Resources

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review those sites listed on the NAHRGIS website for those worth pursuing as National Register of Historic Places sites and work with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to pursue their designation.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCHS GHPD NTHP</i>
Develop marketing/educational materials of town’s historical resources for community members and tourists.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCHS GDED</i>

6.4.4 Community Facilities and Services

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Water Supply.
2. Sewer Infrastructure.
3. Increase in Cultural Diversity.
4. New Police Department.

Alto’s ability to provide basic, yet high-quality services will prove to set it apart as a comfortable small town over time. An adequate water and an accessible sewer system as well as the ability to meet the needs of a diverse population will be some of its core needs during the planning period.

CFS -1. Water Supply

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a strategy and funding sources for connecting with other area water systems to alleviate dependence the town’s systems of wells. <i>This strategy will include installing new water lines, applying for grants, and talking with other water systems about emergency connections.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCWD Baldwin Banks</i>

CFS-2. Sewer Infrastructure

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a long-term strategy for either developing or joining nearby sewerage systems. Demorest or the nearby city of Baldwin could serve as potential sources for additional sewage capacity in the town.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Demorest Baldwin Habersham</i>

CFS-3. Increase in Cultural Diversity

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review Town services to identify those services that are need of a part-time or full-time translator.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	
Hire a part-time or full-time translator to help provide needed translation services, including document translation and interpreter services as necessary.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	
Support the generation of English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to help support the local Hispanic population.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>NGTC PC GDATE</i>

CSF-4: New Police Department

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Provide needed resources and facilities to police department as necessary to maintain an appropriate level of service.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>APD</i>
Where appropriate, combine appropriate code enforcement efforts with regular patrolling of police department.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>APD</i>	<i>Alto</i>

6.4.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Create an Annexation Policy.

The small size of Alto makes it well-positioned to greatly benefit from strong intergovernmental coordination policies. Consolidation of services, discussed in the countywide Implementation Strategies will be particularly helpful to Alto due to its limited size and financial resources.

IC-1. Create an Annexation Policy

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Generate an annexation policy that innumerates those conditions that make annexation an appropriate policy decision.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Habersham Banks GMRDC</i>
Work closely with Habersham and Banks Counties and state and regional agencies to ensure that new community facilities and services built in close proximity to Alto support the needs of residents and businesses.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Habersham Banks GMRDC</i>

6.4.6 Transportation

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Limited Pedestrian Network.
2. Railroad Crossing Safety.
3. Radial Road Network.
4. Maintenance of Existing Roads.

Alto has a relatively basic transportation network. Over the planning period, the Town should work with other transportation partners to improve mobility, safety for pedestrian and drivers, and a more complete pedestrian network.

T-1. Limited Pedestrian Network.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a walkability audit to determine the most effective locations for investing in sidewalk infrastructure.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	
Identify funding sources for future improvements the pedestrian network.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDOT</i>
Connect sidewalk network to potential countywide trail system as appropriate.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>HCRcd Path</i>

T-2. Railroad Crossing Safety.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a needs assessment that identifies appropriate safety improvements for both along and crossing over the railroad tracks	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDOT NSR Habersham Banks OL</i>
Develop a public education campaign to (1) inform community members of restricted areas near railroad and (2) improve overall railroad safety. Partner with neighboring jurisdictions where appropriate and coordinate with sidewalk improvement plans.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDOT NS Habersham Banks OL</i>

T-3. Radial Road Network.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Assess the need for traffic calming devices in heavily traveled commercial and residential areas. <i>Traffic calming strategies should include placement of speed bumps, lower speed limits, and more patrolling.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDOT HCRD</i>

T-4. Maintenance of Existing Roads.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a simple prioritization system for new traffic facilities, including improvements to existing roads and additions of new roads. <i>Continue to work with GDOT traffic studies, including LARP program to improve existing road conditions.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDOT</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Support efforts to create countywide truck routes to remove thru truck traffic in town centers. <i>Town should continue attending GDOT meetings.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Baldwin Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Habersham Mt. Airy GDOT Tallulah Falls</i>

6.4.7 Land Use

Issues and Opportunities

1. Lack of Tree Ordinance.
2. Community Green Spaces are Needed.
3. Protection of Natural Resources.
4. Create an Annexation Strategy.

At the time of this plan, Alto has no zoning or subdivision regulations. Looking to the future, it is critical that the Town draft and adopt certain development regulations to preserve the community’s small-town character, beauty, and viability over time. The below implementation strategies address the core land use needs.

LU-1. Lack of Tree Ordinance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Research tree ordinances from surrounding area. Develop appropriate mechanism for minimizing clear cutting in future developments.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	
Identify public spaces and right of ways that could benefit from additions of trees and vegetation, which should include the following: <i>work session with Town Council and discussion with Norfolk Southern about rights of way.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GDCA NS</i>
Identify cost effective ways to replace tree coverage where it has been lost and add more new trees. <i>Pursue grants with the USFS and GFC.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>USFS GFC</i>

LU-2. Community Green Spaces are Needed.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a community survey to identify areas where green spaces are most needed. <i>Solicit resident input/participation on available land.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	
Continue to identify and pursue funding sources for acquiring additional land over-time to increase the community's greenspace.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>TPL</i>
Talk with residents about their open areas to be kept as possible green space.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	

LU-3. Protection of Natural Resources.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Adopt standards that prohibit development in environmental sensitive areas. <i>The town building inspector should take a lead role in this activity.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GEPD USEPA</i>
Require site designs that protect against unnecessary erosion and other adverse consequences of development. <i>The town building inspector should take a lead role in this activity.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>GEPD USEPA</i>

LU-4. Create an Annexation Policy.²

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Generate an annexation policy that enumerates those conditions that make annexation an appropriate policy decision.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Habersham Banks GMRDC</i>
Work closely with Habersham and Banks Counties and state and regional agencies to ensure that new community facilities and services built in close proximity to Alto support the needs of residents and businesses.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Habersham Banks GMRDC</i>

² This opportunity (LU-4) and relevant strategies are also addressed under the Intergovernmental Coordination section.

6.5 Town of Alto Policies

General policies are designed and adopted to reflect and represent the community’s vision and priorities, confirmed during the planning process. These general policies are constructed to reflect the values of Alto residents and other contributors to the community’s vitality. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Community Vision and addressing the Community’s Issues and Opportunities. These policies will guide day-to-day decisions of Town officials and are intended to be general in nature, reflecting city-wide needs. The general policies will be referenced in staff reports and will play a guiding role in permitting decisions, rezoning, and budget preparation. Geographic-based policies are included in Section 6.3 as a part of the description of the Future Development Map.

Similar to the Issues and Opportunities section, the following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

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

6.5.1 Economic Development

- We will target reinvestment to declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference to new economic development projects in Greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of our community.
- We will take into account access to housing and impacts on transportation when considering economic development projects.
- We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will promote continued education and instruction in adult education programs found in the county.
- Continue to work on incentives for more industrial and commercial opportunities.

6.5.2 Housing

- We will eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.
- We will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.

- We will accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in each neighborhood.
- We will encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (homeownership).
- We support dispersion of assisted housing throughout the community in order to diversify neighborhoods and eliminate pockets of poverty.

6.5.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- We will factor potential impacts on air and water quality in making decisions on new developments and transportation improvements.
- We will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new development.
- We will promote low impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites.
- We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.

6.5.4 Community Facilities and Services

- Our community will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.
- We will ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.
- We will limit development within our community to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure.
- We will ensure that capital improvements needed to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.
- Our community will use planned infrastructure expansion to support development in areas identified (in the comprehensive plan) as suitable for such development.
- We will invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

6.5.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection)
- We will pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions
- We will consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- We will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that

are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.

6.5.6 Transportation

- We will target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the community (recognizing that ready availability of transportation creates demand for land development in adjacent areas).
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be appropriately designed, using context sensitive design considerations, to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.
- We support creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- We will ensure (through traffic calming and other design considerations) that excessive vehicular traffic will not harm the peaceful nature of our residential neighborhoods.

6.5.7 Land Use

- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.
- Our community will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
- We will encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- We are committed to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community, where people have easy access to parks, and necessary services (grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- We support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
- We encourage mixed-use developments that are human-scale and less auto-oriented.
- We support new land uses that contribute to protecting the environment and preserving meaningful open space.
- We support new land uses that enhance housing options in our community.

6.6.1 Town of Alto Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the community’s vision for the Town of Alto.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
General Planning and Land Use				
Develop greenways & pedestrian walkways	2009-2013	\$ 100,000	Mayor & Council	General Fund / Streetscape Grants / Other Grants
Resume work on zoning ordinance to preserve areas for agriculture / rural and to address land use and development	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council / GMRDC	General Fund
Generate an annexation policy that innumerate those conditions that make annexation an appropriate policy decision.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	Habersham Banks / GMRDC
Complete a walkability audit to determine the most effective locations for investing in sidewalk infrastructure.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	
Economic Development				
Pursue Sewer Source / Connection	2009-2013	\$ 100,000	Mayor & Council	Water Fund / GEFA / Grants
Survey community residents to determine training needs and desires. The Town has hired Angela Steedly to poll community	2009	Staff+\$ 2000	Mayor & Council	General Fund / Grants / GDATE

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Complete a redevelopment plan for the revitalization of the Main Street District.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	GDCA / GDEcD
Create a database of needed services/businesses/jobs in the community along with strategies to attract those to the town.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	HCCC / GDED / General Fund
Housing				
Research incentives for improvement of existing housing	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council / Building Inspector	General Fund; Grants; Awards
Improve living conditions for residents by the enforcement of ordinances and inspections	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council / Building Inspector	General Fund / Grants / Awards
Develop a financial assistance program to help low-income renters pay deposits and /or first and last month's rent.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	NEGHA / GDCA / USHUD
Review and update manufactured housing regulations and update as determined appropriate.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council / Building Inspector	USDARD
Develop regulations to guide the design of infill housing development so that new structures fit with the existing character of the neighborhood. The Town Council will review infill design to make sure it is keeping with regulations.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council / Building Inspector	GDCA
Community Facilities and Services				
Pursue new wells and other options for water resources	2009-2013	\$ 200,000	Mayor & Council	Water Fund / GEFA / Grants / SPLOST
New Water Tank & Storage	2009-2010	\$ 300,000	Mayor & Council	Water Fund / GEFA / Grants / SPLOST

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources				
Plan and Develop new recreation areas & playgrounds	2009-2013	\$ 150,000	Mayor & Council	General Fund / Grants
Plant trees along streets to provide shading for pedestrians and bicyclists. Encourage all new developments to plant trees in landscape	2009-2013	\$ 75,000	Mayor & Council	General Fund / Grants
Review those sites listed on the NAHRGIS website for those worth pursuing as National Register of Historic Places sites and work with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to pursue their designation.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	HCHS / GHPD / NTHP
Adopt standards that prohibit development in environmental sensitive areas. The town building inspector should take a lead role in this activity.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council / Building Inspector	GEPD / USEPA
Transportation				
Future closing of Wynn Shoals Railroad Crossing and development of alternate route through Swiss Lane.	2009	\$ 70,000	Mayor & Council	General Fund / SPLOST
Complete a needs assessment that identifies appropriate safety improvements for both along and crossing over the railroad tracks	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	General Fund / GDOT / NSR / Habersham Banks / OL
Develop a public education campaign to (1) inform community members of restricted areas near railroad and (2) improve overall railroad safety. Partner with neighboring jurisdictions where appropriate and coordinate with sidewalk improvement plans.	2009-2013	Staff & Operation Lifesaver	Mayor & Council	GDOTNS HabershamBanks OL

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Develop a simple prioritization system for new traffic facilities, including improvements to existing roads and additions of new roads. Continue to work with GDOT traffic studies, including LARP program to improve existing road conditions.	2009-2013	Staff	Mayor & Council	GDOT Habersham Banks General Fund
Intergovernmental Coordination				
Possibly develop a sports complex for the southern end of the county	2009-2013	\$ 500,000	Mayor & Council County Commissioners Recreational Department	General Fund Grants

6.6.2 Alto Report of Accomplishments

The following table identifies the status of those items included in the Town of Alto 2003-2008 Short Term Work Program.

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Land Use					
Zoning; Mobile Home Ordinance		X			
Annexation of Land for Subdivision	X				
Community Facilities					
Establish a Police Department	X				
Drill Two New Wells	X				
Upgrade Playground	X				
Add on to City Hall			X		
Replace Transit Water Lines in City	X				
Replace Aging Water Meters (10 year plan) about 80 per year	X				
Road Paved through LARP on Capati Drive	X				
Road Paving through LARP for Various Projects	X				
Transportation					
Closing Wynn Shoals RR Crossing				X	

7 City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

7.1 City of Clarkesville Vision Statement

The City of Clarkesville will develop an active economic development program to promote business growth and provide job opportunities for its citizens.

The City of Clarkesville will enhance its land use, zoning, architectural standards and other regulatory tools to protect the historical character of our community, and work with Habersham County and the other nearby cities regarding growth, annexation, taxation policies, subdivision and tree preservation regulations.

Clarkesville will continue to develop a network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways to enhance recreational and transportation opportunities and develop street and sidewalk enhancement programs.

We will remain dedicated to the promotion of our community through support of the visual and performing arts, furthering streetscape improvements, and by seeking mechanisms to revitalize and redevelop the central business district. The City will pursue the Signature Community and Better Hometown programs.

“The citizens of Clarkesville will continue to work together to provide a safe and friendly environment to work, play and enjoy the bounty of this unique community.”

The City of Clarkesville will provide sustainable and adequate water and wastewater capabilities to meet the needs of the community. The City will develop and implement a solid waste recycling program in cooperation with Habersham County.



We will continue to provide municipal services, including public safety, utilities and public works, in a service-oriented, cost-effective manner while expanding those services to meet the needs of its citizens and providing a

valued return of investment to the community, thereby securing the financial stability of its enterprises.

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The citizens of Clarkesville will continue to work together to provide a safe and friendly environment to work, play and enjoy the bounty of this unique community. It is with these goals and aspirations held foremost that the people of Clarkesville, through its elected leadership and private citizens, are dedicated to committing their lives and their futures toward its achievement.

7.2 Issues and Opportunities

7.2.1 Economic Development

- 1. High Concentration of Poverty within Elderly Population.** The provision of adequate services and support for poverty-stricken persons is particularly important in Clarkesville. In 1999, 29.5 percent of persons below the poverty level were 65 years of age or older.
- 2. Major Population Growth.** Between 2000 and 2005, the City's population grew by 4.1 percent, which was the second highest growth rate of all participating municipalities. Between the years of 2005 and 2029, the population of Clarkesville is projected to increase significantly reaching 3,639 in 2029. Potential land use changes can encourage an influx of new services and retail to serve this growing population.
- 3. Maintenance of Small Town Character.** The City of Clarkesville has a traditional downtown character that is inline with its North Georgia heritage. This small-town feel and related aesthetic beauty is appealing to visitors, tourists, and others who happen to be passing through the city. It is essential that Clarkesville maintain this atmosphere as growth occurs in the county. The small-town character should also be used as an asset for further developing the tourism industry both within the city and throughout the county.
- 4. Completion and Maintenance of Streetscape Improvements.** Clarkesville has invested in its main corridor, Washington St., as well as other downtown streets by making many streetscape improvements. These improvements have been a source of local pride and have also helped increase investment in the downtown area. The City should continue with these and other appropriate streetscape improvements. As time progresses, the City should focus on maintaining these improvements so that they do not fall into disrepair.
- 5. Need for Visitor Inns/Hotels.** Clarkesville has limited facilities where tourists, business travelers, or others in-town for a short stay can stay overnight. The City should work towards attracting appropriate hotels to the city that meet the needs of local businesses and residents alike. Due to the area's scenic beauty, the attraction of facilities with adequate meeting space may be successful at bringing small retreats and conferences to town. These visitors would contribute to multiple aspects of the local economy, including services and small retail shops as well as ecotourism. The city would also benefit from increased revenue from the hotel tax, which has already been established in Clarkesville as a revenue-raising mechanism.
- 6. Reestablishment of Downtown Development Authority.** Clarkesville has a concentrated group of businesses within its downtown area that share common issues,

City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

needs, and customers. The City of Clarkesville established a Downtown Development Authority several years ago; however, it has become inactive. Efforts will be made to revitalize the Authority, reestablish its mission and engage the Authority in development activities including revolving loan programs, tourism promotion and bond issuance.

7. **Further Development of Local Tourism Industry.** Clarkesville and its neighboring communities have underutilized their location in the Georgia foothills to attract tourists and visitors. The City should develop strategies to better market itself to travelers on the 365 corridor with a long-term goal attracting tourists from throughout the southeastern U.S.
8. **Strategic Economic Development Plan.** In recent years, Clarkesville has made some important changes that have facilitated positive economic growth. To ensure that this trend continues, Clarkesville should develop a strategic economic development plan to identify area industry strengths, tools for attracting those industries, and other related tactics.
9. **Improved Redevelopment Tools.** Redevelopment of existing sites is widely preferred by the community over the development of greenfield sites. To encourage redevelopment, it is critical that Clarkesville establish incentives for redevelopment. The state has established powers and funds for redevelopment. The City should review these powers and funds to identify those that are underutilized by the community and determine ways to make them an active component of the City's economic development toolkit.

7.2.2 Housing

1. **High Renter Population.** Approximately 42 percent of Clarkesville's occupied housing units were rented in 2000 (compared to 33 percent and 34 percent in the state and nation, respectively). Generally, a significantly higher percentage of owner occupied units is ideal. Owners usually have a longer term investment in the area and are likely to have a long-term commitment to the local economy and community development.
2. **Infill Housing.** There is a need within the city to promote infill housing either within or adjacent to downtown districts and activity centers. Infill housing should complement and emulate the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
3. **Greater Housing Diversity.** Clarkesville has one of the more diverse housing stocks in the county. The City should continue smart permitting practices to ensure that it continues this tradition, providing a mix of condos, townhouses, and apartments as well as units with diverse price points to provide for a range of household income levels.

7.2.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- 1. Ecotourism.** Portions of the Chattahoochee National Forest are in close proximity to the City of Clarkesville. The Tallulah Gorge State Park is also within a short driving distance to the city. These parks attract many visitors to the county and its municipalities each year, who enjoy the trout fishing, whitewater streams, abundant wildlife, hiking trails, and camping opportunities they offer. Many visitors to the parks patronize Clarkesville's restaurants, shops and hotels. Environmental tourism contributes to the economic vitality of the city and should be actively promoted.
- 2. Protection of National Register Historic Districts.** The National Register of Historic Places listing is a federal recognition of significance, but it does not offer protection for a site or district. There are two historic districts in Clarkesville, the South Washington Street Historic District and the Washington-Jefferson Street Historic District. The City has adopted a "Preservation Overlay Corridor Zone" to protect these historic districts. The overlay district establishes architectural guidelines for new development in an effort to maintain the character and integrity of these historic areas.
- 3. Need for Design Guidelines.** Clarkesville has maintained a unique character over time; however, as growth pressures encroach upon the city and county, the City needs to protect this character. One way to ensure that new development is consistent with existing structures is to develop overlay districts in appropriate areas of town. An overlay district should be considered in areas of unique character where appropriate protection does not already exist. The City has already developed overlay districts for areas with historic resources. The need for additional overlay districts may be appropriate in other well-established areas of town that are likely to face redevelopment and infill development over the upcoming years.
- 4. More Community Events.** Clarkesville currently has several community events including the following: Mountain Laurel Festival, Halloween on the Square, Christmas Night in Clarkesville, Habersham Christmas Parade, Clarkesville Holiday Walk, and A Taste of Clarkesville. The City should work with local organizations to ensure that these events continue while adding others as determined appropriate. These events can help maintain and develop local heritage and a sense of pride as well as increase tourism.
- 5. Continued Development of the Clarkesville Greenway.** The Clarkesville greenway plan is highly acclaimed by area residents. The completion of this greenway network and its connection to other county paths and the sidewalk network should be a top priority for the City. The greenway increases connectivity, provides additional exercise opportunities, and improves the overall quality of life for residents. The Clarkesville Trail should eventually link to the Tallulah Falls rails-to-trails project.

7.2.4 Community Facilities and Services

- 1. Water Supply.** Insufficient water supply to keep pace with projected growth is an issue within Clarkesville. The county and its municipalities have recently completed a 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to study and address this issue. The findings of this plan estimate that the city will need to add an additional 1.7 MGD of capacity to serve demand in 2030. The city is currently in negotiations to attain additional water supply from the county, in the event the county is serviced by a waterline from Toccoa. This additional water source could be used to help meet projected future demand.
- 2. Need for Consistency and Continuity.** The community visioning process identified the need for greater continuity and consistency in the day-to-day activities of Clarkesville. The City should work towards providing consistent practices in all elements of its operations, including zoning decisions, code enforcement issues, and other relevant issues. One way to better reach this level of service may include the development of best management practices for all City departments.
- 3. Update and Modify User Fees.** The City should review its permitting processes and increase fees where appropriate. When doing this, the City should also consider the viability of creating impact fees to help compensate for the increased services that will be needed as a result of new developments.
- 4. Better Use of Soque River as Recreational Site.** The Soque River is one of Habersham County's greatest unspoiled assets. Currently, this resource is underutilized due to limited access points and restrictive regulations. Clarkesville should play a lead role in identifying additional and improved access points to the river as well as appropriate opportunities for recreational facilities along these areas.
- 5. Improve Community Recycling Program.** Clarkesville's recycling centers are limited in both location and hours of accessibility.
- 6. County Court House Expansion/Renovations.** Clarkesville is the county seat for Habersham County. As such, it is home to the county's court house. This building needs to undergo major expansion or re-construction. The community highly favors its reconstruction in historic fashion. This capital improvement is identified for funding in the new SPLOST and will facilitate the preservation of Clarkesville's historic downtown and also help further grow Clarkesville's downtown as a center-oriented community.
- 7. Need for Meeting Space.** Clarkesville has the potential to attract a greater number of business travelers and other retreat-style visitors by developing meeting space. This is a largely un-tapped opportunity in the county. To create this pull and attract such out-of-town visitors (as well as local organizational meetings) the City should consider investing

in a mini-convention center. These efforts should be coordinated with any efforts to bring more inns/hotels to the city (see Economic Development Issues and Opportunities).

7.2.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- 1. Update Annexation Policy.** Clarkesville has an annexation policy which was developed contemporaneously with its previous Comprehensive Plan. Such a policy is useful in defining for city leaders and community members the City's annexation plans. It is recommended that Clarkesville's leaders take the opportunity to assess the City's current policies and update them as necessary and as required to meet the stipulations of current Georgia annexation laws. During this process the City may also consider updating its mapping of areas of possible annexation.
- 2. Update Service Delivery Strategy Taxation Policy.** Clarkesville and Habersham County entered into a Service Delivery Strategy Agreement that resulted in an inequitable ad valorem taxation position for city residents. The City of Clarkesville and Habersham County needs to re-examine this strategy and reach an equitable agreement for the elimination of any tax inequity.

7.2.6 Transportation

- 1. Continued Improvements to Pedestrian Network.** Clarkesville has made some major improvements to its streetscaping and sidewalks over the past few years. Despite these improvements, the City continues to have an incomplete pedestrian network. In addition, many pedestrian crossing locations lack safety improvements such as crosswalk striping, refuges, and signals (See Economic Development Issues and Opportunities).
- 2. Strip Development Patterns.** As a consequence of strip development patterns, congestion occurs on the major routes within Clarkesville including SR 17 and SR 197, which are the main tourist and commercial routes across the county and to the municipalities.
- 3. High Accident Rates.** There are many accidents on SR 15, SR 17, SR 105, SR 365, and SR 385. Clarkesville should work with the County and other area municipalities to help improve the accident rates on these roadways.
- 4. Inter-parcel Connectivity.** Adjacent developments should be required to share entrances/exits to reduce the number of curb cuts on major transportation routes in the city, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve roadway safety. Areas appropriate for such development regulations include downtown and areas designated for concentrated

commercial or industrial use. In particular, new development along SR 197 and SR 115 should be subject to these regulations. See Transportation Issues and Opportunities.

7.2.7 Land Use

1. **Lack of Tree Ordinance.** Community members voiced a high degree of concern for the large number of trees that have been removed from Clarkesville and the county over recent years. A tree ordinance is needed to prevent the clear-cutting of lots for development. The City currently has no mechanism to preserve existing trees on developing parcels. Without tree ordinances, new subdivisions are often devoid of mature trees and require decades for the establishment of tree canopy.
2. **Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Growth.** The City needs to develop a capital improvement program that is coordinated with the future land use plan to insure that new development is provided with adequate services and does not put a burden on existing residents and facilities.
3. **Encouragement of Infill Development.** There is a need within the city to promote infill development, including housing either, within or adjacent to downtown districts and activity centers. Infill development should complement and emulate the character of the surrounding neighborhood in both style and size. See also Housing Issues and Opportunities.
4. **Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.** The Community Preference Survey (conducted during the community visioning process) demonstrated community partiality for traditional neighborhood design characteristics, re-use of existing structures, trees, greenspace, and buffers between roads and other land uses. Traditional neighborhood developments may not be viable in every context, but they should be required when developing adjacent to or within the historic Clarkesville core, where not already regulated by existing overlay districts. See also Housing Issues and Opportunities.
5. **Amend Zoning to Reflect Comprehensive Plan Recommendations.** To maximize the Comprehensive Plan, the City should amend its zoning ordinance, along with its development regulations following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. This change will ensure that the City has changed its policies to reflect needed and desired strategies in the city.

7.3 Future Development in Clarkesville

7.3.1 Introduction

The Future Development Map is a vital tool that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in the City of Clarkesville. The Future Development Map is on the community's vision for the future and was developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level and includes the entire area within and surrounding the City. Some of these character areas also cross over into unincorporated Habersham County in an effort to reduce land use and development conflicts at city's limits. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

Like Habersham County, the City of Clarkesville elected not to complete a Future Land Use Map, the map associated with previous comprehensive planning processes. Traditionally, future land use maps were short range planning tools which tied the desired land uses of the community's future vision to a jurisdiction's zoning or land development. Text has been included in the Character Area Narratives accompanying the Future Development Map to provide this guidance. When the City updates its Zoning Ordinance; the guiding language of the ordinance must be amended to directly relate zoning decisions to the Future Development Map.

7.3.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Habersham County and its municipalities, including the City of Clarkesville. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the city. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The city's character areas are described and defined individually in the following narratives and are mapped in Figure 7-1.

The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

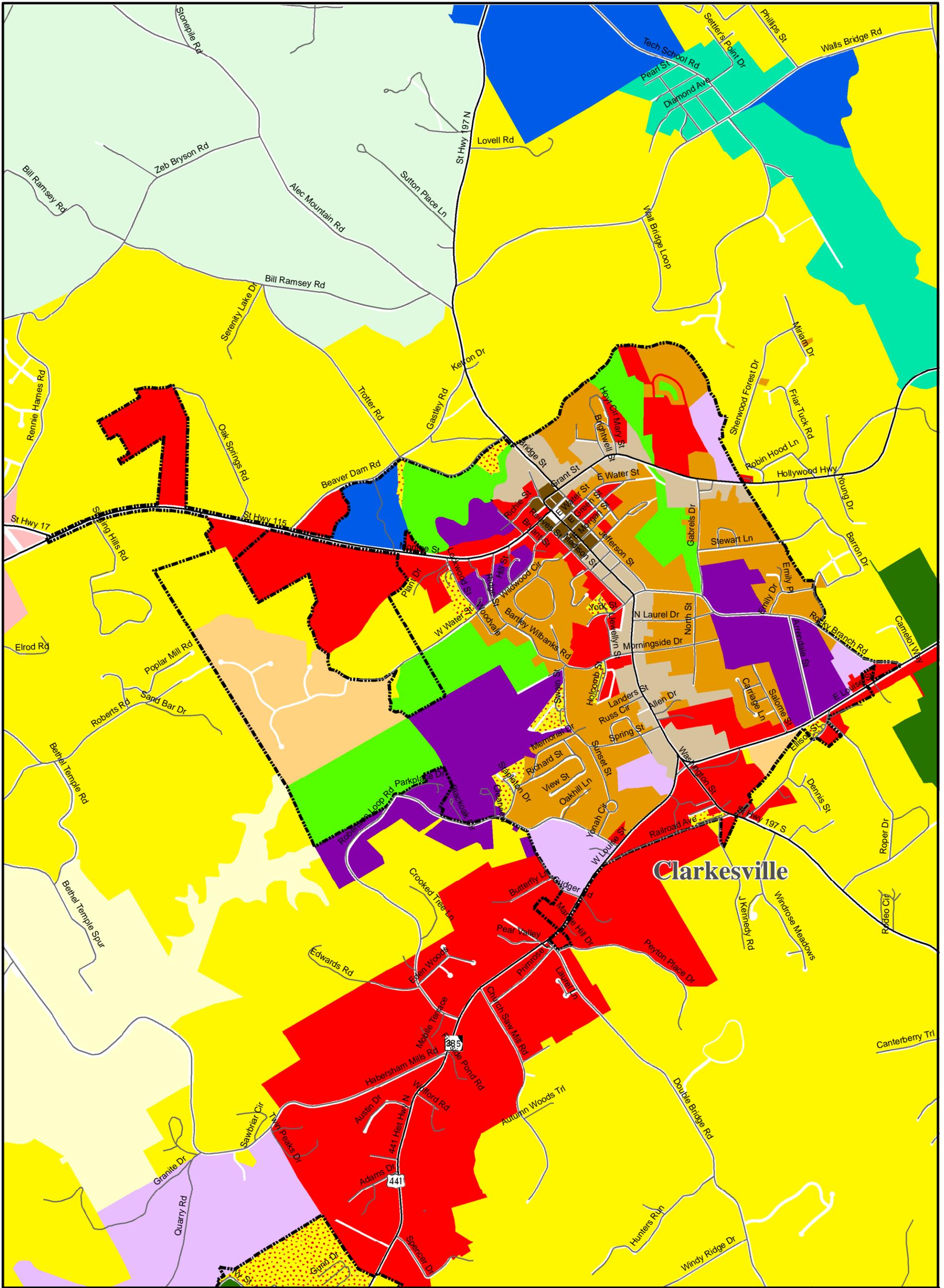
- Siting and configuration of lots.

City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county and municipalities.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for changes to development regulations and development of design guidelines where appropriate.



**Habersham County 2029
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 7-1: City of Clarkesville
Future Development*



Future Development

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gateway Corridor | Mixed Residential |
| Rural Conservation | Historic Area |
| Resource Conservation | Revitalization Area |
| Greenway | Education Center |
| Rural Village | Commercial |
| Developing Residential | Downtown |
| Stable Neighborhood | Industrial/Institutional |
| Traditional Neighborhood | |

- State & Federal Highways
- Local Roads
- City Limits



May 2008

Downtown

Existing Character Description: Located within the twelve block centralized heart of Clarkesville, this area contains several 100-year old structures, exemplified by hand-made brick facades, parapet walls and handcrafted scrollwork typical of the architecture of the period.

Vision for the Area: The distinctive character of downtown Clarkesville will be maintained through community based preservation efforts. The area will remain a vital commercial and community center which through its historic character provides rare insight into small town growth in northeast Georgia in the early part of the 20th Century.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Commercial establishments, service industries, professional, institutional, governmental and residential uses.

Zoning Classification: Downtown District.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage a relatively high-density mix of retail, offices, services, and employment.
 - Require design standards that are pedestrian-oriented with strong walkable connections between different uses.
 - Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
 - Adopt architectural and design standards for existing and new construction to preserve these sites and the district.



- Allow residential development in Downtown District in conjunction with business activity.
- Identify historical and cultural sites and adopt local requirements consistent with state and federal preservation standards.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Sense of Place. Redevelopment within this area should respect and contribute to the unique character of the area.
- Infill Development. Infill development should be encouraged on vacant lots throughout this area.
- Housing Options.
- Heritage Preservation. Efforts to protect and expand the historic attributes of downtown Clarkesville should be pursued.
- Regional Identity. The preservation and expansion of Clarkesville's historic downtown core will contribute to the regional draw of quaint, downtown centers.
- Employment Opportunities. Efforts to promote and enhance the economic vitality of businesses.

Commercial

Existing Character Description: This area is typified by its commercial uses. General commercial activities ranging from mercantile, service industries and professional services are just some examples of the commercial areas of Clarkesville.

Vision for the Area: Commercial areas are vitally important to the economic vitality of the community due to their generation of commerce, enhanced land values and jobs creation. The City of Clarkesville will protect the area's combination of cultural, economic, environmental and historical resources.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: General commercial and business activities, such as service establishments, restaurants, professional offices, financial institutions, government offices, utilities, for-profit and non-profit uses, theatres and churches.

Zoning Classifications: HB-Highway Business, CB-Community Business, PRO-Professional and INS-Institutional Districts.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage the development and use of properties in the Commercial Character Area by providing compatible zoning requirements.
 - Support mixed use development, business community organizations, streetscape enhancements and state community development programs such as Better Hometown and Signature Community.



- Support design and architectural standards to promote pedestrian-friendly environment by adding sidewalks, bike/trail routes linking neighborhoods and commercial centers.
- Promote infill development of existing properties.
- Identify historical and cultural sites and adopt local requirements consistent with state and federal preservation standards.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Employment Options. These areas provide a variety of employment options for city residents. Options include service-sector positions, as well as professional and managerial jobs, supporting both unskilled and skilled sectors of the labor force. Continued job creation in these areas should be pursued to further expand job opportunities to residents.
- Regional Identity.
- Appropriate Businesses.
- Growth Preparedness.
- Housing Choices.
- Infill Development.
- Sense of Place.

Greenway

Existing Character Description: This area consists of undeveloped, environmentally-sensitive areas such as may be found along or near rivers, wetlands, lakes and ponds. Examples of this area are heavily-wooded acreage, large undeveloped tracts and ravine areas.

Vision for the Future: Our vision is to preserve to the greatest extent possible, the majority of the natural vegetation in these areas. However, these areas may also be suitable for other uses that complement the predominant natural character, such as limited recreation, transportation and residential uses.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Limited residential, recreational, alternative transportation.

Zoning Classification: Conservation District.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage the use of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs), conservation covenants and easements to protect environmentally-sensitive properties.
 - Encourage the use of Best Management Practices for implementing resource conservation and the preservation of this area.



- Allow pre-existing residential and commercial uses with buffer and landscaping between greenspace and structures.
- Identify historical and cultural sites and adopt local requirements consistent with state and federal preservation standards.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Housing Options.
- Growth Preparedness.
- Environmental Protection.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Sense of Place.

Mixed Residential

Existing Character Description: This area is generally located in proximity to the downtown area. It consists of a mix of parcel sizes, and developments of notable size (up to 10 acres). The use of the property is primarily residential but other accessory uses are also present.

Vision for the Future: Due to the high cost of land acquisition, infrastructure development, parcel configuration and other factors, accommodation of various housing sizes, price ranges, and development profiles are desired. The vision for this area includes multiple-family dwelling units in high concentrations and infill development that makes the best use of existing infrastructure.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Recreational; Residential; Limited Commercial; Greenspace; Open Space.

Zoning Classification: HB – Highway Business.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage a master planned mixed-use developments with predominantly residential use and limited neighborhood commercial uses.
 - Encourage interconnectivity between developments.



- Establish design criteria for these areas requiring open space, landscaped buffers, minimum lot sizes (SFDs) and recreational amenities in each development.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Housing Options.
- Growth Preparedness.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Environmental Protection.
- Sense of Place.

Historic Area

Existing Character Description: This area extends from East Louise and Washington Streets, northward along U.S. Historic Highway 441 (also known as Washington Street) through the downtown area and northeastward along Grant Street to the city limits. It encompasses a one block area on both sides of Washington Street.

Vision for the Future: This area will be protected by strengthening local preservation standards and developing design criteria for new structures that maintain the character.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential, Commercial, Professional and Institutional.

Zoning Classifications: Preservation Corridor Overlay District with underlying zoning of CB-Community Business, PRO-Professional, INS-Institutional, all types of Residential Districts and HB-Highway Business (limited to current zonings and not to be expanded in this area).

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic Places Designation, which enables



eligibility for tax incentive programs.

- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/restored according to federal guidelines.
- Develop design and architectural standards for new development in the district to insure that its scale and architectural design is consistent with the historic context of the area.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance connectivity to other parts of city.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Heritage Preservation.
- Housing Options.
- Growth Preparedness.
- Appropriate Business.
- Environmental Protection.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Infill Development.
- Sense of Place.

Industrial / Institutional

Existing Character Description: These areas consist of existing industrialized areas and areas suitable for institutional uses.

Vision for the Area: Industrialized areas in Clarkesville will generally be limited to existing locations, but may include other areas in close proximity to public facilities. Current and projected trends in traditional industry indicate minimal industrial growth in Clarkesville, however, provision will be made for specialized industries with emphasis of small sized, environmentally sound, high-value industries, as might be found in the bio-technology, telecommunications and distribution fields.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, government uses, and public utilities.

Zoning Classifications: Add INS, Institutional, M-I, Light Industrial

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop an economic development plan for job creation, industry recruitment and retention in cooperation with Habersham County.



- Develop/redevelop existing properties for industrial use.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Environmental Protection.
- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Options.

Revitalization Area

Existing Character Description: These areas are comprised of widely spaced single-family dwellings on very large lots (typically 2 acres or more). Access of public water and sewer services may be limited. These areas typically have low pedestrian orientation and may be described as pastoral in nature with a high degree of building separation.

Vision for the Area: Growth in these areas should be carefully planned with a rational approach to integrating development into the surrounding environment. Traffic, infrastructure, education needs and other potential impacts should be analyzed to lessen any negative impacts of development. Development should permit clustering of residences, limited mixed use and other elements to enhance the livability. These areas should be planned in close proximity to Developing Residential areas.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Limited residential development restricted to 2 acre + lots.

Zoning Classifications: R-Single-family Residential

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop and implement plans for neighborhood revitalization with emphasis on grants and low-interest loans for improvements.



- Require façade improvements on significant improvement projects within the character area, such as streetscapes, sidewalks and parks.
- Enhance walkability throughout these areas with streetscape/sidewalk improvements.
- Establish minimum open space requirements for new development to increase greenspaces in these areas.
- Identify historical and cultural sites and adopt local requirements consistent with state and federal preservation standards.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Housing Options.
- Heritage Preservation.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Environmental Protection.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Sense of Place.

Stable Neighborhood

Existing Character Description: These areas are typical suburban residential developments on large lots, characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, large expanse of open space, and a high to moderate degree of building separation. These areas have historically developed as residential subdivisions under developer driven master plans.

Vision for the Future: These areas will remain stable residential enclaves, but will have increased connectivity to downtown and commercial centers through enhanced and expanded pedestrian networks. .

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Limited recreation uses, transportation, and large-lot residential development.

Zoning Classifications: R-Single-family Residential.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Require new developments to include sidewalks, parks and other amenities.
 - Require new development to connect internal pedestrian circulation systems to the nearest off-site sidewalks.



- Encourage master planned new development to include neighborhood-serving commercial centers. Establish tree preservation and replacement ordinance requiring developers to build infrastructure and develop lots without clear cutting.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Options.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Environmental Protection.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Sense of Place.

Traditional Neighborhood

Existing Character Description: These areas are comprised of older homes from the middle to late 20th century, typified by single-story ranch style homes, split level and modern era architectural styles. These areas have well established yards, tree growth and landscapes.

Vision for the Area: Maintain these areas with little or no commercial influx. Continue development of pedestrian amenities for interconnectivity to downtown areas.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential, recreational, and home office uses.

Zoning Classifications: R-1-Single-family Residential.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Allow residential development only in R-1 District with a minimum of 30,000 square foot lots with minimum land disturbance and substantial tree preservation.
 - Identify historical and cultural sites and adopt local requirements consistent with state and federal preservation standards.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Housing Options.
- Heritage Preservation.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Environmental Protection.

7.4 City of Clarkesville Implementation Strategies

Introduction

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 7.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (one to five years), or Long-Range (more than five years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this plan, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Short-Term Work Programs of the City of Clarkesville (Section 7.6) – linking appropriate short-term items to the 2009 to 2013 Short-Term Work Program. *Please also see Countywide Implementation Strategies, which are also applicable to Clarkesville as well as all other jurisdictions participating in this plan.*

Jurisdictions and Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
<i>Alto</i>	Alto (Town of)
<i>Baldwin</i>	Baldwin (City of)
<i>Clarkesville</i>	Clarkesville (City of)
<i>CIBCA</i>	Clarkesville Business & Community Association
<i>CIBOA</i>	Clarkesville Board of Adjustment
<i>CIDDA</i>	Clarkesville Downtown Development Authority
<i>CIFD</i>	Clarkesville Fire Department
<i>CIPC</i>	Clarkesville Planning Commission
<i>CIPD</i>	Clarkesville Police Department
<i>CIPDD</i>	Clarkesville Planning and Development Department
<i>CIPWD</i>	Clarkesville Public Work Department
<i>CoDDA</i>	Cornelia Downtown Development Authority
<i>Cornelia</i>	Cornelia (City of)
<i>Demorest</i>	Demorest (City of)
<i>GDCA</i>	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
<i>GDED</i>	Georgia Department of Economic Development
<i>GDNR</i>	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
<i>GDOT</i>	Georgia Department of Transportation
<i>GHPD</i>	Georgia Historic Preservation Division
<i>GMRDC</i>	Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center
<i>Habersham</i>	Habersham County
<i>HCCC</i>	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
<i>HCHS</i>	Habersham County Historical Society
<i>HCIDA</i>	Habersham County Industrial Development Authority
<i>HCRcd</i>	Habersham County Recreation Department
<i>HCRoD</i>	Habersham County Roads Department
<i>Mt. Airy</i>	Mount Airy (Town of)

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
NEGHA	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
NGTC	North Georgia Technical College
Path	The Path Foundation
Private Sector	Area businesses, varies depending on topic
SRWA	Soque River Watershed Association
Tallulah Falls	Tallulah Falls (Town of)
TFHA	Tallulah Falls Housing Authority
USACE	U.S. Army Core of Engineers
USHUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

7.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. High Concentration of Poverty in Elderly Population
2. Major Population Growth.
3. Maintenance of Small Town Character.
4. Completion and Maintenance of Streetscape Improvements.
5. Need for Visitor Inns/Hotels.
6. Reestablishment of Downtown Development Authority.
7. Further Development of Local Tourism Industry.
8. Strategic Economic Development Plan.
9. Improved Redevelopment Tools.

Clarkesville’s small-town character and central location in the middle of Habersham County position it well as a gateway city to the mountains. The City should better utilize these fundamental advantages by developing appropriate resources to further economic development.

ED-1. High Concentration of Poverty in Elderly Population

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Include an elderly job creation and training component in the strategic economic development plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>HCCC</i>
Work with NGTC and GDATE on retraining programs and mentoring opportunities	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>NGTC</i>

ED-2. Major Population Growth.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Update Future Land Use Map and Zoning Ordinances on a regular basis to reflect changing needs in the community.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GMRDC CIPC GMRDC</i>

City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a strategic economic development plan to meet the employment and service needs of the community members.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>HCCC HCIDA</i>

ED-3. Maintenance of Small Town Character

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete streetscape improvements along Washington Street and in downtown.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIPWD</i>
Maintain streetscape improvements by making needed repairs and improvements as they surface.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPWD</i>	
Survey residents to determine additional facilities and activities that would bring people to the downtown area, such as a farmers market, weekly arts festivals, or other events.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>HCCC GDCA CIPC</i>
Strengthen historic preservation requirements and protections.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIPC HCHS</i>
Develop stronger design criteria for unique areas of the city.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIPC</i>

ED-4. Completion and Maintenance of Streetscape Improvements

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Apply for Transportation Enhancement grant and other funding sources to pay for improvements.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>GDOT HCRoD GDCA</i>
Expand Washington Street Project to the central business district and beyond.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>GDOT CIDDA HCRoD GDCA</i>

ED-5. Need for Visitors Inns/Hotels

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify appropriate sites in the city where hotels/inns would be appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIBCA</i>
Survey local businesses to identify their needs for hotel/meeting space for clients and business partners.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIBCA HCCC Private sector</i>

City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review hotel tax arrangements and take necessary steps to ensure that the costs of new sites are adequately reflected by the City's taxation policies.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Develop lodging incentive program.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIDDA HCCC</i>

ED-6. Reestablishment of a Downtown Development Authority.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a needs assessment for reestablishing the downtown development authority. The assessment should review the effectiveness of the Cornelia Downtown Development Authority, the needs of the local business community, and also identify funding sources for staffing the authority. Seek assistance from state agencies on strategies and programs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CoDDA HCCC GDCA GDED</i>
Develop and implement an information campaign to grow interest in a revitalized DDA.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville CBOA</i>	<i>CIPDD GMRDC</i>

ED-7. Further Development of Local Tourist Industry.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop strategies to better market the city to travelers on the 365 corridor. One strategy should include improved signage regarding historic sites.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIBCA GDED HCCC GDOT</i>
Develop a niche marketing campaign to attract tourists to the city's historical resources, festivals, and nearby ecotourism sites. Collaborate with surrounding communities to provide additional information.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDED HCCC CBOA</i>
Update informational pamphlets regarding the city's attractions and assets. Ensure that these resources are available at all state, regional, and local visitor centers.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>HCCC GDED CIBCA</i>
Create a virtual tourist office that is linked to the City's webpage. Utilize the existing tourist resources online as a base and add information on ecotourism, places to stay, and other relevant information.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>CIBCA</i>
If reestablished, task the Downtown Development Authority with leading the implementation of downtown tourism development mission,	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	

ED-8. Strategic Economic Development Plan.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with Habersham County to develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	HCCC GMRDC GDCA

ED-9. Improved Redevelopment Tools.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review potential redevelopment tools available in the state and identify those that could be better utilized by the city, such as DCA's Better Home Town and Signature Community programs. These redevelopment tools should be explored in conjunction with the development of a strategic economic development plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	GDCA GDED GMRDC DCA
Adjust development regulations to encourage the redevelopment of existing sites over greenfield development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	CIPC

7.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. High Renter Population.
2. Infill Housing.
3. Greater Housing Diversity

As population increases in Clarkesville and neighboring areas, it is critical that the City implement appropriate strategies to meet the needs of its existing and new community members. These strategies, particularly a focus on infill housing, should help preserve the city's existing character.

H-1. High Renter Population.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a homebuyer education program. Consider partnering with other area governments and private entities to increase the effectiveness of such program.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	NEGHA USHUD GDCA
Develop a homeownership assistance program to help low-moderate and first time homebuyers with down payment assistance.	<i>Long-Term</i>	CIPDD	NEGHA USHUD GDCA

H-2. Infill Housing.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop provisions for mixed-uses in the Downtown and In-Town corridor character areas of Clarkesville, encouraging new developments incorporate housing above new retail/commercial.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDCA</i>
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDCA HCDA</i>
Refer to Future Development Map to guide infill development decisions.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPC CIPDD</i>	
Work with builders on parcel development.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIDDA</i>

H-3. Greater Housing Diversity.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Continue to provide land use options that permit a wide variety of housing choices	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Develop a housing inventory and sales data to encourage greater housing diversity.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Expand and develop criteria for Planned Unit Development, Community Improvement Districts, and similar mechanisms that enhance the housing options for homeownership and rental properties.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville CIPDD</i>	<i>CIDDA</i>
Work with developers to promote diverse development based on housing market conditions prevailing in Clarkesville	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>Private sector</i>

7.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Ecotourism.
2. Protection of National Register Historic Districts.
3. Need for Design Guidelines.
4. More Community Events.
5. Continued Development of the Clarkesville Greenway.

City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

The region’s natural and cultural resources are of benefit to many aspects of the community’s vitality and attractiveness. These assets should be protected and enhanced through the following strategies over the planning period.

NCR-1. Ecotourism.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop tourism strategy for identifying existing and potential opportunities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>GDNR GDED DCA CBOA</i>
Ensure that annexation policies are eco-friendly and contribute to the natural heritage of the area.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDNR HCHS</i>
Create a virtual tourist office that is linked to the City’s webpage. Utilize the existing tourist resources online as a base and add information on ecotourism, places to stay, and other relevant information.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Work with other area communities and organizations as well as appropriate state agencies to create better public access to and facilities along the Soque River and area lakes/streams.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>SRWA Habersham Demorest</i>
Consider the development of a mini shuttle service from Clarkesville to area tourist locations to facilitate ecotourism and minimize impact on the environment.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>GDED HCCC</i>

NCR-2. Continued Protection of Clarkesville’s Historic Resources.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review other sites (than the Downtown Historic District) listed on the NAHRGIS website for those worth pursuing as National Register of Historic Places sites and work with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to pursue their designation. This designation could lead to some tourist traffic and also open up new funding channels for the repair of existing resources.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>HCHS GHPD</i>
Update marketing/educational materials of City’s historical resources for community members and tourists.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>HCHS GDEcD</i>
Consistently enforce regulations created in by the Preservation Overlay Corridor Zone when new development or improvements to existing structures in these districts occurs	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	

City of Clarkesville Community Agenda

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement a historic site preservation and improvement assistance plan.	<i>Long-Term</i>	CIPDD	HCHS GHPD

NCR-3. Need for Design Guidelines.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop appropriate measures to protect the overlay corridor character areas from over-development and incompatible development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Clarkesville	CIPDD CIPC
Amend zoning code as determined appropriate by the overlay district review.	<i>Short-Term</i>	Clarkesville	CIPDD CIPC
Consider the appropriateness of overlay districts in areas of Clarkesville other than its Preservation Corridor Zone.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	GDCA CIPC

NCR-4. More Community Events.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Maintain existing community events and expand to new celebrations as deemed appropriate.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Clarkesville	CIBCA CBOA
Support community-led efforts to create community activities and events by providing access to facilities, appropriate support, and other resources as deemed possible.	<i>Ongoing</i>	Clarkesville	
Develop a plan for acquiring additional public space where community events, festivals, and other activities can be held. The City should coordinate this plan with the Habersham County Parks and Recreation Department.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	CIBCA HCRoD

NCR-5. Continued Development of Clarkesville Greenway.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Connect the Clarkesville greenway network to other area greenway networks and existing and planned sidewalk system.	<i>Ongoing</i>	CIPDD	Path HCRoD
Complete Clarkesville greenway network.	<i>Short-Term</i>	CIPDD	Path HCRoD GDOT Private sector

7.4.4 Community Facilities and Services

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Water Supply
2. Need for Consistency and Continuity.
3. Update and Modify User Fees.
4. Better Use of Soque River as Recreational Site.
5. Improve Community Recycling Program.
6. County Court House Expansion/Renovations.
7. Need for Meeting Space

The visioning process identified a greater need to update and improve existing services and facilities rather than to create new services. The following strategies are targeted towards this approach.

CFS-1. Water Supply.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Conclude negotiations with Habersham County for additional water supply.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville Habersham</i>	
Develop alternative water supply resources through elevated storage, impoundment and third-party providers.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>GDNR USACE</i>

CFS-2. Need for Consistency and Continuity.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop best management practices for all City Departments.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Allocate additional funding for training for employees, commission members and elected officials to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of the workforce.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Develop a feedback system regarding city services that is user-friendly and easily accessible by the public. This feedback system could take the form of an online survey available on the project website.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Use consistent procedures for zoning decisions, annexations, code enforcement and other issues to maintain consistency.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>CIPC</i>

CFS-3. Update and Modify User Fees.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a revenue-expense plan that will improve the City's ability to closely monitor the cost of services and develop an appropriate fee structure for each service.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Implement annual service and user fee schedule policy.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>CIPDD CIPC</i>
Examine the viability and desirability of impact fees.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>HCCC HCIDA</i>

CFS-4. Better Use of Soque River as Recreational Site.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop recreation plan with Habersham County.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>HRecD</i>
Work with other area communities and organizations as well as appropriate state agencies to create better public access to and facilities along the Soque River and area lakes/streams.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>SRWA Habersham Demorest Private sector</i>

CFS-5. Improve Community Recycling Program.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an integrated solid waste program that utilizes cost effective methods of recycling within the waste stream.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>GMRDC GDCA Habersham</i>
Survey community members to determine changes needed to the community's recycling policies.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPWD</i>	
Review the City's internal recycling program and modify policies to serve as a model for recycling for both area businesses and residents.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPWD</i>	
Expand the hours and locations of the City's recycling centers as identified by community survey and City staff analysis.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPWD</i>	
Complete a feasibility study for a curbside recycling program.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>CIPWD</i>	

CFS-6. Community Court House Expansion/Renovations

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Reconstruct the County Court House in downtown Clarkesville.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Habersham Clarkesville</i>	<i>Alto Clarkesville Cornelia Demorest Mt. Airy Tallulah Falls Baldwin</i>

CFS-7. Need for Meeting Space.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement inn/hotel development incentive program	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>Private sector CIDDA HCCC</i>
Work with other public and private entities to develop a convention center to attract larger groups for meetings and other gatherings.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Habersham Clarkesville</i>	<i>HCCC</i>

7.4.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

Issue Addressed

1. Update Annexation Policy.
2. Update Service Delivery Strategy Taxation Policy

The majority of intergovernmental coordination issues and opportunities are shared with other local governments and are included in the Countywide Implementation Strategies.

IC-1. Update Annexation Policy

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Assess the City's current annexation policies and update them as necessary and as required to meet the stipulations of current Georgia annexation laws.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>
Work with Habersham County and the other municipalities to develop a workable annexation policy for all concerned.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville Habersham Other Municipalities</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>

IC-2. Update Service Delivery Strategy Taxation Policy

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Negotiate with Habersham County for tax equity on property inside and outside city rates.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville Habersham Other Municipalities</i>	

7.4.6 Transportation

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Continued Improvements to Pedestrian Network.
2. Strip Development Patterns.
3. High Accident Rates.
4. Inter-parcel Connectivity.

Many of Clarkesville’s transportation issues and opportunities are tied to its pedestrian network, highlighting the importance of coordinating development with the transportation network. The below strategies address these issues and should lead to a safer environment for both pedestrians and drivers.

T-1. Continued Improvements to Pedestrian Network.¹²

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with the Georgia Department of Transportation and Habersham County to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for Clarkesville.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>HCRoD GDOT GMRDC Other Municipalities</i>
Continue to make needed improvements to the City’s sidewalk infrastructure to create a complete network.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	
Identify pedestrian crossing locations that are unsafe. Improve striping, refuges, and signals as determined necessary.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDOT HCRD</i>

T-2. Strip Development Patterns.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement access control measures on SR 17 & SR 197 to improve safety and increase improvements to road network, particularly as new developments are constructed or improvements to the road are made.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>GDOT Clarkesville</i>	<i>HCRD</i>

¹ Also see Natural Resources Section.

² Also see Economic Development Section

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Continue and update strip development regulations to discourage unfavorable transportation concerns.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDCA CIPC</i>

T-3. High Accident Rates.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Coordinate with GDOT and Habersham County for additional traffic control measures to reduce accident rates.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	<i>HCRoD GDOT</i>
Complete a needs assessment for safety improvements to SR 197.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD GDOT</i>	<i>HCRoD</i>
Add traffic calming devices to SR 197, implementing pedestrian refuges, landscaped medians, raised crosswalks, etc. as determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term Long-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD GDOT</i>	<i>HCRoD</i>

T-4. Interparcel Connectivity.³

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify roadways where adjacent developments should be required to share entrances/exists to reduce curb cuts.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	
Amend development regulations to require interparcel connectively where determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	

7.4.7 Land Use

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Lack of Tree Ordinance.
2. Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Growth.
3. Encouragement of Infill Development.
4. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.
5. Amend Zoning to Reflect Comprehensive Plan Recommendations.

Clarkesville’s small town character can be retained over time through smart land use decisions. The following land use strategies will help preserve the city’s character through the development of appropriate regulations, incentives, and zoning that encourage the type of city that community members have envisioned over time.

³ See also T-2.

LU-1. Lack of Tree Ordinance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a tree ordinance to preserve the tree cover in the city. The ordinance should include a tree replacement clause for sites where tree preservation is not possible.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDNR</i>
Identify public spaces and rights of way that could benefit from additional trees or vegetation. Over time, work with state and local agencies to identify cost-effective ways to increase tree cover in areas where tree loss has already occurred.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDNR</i>

LU-2. Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Growth.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop and implement a Capital Improvement Program that is coordinated with Future Development Map. Coordinate this effort with the Short Term Work Program developed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan (Section 7.6).	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i>	

LU-3 and LU-4. Encouragement of Infill Development and Traditional Neighborhood Development.⁴

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>GDCA</i> <i>CIPC</i> <i>CIDDA</i>
Develop provisions for mixed-uses in the Downtown and In-Town corridor character areas of Clarkesville, encouraging new developments incorporate housing above new retail/commercial.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIBCA</i> <i>CIPC</i>
Continue to make needed improvements to the City's sidewalk infrastructure to create a complete network. <i>Coordinate with T-1.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIPC</i> <i>GDOT</i>
Maintain appropriate zoning classifications for the development of traditional neighborhood styles.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>	<i>CIPC</i>

⁴ See also Housing Section.

LU-5. Amend Zoning to Reflect Comprehensive Plan Recommendations.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review and update zoning and development regulations, as appropriate, to meet recommendations made in the Comprehensive Plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CIPC</i>	<i>CIPDD</i>

7.5 City of Clarkesville Policies

Policies are adopted to provide ongoing guidance and direction to our elected officials. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the Community Vision and appropriately addressing the Community Issues and Opportunities. These policies are provided for future planning purposes and are intended to provide clarification of the overall ideals for the City of Clarkesville to implement its comprehensive planning goals.

7.5.1 Economic Development

- The City of Clarkesville will develop and support a retention, expansion and jobs creation programs that will target all levels of experience and skills of its citizens. Particular areas of importance will be employment of the low-skill and elderly population.
- We will target reinvestment to infill and brownfield sites.
- The City of Clarkesville will seek to balance the supply of housing and employment in our community and work with developers to integrate connectivity in design criteria
- We will require, where appropriate additional study of proposed developments with regard to transportation, utility, education and other infrastructure impacts.
- The City of Clarkesville will to pursue public and private funding opportunities to continue the streetscape improvements in the central business district.
- We will develop an incentive and economic development plan to support the recruitment of a lodging business.
- The City of Clarkesville will revitalize and support a downtown development authority.
- We will support and promote tourism in Clarkesville
- The City of Clarkesville will develop an overall economic development plan.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.

7.5.2 Housing

- We will eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.
- We will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- We will create affordable housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community.
- We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
- We will accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in each neighborhood.
- We will encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (homeownership).

- We will increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.
- We support dispersion of assisted housing throughout the community in order to diversify neighborhoods and eliminate pockets of poverty.

7.5.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- The City of Clarkesville will develop a comprehensive ecotourism plan.
- We will minimize inefficient land consumption and encourage more compact urban development in order to preserve green open space and natural resource areas.
- The City of Clarkesville will strengthen the Historic Preservation Corridor requirements to protect and preserve the district.
- We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- The City of Clarkesville will plan and support additional community events to promote tourism.
- We will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new development.
- We will promote low impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites.
- The City of Clarkesville will continue to develop the Clarkesville Greenway.
- We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.

7.5.4 Community Facilities and Services

- Our community will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.
- The City of Clarkesville will continue to develop additional water supply resources and protect existing infrastructure from decline.
- We will ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.
- The City of Clarkesville will continue negotiations with other water providers to insure an adequate supply for its citizens.
- We will ensure that a capital improvements program is implemented to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.
- We will coordinate provision of public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact urban development.
- The City of Clarkesville will develop a method to periodically update its user and service fees to reflect current cost needs.

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- Our community will use planned infrastructure expansion to support development in areas identified (in the comprehensive plan) as suitable for such development.
- The City of Clarkesville will support additional recreational opportunities along the Soque River.
- The City of Clarkesville will develop a plan to create a public-private partnership for additional meeting/convention space.
- The City of Clarkesville will work with Habersham County on the new Court House expansion and future renovations to the existing court house.
- We will invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.
- The City of Clarkesville will develop a stronger recycling program.
- We will work with the local school board to encourage school location decisions that support the community's overall growth and development plans.

7.5.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection, water resources)
- The City of Clarkesville will develop a workable annexation policy with Habersham County.
- We will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.
- The City of Clarkesville will work with Habersham County and the other municipalities to resolve inequities in taxation as part of the Service Delivery Strategy negotiations.
- We will engage in cooperative planning between the local government and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities.

7.5.6 Transportation

- We will make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.
- We will target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the community (recognizing that ready availability of transportation creates demand for land development in adjacent areas).
- The City of Clarkesville, working with the Georgia Department of Transportation, will work to develop alternative truck routes around the City to lessen traffic impacts on the Historic Corridor.
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be designed to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, public transit (if applicable) as well as local vehicular circulation.
- We will promote connectivity of our road network (such as fostering a grid network of streets, multiple connections between subdivisions).
- The City of Clarkesville will work to identify high accident intersections and work with GDOT to reduce incident occurrence.

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- We support creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- The City of Clarkesville will work with Habersham County to address commercialization of the major thoroughfares that increase congestion.
- We will ensure (through traffic calming and other design considerations) that excessive vehicular traffic will not harm the peaceful nature of our residential neighborhoods.

7.5.7 Land Use

- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- The City of Clarkesville will develop, if possible in conjunction with Habersham County, a tree protection and preservation ordinance.
- We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.
- We want development whose design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- The City of Clarkesville will coordinate infrastructure expansion with Habersham County.
- We will preserve the rural character of our community and provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the community.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- The City of Clarkesville support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
- We will encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- The City of Clarkesville will encourage traditional neighborhood development with larger lot sizes, sidewalks, streetlights and other amenities.
- We are committed to creating pedestrian and bicycle friendly, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community, where people have easy access to schools, parks, and necessary services (grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important to our community.
- We are committed to providing pleasant, accessible public gathering places and parks throughout the community.
- We encourage mixed-use developments that are human-scale and less auto-oriented.
- The City of Clarkesville will review and amend its zoning ordinance to reflect concept and plans identified in the comprehensive plan.
- We support new land uses that enhance housing options in our community.
- We are open to land planning and development concepts that may be new to our area but have been tried successfully in other places.

7.6.1 City of Clarkesville Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the community’s vision for the City of Clarkesville.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Economic Development				
Support Development of Visual Arts by Leasing Use of City Building	2009-2013	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Support Development of Performing Arts by Assisting with Fund Procurement	2009-2013	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Continue Streetscape Project by Rehabilitation of Downtown Square	2010, 2012, 2013	\$ 1,000,000	Administration	GDOT, City
Attract and Retain Country Inn/Small Hotel	2009, 2011, 2013	\$ 10,000	Administration	DCA, City
Develop and Adopt Economic Development Plan	2011	\$ 25,000	Administration	DCA, GDED, City
Reestablishment of DDA	2010	TBD by needs assessment	Administration, CIBHCA	City, DCA, GDED
City Tourism Marketing Campaign	Ongoing	\$ 75,000	Administration, CIBCA, HCCC, CIDDA	City, CIDDA, CIBCA

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Review available and integrate appropriate redevelopment tools into City development regulations	2009 - 2010	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning	City
Housing				
Develop design standards and other regulations for mixed use development	2009-2013	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning	Local developers, Planning Commission
Develop homebuyer education program	2010	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning	City
Develop and keep and up-to-date inventory of housing and sales data to aid in monitoring housing diversity.	Ongoing	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Natural and Cultural Resources				
Develop an ecotourism strategy	2011	\$ 25,000	City	City, Grants
Develop and adopt a tree ordinance	2011	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning	City
Develop a tree planting master plan for city roadways	2012	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning, Public Works	City
Continue Greenway and Pedestrian Program	2009, 2011, 2013	\$ 400,000	Administration	PATH, HCRoD, GDOT, City, Private Sector
Develop and Adopt Historic Properties Preservation Standards	2010	\$ 15,000	Planning	DCA, City
Develop and Adopt Architectural Design and Review Standards in HPC	2010	\$ 1,000	Planning	DCA, City
Community Facilities				
Develop Water Resource Management Plan	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	GDNR, Habersham County, City

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Develop and adopt best management practices for all city department	2009, 2010	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Develop a customer service feedback system for city services.	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Increase staff, elected official, and commission member training opportunities	ongoing	\$2,000 per year	Administration	City
Conduct an impact fee feasibility study	2009	\$ 50,000	Administration	City
Review and Update User Fee Schedule	2009-2013	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Participate in the development of County-wide recreation plan	TBD	TBD	City	City, Habersham County, and other Habersham municipalities
Update Solid Waste Management Plan	2009	\$ 25,000	Administration	City, may also be Habersham County if a joint SWMP update is pursued.
Develop and Adopt Solid Waste Recycling Program	2012	\$ 50,000	Administration, Public Works	GEFA, City
Develop a Capital Improvements Program	2010	N/A to be completed by staff	Administration	City
Survey and create updated cemetery plans	2009, 2010	\$ 25,000		Consultant, City
Intergovernmental Coordination				
Coordinate with Service Delivery Strategy update, including review and revision of annexation policies	2009	N/A	Administration	City, Habersham County, and other Habersham municipalities

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Eliminate County ad valorem tax inequality	2010	N/A	Administration	Habersham County, City
Coordinate tree ordinance regulations for consistency	2011	N/A	Administration	Habersham County, City
Coordinate land use regulations for consistency	2011	N/A	Planning	Habersham County, City
Coordinate code enforcement for consistency	2011	N/A	Planning, CPD, CFD, Admin	Habersham County, City
Coordinate tax policies on CIDs/TADs	2012	N/A	Administration, Planning	GDOR, Habersham County, City
Coordinate Water Resources Plan with County, Cities	2010	N/A	Administration, Planning	GDNR, Habersham County, Cities
Transportation				
Improve traffic flow by coordinating with GDOT at key intersections	2009-2013	\$ 750,000	Administration	GDOT, City, Habersham County
Improve and expand city sidewalk facilities	2009, 2011, 2013	\$ 250,000	Administration, Public Works	GDOT, City
Develop and adopt a street improvement program	2010, 2012, 2013	\$ 200,000	Public Works	GDOT, City
Develop and adopt access management standards for SR 17 and SR 197, this may include corridor overlay regulations	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning, Public Works	City
Participate in the development of a county-wide transportation plan	TBD	TBD	Administration, Public Works, Planning	City, Habersham County, and other Habersham municipalities

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Develop and adopt inter-parcel connectivity standards for development in appropriate areas of the city	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning, Public Works	City
Land Use				
Update Subdivision Regulations	2010	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning	Habersham County, City
Develop and Adopt Downtown Master Plan, including rehabilitation element	2009	\$ 35,000	Planning	DCA, Consultant, City
Establish Process for Coordination of City and County Land Use Plans	2011	N/A to be completed by staff	Planning	Habersham County, City

7.6.2 Clarkesville Report of Accomplishments

The following table identifies the status of those items included in the City of Clarkesville 2003-2008 Short Term Work Program.

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Prepare & Publish Revised Zoning Ordinance		X			Revision in Final Draft to be Approved by Mayor & Council
Develop & Adopt Downtown Master Plan		X	X		Plan in 2 nd Draft When Contractor Project Officer Moved; New Project Officer to be Selected
Continue Support of Business & Community Association		X			Will Continue to Work w/ Business & Community Association
Support Development of Visual Arts by Leasing Use of City Building		X			Will Continue to Lease Building in Foreseeable Future
Support Development of Performing Arts by Assisting with Fund Procurement	X				Assisted w/ Georgia Cities Loan Procurement & Processing Payments; Will Help Seek Further Funding Support
Continue Work with Chamber of Commerce to Promote Tourism		X			Will Continue to Work w/ Chamber on Tourism & Economic Development
Develop Plans for Pedestrian Walking Paths Along Riparian Corridors		X			Request for Proposal for Plans & Construction Completed and Advertised
Implement Plans for Pedestrian Walkways Along Riparian Corridors			X		Request for Proposal for Plans & Construction Completed and Advertised
Construct Public Restrooms in Downtown Business District	X				Public Restrooms Constructed at City Parking Lot
Repair/Rehabilitate Water Plant Reservoir Dam			X		Plan to Initiate This Project Upon Completion Water Plant Controls Upgrade
Additions/Improvements to Water System, Including Two New Water Tanks		X			16,000 Feet of New 12 Inch Water Line Nearly Completed; Two New 300,000 Gallon Water Tanks Begun

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Inspect & Prioritize Work for Sewer Lines		X			Ongoing Work
Repair, Replace, Upgrade Sewer Lines, As Needed		X			Ongoing Work
Upgrade Water Treatment Plant Controls		X			Construction Contract Approved; Notice to Proceed for January, 2008
Complete Initial Phase of Downtown Streetscape	X				Project Completed; Reviewing Options for Next Phase
Repair or Repave City Streets, As Required		X			Work Completed w/ LARP Assistance
Evaluate Fire Department for Improved Insurance Rating		X			Work Ongoing; Anticipate Formal Evaluation Upon Completion of New Water Tanks
Purchase New Sanitation Truck	X				New Truck Purchased in 2004
Purchase Two New Police Vehicles	X				New Vehicles Purchased in 2004 & 2006
Evaluate Community Recreation Needs for Possible Consolidation with County			X		Need to Determine County's Recreation Goals

8.2 Issues and Opportunities

Effectively implementing Cornelia’s vision will require a well-defined implementation program. The first step in developing this implementation program is the identification of core community issues and opportunities. It is critical that these issues and opportunities are clearly stated and understood because they form the basis for the community’s long and short-term action plan, which begins in Section 8.4 and is carried through to the Short Term Work Program, Section 8.6.

Issues and opportunities were first drafted in the analysis phase of the Comprehensive Plan (see *Community Assessment*) and then later refined through public discussions, input from elected officials, and analysis by staff. These items are organized under key planning areas:

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

8.2.1 Economic Development

1. **Tourism.** Cornelia can serve as an increasingly popular tourist destination due to its small town charm and continuation of ongoing downtown revitalization activities. To support this industry, the City is actively pursuing projects to improve the city’s aesthetics, developing initiatives to support its Better Home Town designation, and facilitating the continuation and growth of local festivals and fairs.
2. **Attractive Environment for Restaurants.** Cornelia recently altered its ordinances to allow the pouring of liquor within its city limits. As the only community in the county to provide this opportunity for restaurants, Cornelia has developed an inviting economic environment. During recent years, Habersham County and its cities have seen an increase in the number of chain restaurants. The City should develop a strategy to attract a greater variety of restaurants, including fine dining and “mom and pop” shops. An increased restaurant presence will not only help the tax base but also improve the quality of life for residents and city visitors who enjoy such amenities.
3. **Need for Professional Employment Opportunities.** Cornelia has a very limited number of high-skill job opportunities. As a result, it is difficult to retain recent college graduates and others with advanced degrees. The City should work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop strategies that help diversify the job opportunities in the community.
4. **Continuation of Better Hometown Programs.** The Better Hometown program has enabled Cornelia to make some needed improvements to its core downtown commercial district. Improvements have included streetscaping and the growth of downtown businesses. The City should maintain these recent improvements while continuing to develop other creative strategies that will help promote Cornelia as a good environment for living and working.

5. **Attraction of More Industry to the City.** Cornelia should work towards attracting more industry to appropriate areas of town. By expanding its economic base, Cornelia will be able to redistribute some of the tax burden from residents to these new businesses. New revenue will also help provide funding for some needed infrastructure improvements, including roads and water.
6. **Redevelopment of Vacant or Abandoned Sites** These issues and opportunities lay the groundwork for the action plan that follows. Cornelia is facing the fallout of a declining industrial economy. As a result, the city is home to some abandoned industrial sites and buildings. The City should identify ways to redevelop these sites to complement the city's changing economy.

8.2.2 Housing

1. **More Housing Units in Downtown Area.** Downtown Cornelia's historic design provides a positive environment for walking, shopping, and doing business. This area is also need in some reinvestment. One way to both make use of the existing infrastructure and revitalize the downtown streets is to add infill housing to the downtown area. Such developments could occur in the form of condos, lofts, and townhomes. The City should identify sites that would be appropriate for such developments and remove any unnecessary regulations that would inhibit such reinvestment from occurring.
2. **Neighborhood Revitalization.** During the community visioning process, the need to revitalize some older neighborhoods in Cornelia was identified. Some areas have blocks of dilapidated houses as well as aging infrastructure. Maintaining and repairing these existing resources is extremely important to preserving the existing character of the community as well as most effectively using the city's assets.

8.2.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

1. **Protection of National Register Historic Districts.** A Local Historic District Designation Report for the Cornelia Downtown Historic District has already been completed. In order to protect historic sites and the district, Cornelia should implement a local preservation ordinance or create historic overlay zoning districts to protect resources from incompatible changes that negatively impact the character of the districts. District regulations should include structure standards and guidelines to maintain the character and integrity of the historic resources.
2. **Continuation and Expansion of Community Celebrations.** Community members are proud of the City's traditions, including the annual Apple Festival and other events. The City should work towards maintaining these festivals and expanding to new celebrations as deemed appropriate. Public/private partnerships are an excellent way to ensure the financial feasibility of such events over time. Increased marketing of these events will also help draw more tourists to the area.

8.2.4 Community Facilities and Services

- 1. Increasing Need for Services for Hispanic Population.** Approximately 19 percent of the City's population was of Hispanic origin in 2000, a dramatic increase from 1990 (1.3 percent). The increasing Hispanic population will require non-traditional services, including translation for community services and "English as a Second Language" (ESL) offerings to assist school age children and adults of Hispanic origin. An increased Hispanic population also increases diversity, which can add to the town's cultural assets. This diversity can spur the local economy by encouraging the growth of more diverse restaurants and stores.
- 2. Need for More Law Enforcement.** Cornelia has experienced some increase in crime over recent years. These increases are likely tied to the increases in population and the diversification of the population. To maintain Cornelia's historically low crime rate, the City should identify ways to better fund the police department and the resources needed to maintain a high level of safety throughout the community.
- 3. Need for Meeting Space.** Cornelia has the potential to attract a greater number of business travelers and other retreat-style visitors by developing meeting space. This is a largely un-tapped opportunity in the county. To create this pull and attract such out-of-town visitors (as well as local organizational meetings) the City should consider investing in a mini-convention center. The City already has some hotel space that could house such out-of-town visitors; however, there will likely be a long-term need to increase the capacity of these facilities over time.
- 4. Improve Community Recycling Program.** Community members have identified the need to develop a City recycling program. The City should identify a cost-effective way to provide this service to its residents. The City is currently working on a curbside recycling program.

8.2.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- 1. Improved Coordination between Local School System, Local Planning, and Private Entities.** The public schools in Cornelia have faced significant changes over recent years, largely due to changes in the local population. The City of Cornelia should continue to work closely with the school system to ensure that its residents are receiving the highest level of education and services possible. Some unmet educational needs may be met through public-private partnerships and increased coordination with the local higher education institutes, including Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College.

8.2.6 Transportation

- 1. Expansion of Pedestrian Facilities.** The visioning process reflected the community's desire to upgrade its pedestrian facilities. Cornelia has a poorly connected or incomplete pedestrian network and also lacks a sidewalk installation and repair program as well funding sources to pay for these sidewalk needs. The City seeks to complete a pedestrian multi-use trail along Level Grove Road. Phase I is already underway, and Phase II is in design. The City needs to leverage this project to begin a plan to connect the city's entire

pedestrian network, which would improve safety and decrease the possibility of pedestrian-related accidents.

2. **Parking Solutions.** Currently, there is a shortage of parking in downtown Cornelia, which is a reflection, in part, of recent success at revitalizing the downtown core. Limited downtown parking could eventually hamper these ongoing efforts to revitalize the core. On street parking opportunities, shared parking opportunities, and continued landscaped screening of off-street parking need to be identified in the commercial areas of the city.
3. **Mitigation of Traffic Congestion.** Traffic congestion is going to worsen as the city grows. Possible steps to mitigate congestion include requiring street connectivity, traffic studies, and the consideration of impact fees. Improving street connectivity within and between developments will also help mitigate traffic congestion.
4. **Prioritization of Street Repaving.** Several of Cornelia's streets need to be repaved. As the availability of state and federal transportation funding continues to decrease, it will become more challenging to pay for routine road repairs. With this in mind, the City should work with the county and GDOT to prioritize street repaving projects, while balancing these repairs with other needed transportation improvements.

8.2.7 Land Use

1. **Infill Commercial and Residential Development.** There are opportunities to promote infill development, both residential and commercial, either within or adjacent to downtown. Infill housing should complement and emulate the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Commercial development should only be permitted in areas that will not negatively affect existing uses.
2. **Reserve Land for Industrial and Office Growth.** Within updates to the Future Land Use Plan, include adequate space for the growth of non-retail employment related uses.
3. **Develop Overlay Districts in Appropriate Areas of City.** During the community visioning process, the importance of sidewalks, landscaping, and building design surfaced. In particular, citizens mentioned the importance of these elements in the downtown area. The City should utilize the Future Development Map to clarify areas of similar characteristics and implement overlay districts where appropriate.
4. **Revamp Zoning and Development Regulations.** As part of the city's current process of revising its zoning regulations, stricter development regulations and more flexible zoning classifications should be considered, however; any modifications to these items should also consider the impacts of such changes on the City's ability to attract businesses.
5. **Recreation Facilities.** Some portion of Cornelia's future land use should be set aside for recreational purposes. These resources should reflect the diverse ages and preferences of the Cornelia population, including greenways and public plazas, ball fields, and a senior center. Through the visioning process, the need for more recreational space, particularly for youth, was identified. If space is unavailable within the city limits, the City should look to the County and other area municipalities to develop additional recreational facilities in the southern end of the county.

8.3 Future Development in Cornelia

8.3.1 Introduction

The Future Development Map is a vital tool that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in the City of Cornelia. The Future Development Map is on the community's vision for the future and was developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level and includes the entire area within and surrounding the city. Some of these character areas also cross over into unincorporated Habersham County in an effort to reduce land use and development conflicts at city's limits. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

Like Habersham County, the City of Cornelia elected not to complete a Future Land Use Map, the map associated with previous comprehensive planning processes. Traditionally, future land use maps were short range planning tools which tied the desired land uses of the community's future vision to a jurisdiction's zoning or land development. Text has been included in the Character Area Narratives accompanying the Future Development Map to provide this guidance. If a Future Land Use map is not subsequently developed and adopted, the guiding language of the city's zoning ordinance must be amended to directly relate zoning decisions to the Future Development Map.

8.3.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Habersham County and its municipalities, including the City of Cornelia. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the city. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The city's character areas are described and defined individually in the following narratives and are mapped in Figure 8-1.

The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

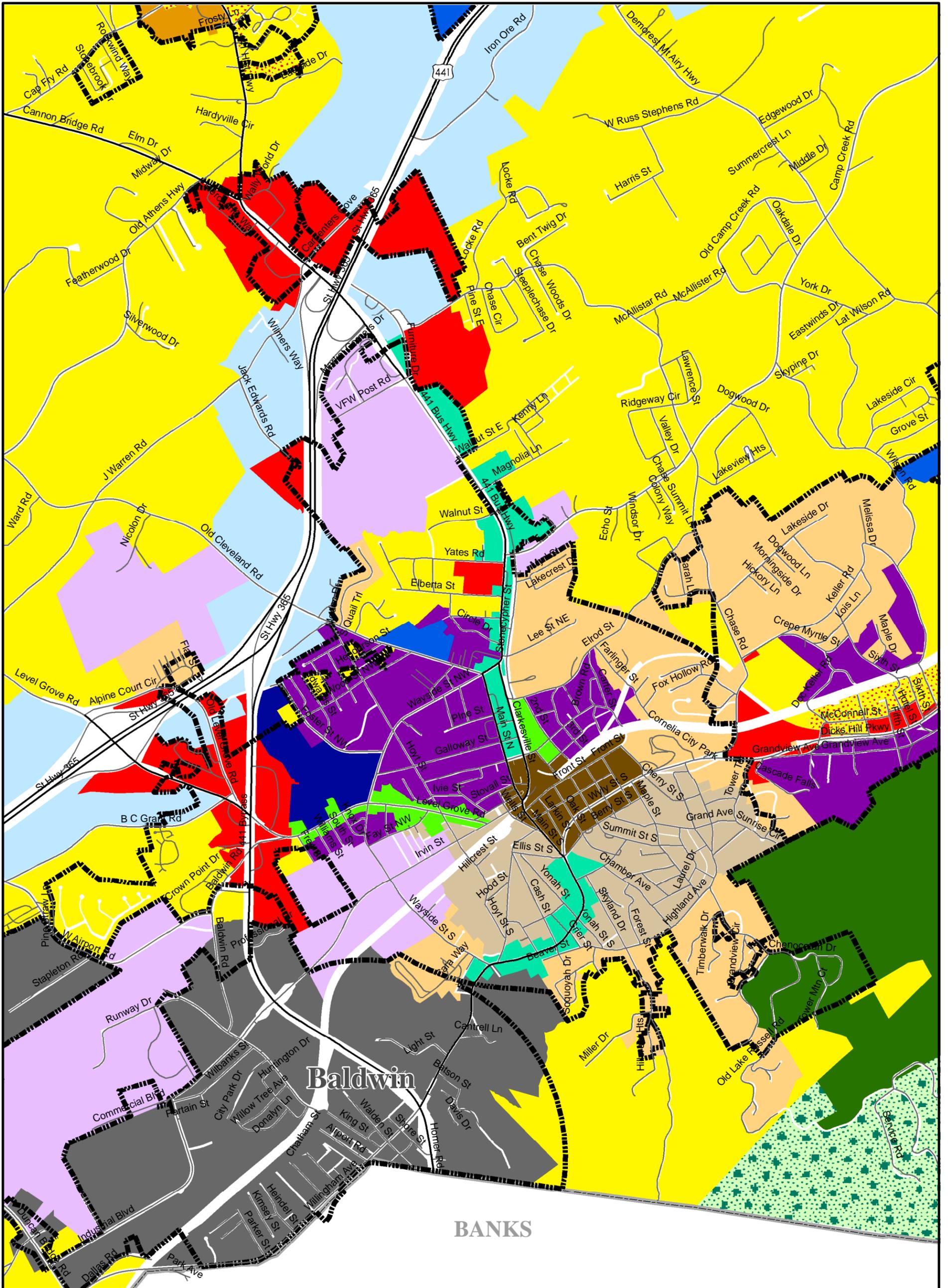
- Siting and configuration of lots.

City of Cornelia Community Agenda

- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county and municipalities.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for changes to development regulations and development of design guidelines where appropriate.



**Habersham County 2029
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 8-1:
City of Cornelia
Future Development*



Character Area

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 365 Corridor | Historic Area |
| Gateway Corridor | Revitalization Area |
| Resource Conservation | Education Center |
| Greenway | Business Park |
| Rural Village | Commercial |
| Developing Residential | Downtown |
| Stable Neighborhood | Industrial/Institutional |
| Traditional Neighborhood | Non-participating jurisdiction |
| Mixed Residential | |

- State & Federal Highways
- Local Roads
- National Forest
- County Lines
- City Limits



May 2008

Business Park

Existing Character Description: Currently undeveloped land located on Level Grove Road and the 441 By-pass.

Vision for the Area: Office professional type uses with a mixture of multi-family residential.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Offices and professional uses, multi-family residential uses

Zoning Classifications: B-2 – General Business.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Zoning will be used to maintain the vision for this area.
 - The city is working on Bicycle Pedestrian Plan for this area as a means for alternative transportation to help with traffic congestion.
 - The zoning regulations require vegetative buffers from surrounding residential properties.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Options.



Commercial

Existing Character Description: This area abuts Historic 441 and Highway 365; it currently houses large-scale retail such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and Lowes.

Vision for the Area: This area will continue to serve as a cluster for large-scale retail uses. .

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Categories:

Land Uses: Large-scale retailers and strip malls.

Zoning Classifications: B-1 – Neighborhood Business.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - The City of Cornelia is evaluating this area to see if B-2 would not be a more appropriate zoning classification for this area. B-2 allows more high intense commercial uses that are already present in this area.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Options.



Developing Residential

Existing Character Description: These areas are developed with single-family residences.

Vision for the Area: To attract moderate to high income housing. The single family lot sizes vary from ½ acre to 1 acre lots to keep the density low. The architectural requirements call for brick or hardy plank siding.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential

Zoning Classifications: R1, R1A, R1B, R2, and TND

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Good zoning and subdivision regulations that calls for larger lot sizes and large minimum square footage.
 - The city has strict architectural requirements such as specific types of siding, and 2-car garages on all new residential structures.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Options.



Downtown

Existing Character Description: This area is known as the “Central Business District” and is made up of historic buildings dating back to the 1890s.

Vision for the Area: Infill development to preserve the historical nature of downtown. The DDA is working to attract more shops and restaurants to downtown. The city is currently working on Phase II of the streetscape project that will help to beautify the area and make it more attractive for new businesses.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: A variety of commercial and uses along with residential uses

Zoning Classifications: B-2, CBD

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - The city is working on a Historic Preservation Ordinance to protect the historic downtown.
 - The city is working on an overlay district for downtown.
 - The city ordinances allow for residential over commercial in downtown and we are working to attract this type of development in the area.



- The city will continue to host several festivals a year to help promote this area.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Options.
- Sense of Place.
- Heritage Preservation.
- Infill Development.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Regional Identity.

Education Center

Existing Character Description: This area currently houses the elementary school and a sixth grade academy.

Vision for the Future: This area will be an educational hub of the community, allowing Cornelia's children to continue to attend school close to home, walking whenever possible. The goal of these areas is to keep these schools in Cornelia. This will allow the children of the area to continue to attend school close to home.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Schools, open space, recreation.

Zoning Classifications: R1, R1A, & R1B

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Continue to maintain a strong working relationship with the Board of Education.
 - Provide safe routes to and from school. This will be accomplished through the Safe Routes to School Program, which the city is already working with to improve safety.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Educational Opportunities.

Gateway Corridor

Existing Character Description: These areas are the entrances to downtown that currently have a variety of uses, both commercial and residential.

Vision for the Future: These areas will be visually appealing and give visitors a good first impression of Cornelia. They will contain mostly commercial uses with a well planned, cohesive streetscape, sidewalks, and very few curb cuts to maintain pedestrian safety and traffic flow. The city hopes to eventually eliminate the residential structures in this area through re-development.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: A variety of commercial uses

Zoning Classifications: B-1 and OP

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Work with the DCA’s Quality Growth Resource Department to develop master plans for these areas. The purpose of these master plans will be for streetscape, traffic plans, and architectural guidelines for developers to follow.
 - Adopt a gateway corridor overlay district to address streetscape and access management issues.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Sense of Place.
- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Options.
- Infill Development.

Greenway

Existing Character Description: This area abuts downtown and is the site of the old Veneer Plant.

Vision for the Area: This area will develop as a civic center, municipal building, and gateway park.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Civic uses, open space and recreational uses.

Zoning Classifications: Office Professional

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Purchase the property and develop according to the City's master plan.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Character Area:

- Open Space Preservation.
- Infill Development.
- Sense of Place.
- Regional Identity.



Historic Area

Existing Character Description: This area includes the historic Tower Mountain neighborhood.

Vision for the Area: The residential use and historic character of this neighborhood will be maintained.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Single-family residential uses.

Zoning Classifications: R-1

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Historic Preservation Ordinance.
 - Historic Preservation Commission to offer suggestions to residents who wish to make improvements to their structures.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Character Area:

- Heritage Preservation.



Industrial / Institutional

Existing Character Description: This area currently houses Ethicon and Fieldale Farms along with some smaller industries.

Vision for the Area: The existing industries will be maintained while additional small industries will be encouraged to locate in these areas and help maintain the city's economic viability.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Industrial

Zoning Classifications: Industrial, B-1, B-2, OP

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Working with the existing industries and continuing to try and attract appropriate industries to the area.
 - Reduce land use conflicts by redeveloping residential area surrounding Fieldale into commercial uses.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Opportunities.

Resource Conservation

Existing Character Description: This area abuts the National Forest and has an abundance of natural resources. An example would be Historic Chenocetah Tower.

Vision for the Area: Development in this area will be limited in order to preserve the natural resources. The city is also working with Mt. Airy and the National Forest to create bicycle and hiking trails in the area.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential – Single-family only

Zoning Classifications: R-1

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - R-1 is the lowest density zoning classification. The minimum lot size for this zone is 1 acre.
 - The city has a conservation subdivision classification in which half the land must be placed in a conservation land trust.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Open Space Preservation.
- Environmental Protection.

Revitalization Area

Existing Character Description: These areas represent some Cornelia's older neighborhoods. There is a small amount of commercial property in but the majority of the structures are single-family residences, which have become rental properties.

Vision for the Area: These areas will become stable neighborhoods with increased levels of homeownership, upgraded structures and appropriate infill development and redevelopment outdated housing. The city will try to persuade developers to develop traditional neighborhoods. This subdivision type calls for a combination of residential and low intensity commercial development.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Single-family and multi-family residential uses and neighborhood scale commercial uses.

Zoning Classifications: R-2, B-1, and OP

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Work with the Georgia Mountains RDC to develop a revitalization plan for these areas.



- Use revitalization plan to pursue grant money to help with revitalization projects. The grant funds will be used to purchase and demolish existing structures. We will then market the properties to developers with the intent to develop traditional neighborhoods with sidewalks, parks, affordable housing.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Options.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Infill Development.

Stable Neighborhood

Existing Character Description: This area represents existing stable residential neighborhoods. Most of the city's seven parks are located in these areas.

Vision for the Area: These areas will remain stable, family-focused neighborhoods through continued property maintenance and upgrades and the ongoing encouragement of home-ownership.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential and recreational uses.
Residential, Recreation

Zoning Classifications: R1, R1A, R1B, and TND

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Maintain the existing neighborhoods through Zoning and Code Enforcement.
 - Continue to maintain and upgrade community parks.



- Enhance pedestrian networks and establish bicycle connections throughout these areas so residents have transportation alternatives for accessing neighborhood parks and nearby destinations.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Sense of Place.
- Housing Options.
- Greenspace Preservation.
- Transportation Alternatives.

8.4 City of Cornelia Implementation Strategies

Introduction

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 8.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (one to five years), or Long-Range (more than five years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this plan, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Short-Term Work Programs of the City of Cornelia (Section 8.6) – linking appropriate short-term items to the 2009 to 2013 Short-Term Work Program. *Please also see Joint Implementation Strategies, which are also applicable to Cornelia as well as all other jurisdictions participating in this plan.*

Jurisdictions and Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
Cornelia	Cornelia (City of)
CoBHP	Cornelia Better Hometown Program
CoBZD	Cornelia Building and Zoning Department
CoDDA	Cornelia Downtown Development Authority
CoFD	Cornelia Fire Department
CoHA	Cornelia Housing Authority
CoHRD	Cornelia Human Resources Department
CoPD	Cornelia Police Department
CoPB	Cornelia Planning Board
CoPUD	Cornelia Public Utilities Department
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GDATE	Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education
GDCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
GDED	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
GHPD	Georgia Historic Preservation Division
GODD	Georgia Office of Downtown Development
Habersham	Habersham County
HCBOE	Habersham County Board of Education
HCCC	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
HCHS	Habersham County Historical Society
HCIDA	Habersham County Industrial Development Authority
NEGHA	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
NGTC	North Georgia Technical College
PC	Piedmont College
PRIDE	PRIDE of Cornelia

<i>USEPD</i>	U.S. Environmental Protection Division
<i>USHUD</i>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

8.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Tourism.
2. Attractive Environment for Restaurants.
3. Need for Professional Employment Opportunities.
4. Continuation of Better Hometown Programs.
5. Attract More Industry to the City.
6. Redevelopment of Vacant or Abandoned Sites.

Cornelia is well-positioned both geographically and administratively to experience continued revitalization and increased economic development over the planning period. Success at meeting the City’s economic goals will largely rely on the ability of various city agencies and its partners to develop innovative and collaborative approaches.

ED-1. Tourism

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a niche marketing campaign to attract tourists to the city’s historical resources, festivals, and nearby ecotourism sites. Collaborate with surrounding communities to provide additional information. <i>Expand the market for the city by beginning to advertise in more widely distributed newspapers and magazines.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>CoDDA HCCC</i>
Provide informational pamphlets to city’s businesses, particularly the hospitality sector. <i>The downtown business association should form a relationship with hotels and provide advertisements to be distributed.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>CoDDA HCCC</i>

ED-2. Attractive Environment for Restaurants.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a strategy to further attract restaurants including incentives such as marketing, City-sponsored events, and infrastructure improvements. <i>Continue to improve downtown and support the DDA.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoDDA CoBZD</i>	<i>HCCC GDED</i>

ED-3. Need for Professional Employment Opportunities

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop stronger partnership with North Georgia Technical College to connect local residents with training opportunities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>NGTC</i>
Need to continue to promote the development of Level Grove Road as office professional.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>GDED</i>
Work towards acquiring property that the DDA can sell to prospective developers at an affordable price.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CoDDA</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>

ED-4. Continuation of Better Hometown Programs.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Continue to develop innovative strategies supported by the Better Hometown Program (BHT) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. <i>Continue to improve the BHT program each year.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CoBHP</i>	<i>GODD</i>
Review other Better Hometown Programs in the state to pinpoint new programs that the City could pursue. <i>Continue to send BHT Manager to train and network with other BHT managers.</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoBHP</i>	<i>GODD</i>

ED-5. Attraction of More Industry to the City.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a list of vacant or abandoned commercial sites that are available for new businesses. <i>The City will continue to pursue the hiring of a Community Development Director tasked with attracting appropriate industries to the area.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CoBZD</i>	<i>HCDA</i> <i>CoDDA</i>
Consider developing or encouraging private development of light industrial sites that would facilitate business location.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>CoBZD</i>	<i>HCIDA</i>

ED-6. Redevelopment of Vacant or Abandoned Sites.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a list of vacant or abandoned commercial sites that are available for new businesses.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CoBZD</i>	<i>HCIDA</i> <i>CoDDA</i>
Continue process of modifying development regulations (including zoning) to facilitate the conversion of abandoned sites to mixed-use or other more appropriate development.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoPZD</i>	<i>CoDDA</i> <i>CoPB</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify and secure financing options for the clean-up and redevelopment programs. These programs should be identified in partnership with state and local economic and community development agencies.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoBHP</i>	<i>GODD GCF GDCA</i>
Continue to work on redevelopment plan to be approved by the DCA, allowing the City to seek CHIP funds and other related resources and funding.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoBZD</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>
Help developers identify potential redevelopment benefits provided by the state and federal government.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CoBZD</i>	<i>HCIDA</i>

8.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. More Housing Units in Downtown Area.
2. Neighborhood Revitalization.

Due to the aging of existing housing stock, Cornelia’s housing strategies should focus on reviving existing neighborhoods to preserve affordable housing and existing structures. To complement these efforts, the City should continue to implement creative housing strategies such as a housing assistance program and mixed-use housing options.

H-1. More Housing Units in Downtown Area.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an infill development program to encourage development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoBZD CoDDA</i>	<i>CoPB CoBHP GDCA</i>

H-2. Neighborhood Revitalization.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Improve enforcement of existing ordinances and codes.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoBZD</i>	<i>CoPD</i>
Develop a homeowner’s assistance program to assist low and limited income homeowners with repairs to their homes. Such programs could be coordinated with area housing authorities and Senior Center programs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>CoHA NEGHA USHUD GDCA</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with the PRIDE of Cornelia group to encourage residents to clean up their neighborhoods.	Ongoing	CoBZD	PRIDE
Try to obtain CHIP and CDBG funds to help revitalize the blighted neighborhoods.	Ongoing	Cornelia	GDCA USHUD

8.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Over the past several years, Cornelia has taken several steps forward to preserve the community's existing infrastructure and resources. The City's Better Hometown Program and historic district designation have helped in these efforts. The following strategies should aid in the continued protection of the community's sense of place over time.

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Protection of Historic Districts.

NCR-1. Protection of National Register Historic Districts.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a short-study to evaluate the appropriateness of a local preservation ordinance or historic overlay district(s) for protecting the community's existing historic resources.	Short-Term	CoBZD	CoPB GHPD
Work with the RDC to adopt recently drafted Historic Preservation Ordinances.	Short-Term	CoBZD CoPB	HCHS GHPD

8.4.4 Community Facilities and Services

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Increasing Need for Services for Hispanic Population.
2. Need for More Law Enforcement.
3. Need for Meeting Space.
4. Improve Community Recycling Program.

The growing changing needs of Cornelia will require various maintenance and improvements to existing facilities and services, including translation services, and improved recycling programs.

CFS-1. Increasing Need for Services for Hispanic Population.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Support the development of English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to help support the local Hispanic population.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>HCBOE NGTC PC GDATE</i>
Continue to support language training opportunities, particularly Spanish, for City staff.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>HCBOE NGTC PC GDATE</i>

CFS-2. Need for More Law Enforcement.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify ways to fund needed resources for the Police Department, including special grants and other revenue sources. This should include using increased tax revenue to begin slowly expanding Police Department.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoPD</i>	<i>GCF GDCA</i>
Continue to promote existing Neighborhood Watch Programs begun by neighborhoods, and support the development of additional programs in other areas of the city.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoPD</i>	

CFS-3. Need for Meeting Space.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Create an inventory of existing meeting space both within the community and in nearby areas.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>Habersham CoBHP CoDDA</i>
Complete a feasibility study for the development of mini-convention center. The study should include a survey of area businesses and a review of similar sites in comparable communities in the southeast.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Cornelia</i>	<i>CoBHP CoDDA HCCC</i>

CFS-4. Improve Community Recycling Program.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop neighborhood-level clean and green programs and continue to support citizen beautification efforts	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>CoBZD CoPUD</i>	<i>GDNR</i>
Review the City's internal recycling program and modify policies to serve as a model for recycling for both area businesses and residents.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>CoPUD</i>	

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Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Continue efforts to educate the public on the importance of recycling by holding public hearings and working with elementary schools. This effort should be coordinated with state and national agencies and should include the dissemination of literature regarding how to reduce, recycle, and reuse.	ongoing	CoPU	GP UP

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Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Expansion of Pedestrian Facilities.
2. Parking Solutions.
3. Prioritization of Street Repaving.

Cornelia has a fairly compact and highly traveled downtown center with a mix of commercial and residential uses. Because of these dynamics, the City’s transportation focus over upcoming years should focus on the following strategies to improve existing infrastructure, develop parking solutions, and increase safety for car travelers and pedestrians.

T-1. Expansion of Pedestrian Facilities.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a sidewalk installation and repair program and continue to budget for sidewalk repairs each year.	Short Term	CoB	
Identify and secure funding sources for future improvements the pedestrian network such as GDOT state aid and Transportation Enhancement Grants	Short Term	Cornelia	G

T-2. Parking Solutions.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a local parking study to determine where parking problems exist in the community, including current inadequacies and best practices, projected future parking supply/demand, and review of development regulations that impact parking supply.	Short Term	Co	Co CoB/P

T-3. Prioritization of Street Repaving.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Maintain existing prioritization system for new traffic facilities, including improvements to existing roads and additions of new roads.	Ongoing	CoB	

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Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Develop Overlay Districts in Appropriate Areas of City.
2. Revamp Zoning and Development Regulations.

Land use strategies for the city include encouragement of infill housing, identification and addition of more recreational/open space, and the preservation of existing community character through appropriate development regulations.

LU-1. Develop Overlay Districts in Appropriate Areas of City.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Draft and adopt appropriate preservation regulations as determined by historic resources protection study. These regulations should help ensure that infill development in historic areas of the city is consistent with the existing character.	Short term	CoB CoPB	C GP
Update development regulations and develop overlay districts where considered appropriate. An overlay district should include sidewalks specifications, landscaping, and specific building design as well as consistent signage that maintains a unique character for the identified area.	Short term	CoB	CoB/P Co CoPB

LU-2. Revamp Zoning and Development Regulations.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Adopt and implement updated zoning regulations, to implement the vision of future development set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.	Short term	Cornelia	CoB CoPB

8.5 City of Cornelia Policies

General policies are designed and adopted to reflect and represent the community's vision and priorities, confirmed during the planning process. These general policies are constructed to reflect the values of Cornelia residents and other contributors to the community's vitality. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Community Vision and addressing the Community's Issues and Opportunities. These policies will guide day-to-day decisions of City officials and are intended to be general in nature, reflecting city-wide needs. The general policies will be referenced in staff reports and will play a guiding role in permitting decisions, rezoning, and budget preparation. Geographic-based policies are included in Section 8.3 as a part of the description of the city's Future Development Map.

Similar to the Issues and Opportunities section, the following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

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

8.5.1 Economic Development

- We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our community's economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.
- We will target reinvestment to declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference of new economic development projects in greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of our community.
- We will seek to balance the supply of housing and employment in our community and consider their location in relation to each other.
- We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.
- We will consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will continue to work with and support the local educational institutions by supporting educational programs aimed at expanding skill sets and the employability of the local workforce.

8.5.2 Housing

- We will eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.
- We will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- We will create affordable housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community.
- We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
- We will encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (homeownership).

8.5.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- We will factor potential impacts on air and water quality in making decisions on new developments and transportation improvements.
- We will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new development.
- We will promote low-impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites.
- We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.
- We will promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

8.5.4 Community Facilities and Services

- Our community will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.
- We will protect existing infrastructure investments (i.e., already paid for) by encouraging infill redevelopment, and compact development patterns.
- We will ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.
- We will ensure that capital improvements needed to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.
- The community will 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.
- We will invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.
- We will work with the local school board to encourage school location decisions that support the community's overall growth and development plans.

8.5.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection).
- We will pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions
- We will consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- We will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decisions that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.
- We will engage in cooperative planning between the local government and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities.

8.5.6 Transportation

- We will make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be appropriately designed, using context sensitive design considerations, to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be designed to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, public transit (if applicable) as well as local vehicular circulation.
- We support the creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- We will encourage new development that supports and ties in well with existing and planned public transit options in the community.
- We will ensure (through traffic calming and other design considerations) that excessive vehicular traffic will not harm the peaceful nature of our residential neighborhoods.

8.5.7 Land Use

- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.
- We want development whose design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- We will encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- We are committed to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community, where people have easy access to schools, parks, and necessary services (grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important to our community.
- We are committed to providing pleasant, accessible public gathering places and parks

- throughout the community.
- We are committed to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas within our community in preference to new development in greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of the community.
 - We support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
 - We encourage mixed-use developments that are human-scale and less auto-oriented.
 - We will encourage development of a rational network of commercial nodes (villages, or activity centers) to meet the service needs of citizens while avoiding unattractive and inefficient strip development along major roadways.
 - We are open to land planning and development concepts that may be new to our area but have been tried successfully in other places.

8.6.1 City of Cornelia Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the community’s vision for the City of Cornelia.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
General Administration				
Main Streetscape (Hodges to Chattahoochee)	2010	\$500,000	Cornelia	General Revenue
Main Streetscape (Front to Wylly)	2013	\$500,000	Cornelia	General Revenue
Second Street Bridge	2013	\$3,000,000	Cornelia, Railroad, GDOT	DOT, Railroad, General Revenue
Property Acquisition for new Municipal Building	2009	\$1,000,000	Cornelia	USDA Municipal Loan
New Municipal Building	2009	\$5,000,000	Cornelia	USDA Municipal Loan
Telephonics upgrade	2009	\$30,000	Cornelia	General Revenue
Computer software upgrade	2009	\$50,000	Cornelia	General Revenue
New signs at the entrances to the City	2009-2011	\$50,000	CoBHP	General Revenue
South Main Street sidewalk project	2013	\$200,000	Cornelia, Baldwin	SPLOST, Grants
Level Grove/Wayside Street sidewalk project	2009-2010	\$100,000	Cornelia	GDOT, CDBG, SPLOST
Public Works				
New garage to house vehicles	2010	\$100,000	CoPUD	General Revenue
Composting Facility	2011	\$200,000	CoPuD	GEFA Recycling Grant, General Revenue
Street Resurfacing Priority Plan	2009	\$5,000	CoPUD	General Revenue
New multi-purpose tractor	2009	\$88,000	CoPUD	General Revenue

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Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Sanitation				
New compactor truck	2011	\$120,000	CoPUD	General Revenue
New scooter truck	2012	\$30,000	CoPUD	General Revenue
Implement Composting of Leaves and Wood Chips	2009	\$100,000	CoPUD	GEFA Recycling Grant, General Revenue
Planning Department / Better Hometown				
New Downtown Parking Lot	2010	\$200,000	CoDDA	USDA Ed Grant
Facade Grants for Downtown	2010	\$100,000	CoDDA	DDA Funds
Complete Revitalization Plan	2009	\$3,000	CoBZD	General Revenue
Develop Infill Development Plan	2009	\$1,000	CoBZD	General Revenue
Revitalization Phase I	2010	\$200,000	CoBZD	CHIP, CDBG
Revitalization Phase II	2012	\$200,000	CoBZD	CHIP, CDBG
Revitalization Phase III	2013	\$100,000	CoBZD	CHIP, CDBG
Recreation				
Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan	2009	\$5,000	CoPUD	GDOT,
New restroom at City Park	2009	\$25,000	CoPUD	DNR Trails Grant, General Revenue
Gateway Park Project	2009	\$350,000	CoPUD	Grants, General Revenue
City Park trail project	2009	\$100,000	CoPUD	DNR Trails Grant, General Revenue
Trail project from Depot to Veterans Memorial Dr.	2012	\$200,000	CoPUD	SPLOST, Grants
New park at Hodges & Level Grove	2009	\$20,000	CoPUD	SPLOST, General Revenue
Recreation Center	2012	\$50,000	CoPUD	Grants, SPLOST
Skatepark	2010	\$200,000	CoPUD	SPLOST, General Revenue
Public Safety				
Replace 6 patrol cars	2009	\$145,000	CoPD	General Revenue
Replace 6 patrol cars	2010	\$150,000	CoPD	General Revenue
New Snorkel Truck	2012	\$400,000	CoFD	SPLOST, General Revenue

City of Cornelia Community Agenda

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
New Extrication Tools	2009	\$30,000	CoFD	General Revenue
Second Fire Station on the North end of town	2012	\$300,000	CoFD	SPLOST, General Revenue
Water				
Plant Upgrade and Expansion	2012	\$4,500,000	CoPUD	SPLOST, Water Revenue
Reservoir dredging	2009	\$300,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
Water tank rehabilitation	2009-2012	\$500,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
New elevated storage tank on North end of city	2011	\$2,500,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
Meter replacement	2009-2012	\$200,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
Old Cleveland/Hoyt water line replacement	2012	\$400,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
Reservoir overflow improvements	2009	\$150,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
Booster station at Fieldale	2010	\$250,000	CoPUD	Water Revenue
Sewer				
Yates Street water & sewer project	2009	\$1,500,000	CoPUD	CDBG, GEFA Grant, Sewer Revenue
Install sewer lines/lift station to serve the Camp Creek area	2009	\$3,600,000	CoPUD	BOE, SPLOST
Stormwater infiltration project	2009	\$100,000	CoPUD	Sewer Revenue
Plant expansion	2013	\$3,000,000	CoPUD	Sewer Revenue
South J. Warren lift station upgrade	2009	\$300,000	CoPUD	ARC, One Georgia, Sewer Revenue
North J. Warren lift station upgrade	2010	\$300,000	CoPUD	Sewer Revenue
Alpine lift station upgrade	2012	\$200,000	CoPUD	Sewer Revenue

8.6.2 Cornelia Report of Accomplishments

The following table identifies the status of those items included in the City of Cornelia 2002-2007 Short Term Work Program.

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
General Administration					
Elevator for courtroom	X				
Restore Porte Cochere at Com. House	X				
Depot Roof	X				
Red Apple Park Hardscape	X				
Irvin and Clarkesville Streetscape	X				
Wells to Stovall Streetscape		X			Funding
Property Acquisition revitalization area 1		X			Funding
Property Acquisition revitalization area 2		X			Funding
Design for revitalization areas		X			Property not yet acquired
Streetscape Phase 2		X			Funding
Streetscape Phase 3		X			Funding
Streetscape Phase 4		X			Funding
Streetscape Phase 5		X			Funding
Streetscape Phase 6		X			Funding
Streetscape Phase 7		X			Funding
Streetscape Phase 8		X			Funding
Streetscape Wayside to Wells		X			Funding
Northern Gateway Park		X			Property has not been acquired
Second Street Bridge		X			Funding
Wells Street Park	X				
Industrial Park		X			Funding

Comprehensive Plan

Clarkesville Cornelia Alto
Habersham County Mt. Airy Demorest

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Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Trail Project Phase 1		X			Funding
Trail Project Phase 2		X			Funding
Trail Project Phase 3		X			Funding
Trail Project Phase 4		X			Funding
Trail Project Phase 5		X			Funding
Trail Project Phase 6		X			Funding
Become Better Hometown	X				
Market Analysis	X				
Signage Plan	X				
Banner Design	X				
Recruit three new businesses	X				
Select BHT Manager	X				
Review Ordinances for growth concepts	X				
Update Personnel Manual	X				
Develop Financial Policies	X				
Install Web Site	X				
Public Safety					
Purchase Patrol Cars	X				
Computer Upgrade	X				
Software Upgrade	X				
Certified Department Upgrade	X				
Replace Utility Vehicle			X		Funding
Pick up for Hydrant testing	X				
Replace inspector's vehicle	X				
Replace 1983 Truck 2	X				
Replace Snorkel Truck		X			Funding/need

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Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Postponed</i>	<i>Dropped</i>	
Replace older volunteer patrol cars				X	No longer use volunteers
Establish budget line item for volunteers				X	No longer use volunteers
Sanitation					
New Compactor replace 7	X				
New Compactor replace 7A	X				
Scooter Truck	X				
Buildings, Grounds, & Forestry					
Leaf Vacuum	X				
Truck for leaf vacuum-replace truck 9	X				
Replace truck 22	X				
Wood and brush chipper replacement	X				
Replace truck 21 with landscape truck			X		Funding
Replace truck 20	X				
Replace r/w mower			X		Funding
Replace leaf vacuum		X			Not needed at this time
Planning Dept.					
Vehicle for Planner/Code Enforcement	X				
GIS system for zoning & land use	X				
Recreation Department					
Review future status of pool	X				Pool has been filled in
Resurface tennis courts	X				
Landscape East end of Community House	X				
Maintenance & Mechanical Division					
Add one skilled laborer	X				
Replace large service truck	X				
Replace mechanic's vehicle	X				

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Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Replace small service truck	X				
Water Plant					
High service pump	X				Redundant pump installed 2007
Water master plan	X				
Develop Capital Improvement Plan	X				5 year plan done in 2006
Build second sedimentation basin	X				
Additional chemical supply storage	X				
Repair flocculation chamber	X				
Place park well in service	X				New pump installed in 2007
Guard rails	X				Safety Grant in 2007
Hazel Creek pump station	X				New pumps installed in 2007
Dam improvements			X		Will be done in 2009
Waste Water Plant					
Repair clarifier #1			X		2008 upgrade project
Repair clarifier #2			X		2008 upgrade project
Repair clarifier #3			X		2008 upgrade project
Install receiver unit for waste haulers	X				
Digester aerator replace			X		2008 upgrade project
Aerator spare for basin			X		2008 upgrade project
Waste water master plan	X				
Capital improvement plan	X				5 year plan done in 2006
Diffused air for aerator basin			X		2008 upgrade project
Water and Sewer Crew					
New backhoe		X			Funding
New utility truck	X				Purchased in 2005
New wireless read meters	X				Began replacing meters in 2004

City of Cornelia Community Agenda

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Clean up of landfill site	X				Completed in 2005
Fox Hollow sewer extension	X				Completed in 2005
Julia Street sewer extension		X			Funding
Stonecypher sewer extension		X			Funding
Midway sewer extension	X				
Chatham loop water extension	X				
Thomas Ave water line improvement		X			Funding
10" High service water line to town		X			Funding
Sewer line from Camp Creek to Midway			X		Global Tech Project in 2008
Sewer infiltration project			X		Bid out November 2007

9 City of Demorest Community Agenda

9.1 City of Demorest Vision Statement

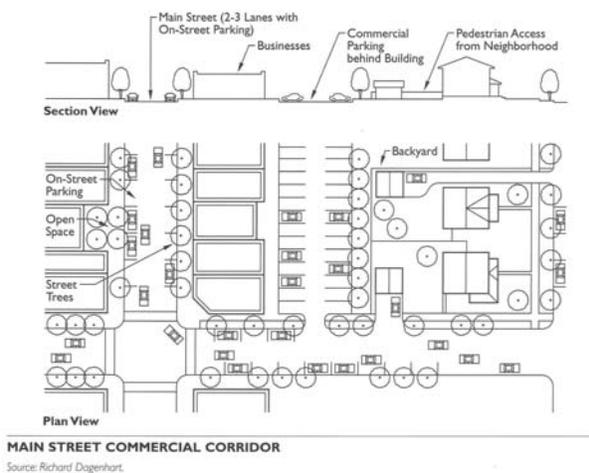
Demorest, a small city in central Habersham County, will retain its small-town character and preserve its cultural heritage as it embraces new growth and development. Historic Piedmont College is located in the center of the city and is its largest single land user. A cooperative relationship with the City and Piedmont College will define all future decisions about the city. Piedmont College’s campus, coupled with the city’s original downtown area, is the centerpiece that defines the current and future desired core characteristics of Demorest.



Piedmont College

“Demorest, a small city in central Habersham County, will retain its small town character and preserve its cultural heritage as it embraces the new.”

The city’s small downtown will be improved with streetscapes and will remain a thriving center of the city’s activities. The downtown commercial core, and uses related to Piedmont College, will expand as necessary in a way that is compatible with and complements the existing historic fabric of the city. Plans for the college campus and downtown will be implemented with full partnership between the college’s administration and the City, as well as other stakeholders. The city’s quaint but small downtown will become a prized destination for shopping, lodging, leisure, learning, and will include a center for small conventions. Collectively, the college and the City will help promote Demorest as “*the*” place for



small conventions in the region, so popular that its facilities will be booked months if not years in advance.

Running through the middle of Demorest in a north-south direction is historic U.S. Highway 441, the original major north-south route in the region that was “bypassed” with construction of the new U.S. Highway 441, a divided highway on the eastern fringe of the city. Old 441 helped make Demorest a mountain resort, which contributed positively to its rich cultural heritage.

Historic Highway 441 will remain the city’s primary travel route, and the City will work in conjunction with Habersham County and Clarkesville to revitalize that historic road corridor and transform it into a thriving, regionally important tourism-based corridor. Corridor revitalization strategies and gateway improvements in Demorest, which will include monuments, public art, landscaping, and other improvements will help nurture and promote the old 441 regional tourism corridor.

Demorest will preserve and protect its historic and traditional neighborhoods, characterized by older homes, skinny streets, and unique intersection geometries, and the City will ensure that as new development occurs these neighborhood characteristics will be maintained. It will also provide and maintain residential neighborhoods with a mix of housing types that will offer adequate choices for a variety of households and respond to affordability needs with workforce housing as the city’s population grows.



Neighborhood Street in Demorest

Demorest’s historic, traditional, and “mixed” neighborhoods will be complemented by more conventional suburban residential neighborhoods that provide more choices with regard to housing and neighborhood character.

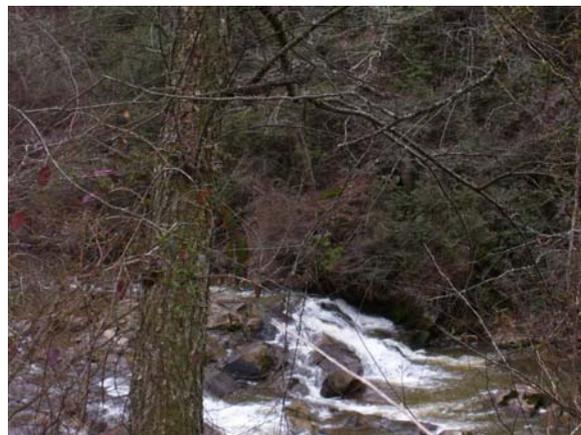
Pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to travel safely and comfortably in the downtown, throughout the old 441 corridor, and within historic and traditional neighborhoods of the city. Regional mobility will be further enhanced with completion of a rails-to-trails project including an abandoned rail line in Demorest. Traffic congestion will not take place in Demorest due to the relatively low density of land uses, the availability of an alternative route serving regional traffic patterns (i.e., U.S. Highway 441), and the desire to ensure the city’s existing road system continues to maintain its small-town character.



**Pedestrian bridge and amenities,
Piedmont College**

The city will aggressively pursue sidewalk improvements in its downtown and adjoining neighborhoods to connect with and complement downtown streetscape improvements now underway. Demorest’s population will remain healthy as a result of these improvements, and seniors will brag about the positive attributes of the city.

Demorest will conserve and protect its natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive resources, including steep topography and extensive flood plains along creeks. As new development occurs, significant natural features such as tree canopies and ridge lines will be retained rather than bulldozed over and leveled. Demorest will help maintain its watersheds so that regional water supplies remain viable for future generations.



Hazel Creek

The City of Demorest will annex modestly, in a manner that ensures a diversified economy but that does not transform or threaten to overwhelm its small-town character. Areas of annexation will remain within those areas agreed upon through countywide service delivery strategies, land use plans, and municipal growth boundaries.

In improving its own municipal facilities, the city aspires to make the best possible use of technology and will embrace the concept of “e-governance.”



Habersham Medical Center

Demorest’s economy will be strong, with a combination of the following: a destination-based stimulus of the college, convention center, and quaint shopping facilities; tourism-based businesses and services in the Historic 441 corridor and the city’s downtown; and new highway-oriented commercial development in the SR 365/U.S. 441 corridor.

Because Demorest will increase modestly in population and land area during the planning horizon, it will need to make only modest increases to its municipal facilities and services such as police, fire, and administration. Demorest will add to its existing municipal facilities and services as necessary to keep levels of service desired by its citizens, businesses and institutions.

Demorest is an important water service provider well outside its city limits, covering a large part of unincorporated Habersham County. As long-range county plans are implemented for water supply, Demorest will retain ownership of the water system in which it has heavily invested. But the City will cooperate with Habersham County and other municipalities to ensure that municipal and county water systems provide service to areas agreed upon for each provider, and that such systems are interconnected and coordinated for efficiency with regard to water supply, treatment, storage and distribution. Demorest will be a cooperative and willing partner in countywide planning efforts and the formulation and reformulation of service delivery strategies.

9.2 City of Demorest Issues and Opportunities

Introduction

Effectively implementing Demorest’s vision will require a well-defined implementation program. The first step in developing this implementation program is the identification of core community issues and opportunities, which form the basis for the community’s long and short-term action plan, which begins in Section 9.4 and is carried through to the Short Term Work Program, Section 9.6. Issues and opportunities were first drafted in the analysis phase of the Comprehensive Plan (see *Community Assessment*) and then later refined through public discussions, input from elected officials, and analysis by Comprehensive Planning staff. These items are organized under key planning areas.

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

9.2.1 Economic Development

1. **Limited Employment Opportunities.** Demorest has a limited mix of employment opportunities. Most jobs are affiliated with state and local services or the area college. The City should work towards attracting low-impact industry that is appropriate for the area and bringing higher-paying employers to the area. New industry would not only help broaden the tax base but also potentially help retain some Piedmont College students after graduation.
2. **Attraction of Small Businesses to Downtown Area.** Over the past five years, a few small restaurants have left their downtown location for other areas in the county. With the growing success of Piedmont College and overall increase in Habersham County population, Demorest can use its quaint downtown design and infrastructure to help attract more businesses. By focusing on such efforts, the City can increase its tax base and improve the quality of life for its resident. The recent addition of a bank and salon to downtown are positive steps in this direction.
3. **Increased Leisure/Entertainment Offerings.** Demorest has a limited number of restaurants and entertainment options. The City should look towards attracting higher-end restaurants as well as consider partnering with the County and other localities to develop appropriate entertainment facilities. As an element to this, the City should identify sites that would be appropriate for such developments. These types of services will also provide greater job opportunities to residents and Piedmont College students.
4. **Limited Sewer Capacity.** Demorest lacks sewer facilities capable of supporting increased growth. The City should work towards developing a master plan for expanding its sewer system. It would be wise for the City to look at opportunities to collaborate with neighboring communities and the county for developing a sewer system that can support the future growth of the southern end of the county.

9.2.2 Housing

1. **High Vacancy Rates.** The vacancy rate of all housing units in Demorest increased from 10 percent in 1990 to 12.5 percent in 2000. This rate is high compared to the rest of the county. High vacancy rates can have mixed and often negative effects on a community such as decreasing a sense of safety. Demorest has some of the oldest housing stock in the county, which likely contributes to the vacancy rates. Demorest can work to lower its vacancy rate over the next 20 years by encouraging habitation of vacant units while planning the construction of new units to meet market demand. Greater code enforcement and rehabilitation resistance programs could help facilitate the repair or removal of such stock from the city.
2. **Increase Home Ownership Rates.** Approximately 40 percent of Demorest's occupied housing units were rented in 2000 (compared to 33 percent and 34 percent in the state and nation, respectively). A significantly higher percentage of owner occupied units is preferred. Owners usually have a longer term investment in the area and are likely to have a long-term commitment to the local economy and community development.
3. **Senior Housing.** Demorest's small town character has appealing qualities for those reaching retirement age. In light of this, the city should work towards attracting appropriate senior housing near its downtown area. New residents in downtown would help support the small commercial district. Residents in this area would also benefit from existing and planned sidewalk infrastructure as well as Piedmont College activities and resources.
4. **Design Guidelines for New Construction.** Consistent with countywide trends, new housing in Demorest lacks unique qualities and character that would reflect the community's character. The City should consider creating and adopting design guidelines that would guide developers in designing structures that are consistent with community's feel. These guidelines should be coordinated with those related to historic resources.
5. **Property Maintenance Program.** Demorest has a notable stock of historic and aging housing units. These units can be challenging to keep-up, particularly for those residents with limited financial resources and those increasing in age. A property maintenance program should be coordinated with code enforcement efforts, creating a connection between code enforcement and community development.

9.2.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

1. **Demorest Lake.** Demorest needs to develop a plan and secure funding for the removal of the unsafe dam at Demorest Lake, which is owned by the city. This means a draining of Demorest Lake and reuse of the land. Demorest will participate in the college's effort to master plan the area left by Demorest Lake once the dam is removed due to classification as "unsafe" and the lake is drained.
2. **Protection of Trees.** The City currently has no mechanism to preserve existing trees on developing parcels. Without a tree ordinance, new subdivisions and other developments are often devoid of mature trees. Decades are required for the establishment of a tree canopy.

3. **Protection of National Register Historic Districts.** The National Register of Historic Places listing is a federal recognition of significance, but it does not offer protection for a site or district. There is one historic district in Demorest, the Demorest Commercial Historic District.
4. **Design Guidelines.** The creation of design guidelines for historic resources located in Demorest would act as a guide for both appropriate maintenance and for new construction of structures within historic districts. The design guidelines also would act as a guide for maintenance for existing resources.
5. **Continuation of Community Traditions.** Demorest offers its residents the benefits of a close-knit community where people can depend on their local leaders and neighbors. This environment is fueled by the small size of the city and the ongoing production of such events as the July 4th celebration. By maintaining these social interactions among residents, community members will stay invested in their community's wellbeing and help carry forward the city's cultural heritage.

9.2.4 Community Facilities and Services

1. **Water Supply.** Sufficient water supply to keep pace with projected growth is an issue within the City of Demorest. The county and its municipalities have recently completed a 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to study and address this issue. The findings of this plan estimate that the City will need to add an additional 6.9 MGD of capacity to serve demand in 2030. The City may be able to meet this demand through additional capacity gained through its recently submitted permit to withdraw water from Lake Yonah.
2. **Need for Additional Patrolling.** With a growing population, there is need for additional police patrol in the city. The areas surrounding Piedmont College and downtown should receive a greater degree of attention due to their higher concentration of people.
3. **Limited Communication between Government and Residents.** Through the public involvement process, the need for improved communication channels between government and residents was identified. The City should investigate ways to repair this sense of disconnect. Better use of existing correspondence with residents (e.g. tax bills, public notices, etc) may help resolve this issue.
4. **Piedmont College.** Piedmont College is a major asset to the City of Demorest. It not only provides educational, employment, and cultural opportunities for city residents, it can also be used as a marketing device. It is anticipated that large numbers of affluent baby-boomers will be relocating to the county. Marketing to retirees, and the cultural opportunities offered by a college, can attract new residents and promote economic development within the city.
5. **Improvements to Downtown Park.** Demorest has the benefit of a centrally-located, downtown park. The city should query city residents to determine what new facilities are most desired by the community. A park pavilion is one needed facility identified during the community visioning process. The city should concurrently identify mechanisms for funding desired additions to the park system.

9.2.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- 1. Creation of an Annexation Policy.** Demorest needs a clear annexation policy to define when annexation is or is not in its best interest and to define its expectations for prospective developers. The City should work closely with surrounding jurisdictions and state and regional planning agencies, including the County Board of Commissioners and the County Building and Planning Department, to ensure that new community facilities and services built within this sphere of influence support the needs of local residents and businesses and are compatible with the provisions of this plan
- 2. Revitalization and Improvement of Historic 441 Corridor.** Demorest should work in conjunction with Habersham County and Clarkesville to revitalize the historic 441 road corridor and transform it into a thriving, regionally important tourism-based corridor.

9.2.6 Transportation

- 1. Lack of Pedestrian Network.** Demorest has an incomplete pedestrian network. In addition, many pedestrian crossing locations lack safety improvements such as crosswalk striping, refuges, and signals. The city needs a sidewalk installation and repair program as well as funding sources to support improvements. The greatest emphasis should be placed on areas with high pedestrian traffic, including downtown and areas adjacent to the college.
- 2. Road Network.** Due to the radial configuration of the road network, cross county traffic passes through the cities; most traffic congestion within Demorest is located in residential and commercial centers.
- 3. Red Light at Central Avenue and Georgia Avenue.** Several community members cited the need for a red light at the intersection of Central Avenue and Georgia Avenue. A red light at this intersection will help traffic flow and increase pedestrian safety. The city is currently in the process of adding a pedestrian overpass to this intersection. This improvement should be strategically coordinated with a new stoplight.
- 4. Parking Solutions.** Existing, limited parking is contributing to some congestion near the downtown area. On-street parking opportunities, shared parking opportunities, and continued landscaped screening of off street parking need to be identified in the commercial areas of the city. The development of legitimate solutions will have lasting importance as the area's population increases over time.

9.2.7 Land Use

- 1. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement Needed.** There are many instances of code violations within the city. Violations bring down the property values of adjacent properties and contribute to neighborhood decline.
- 2. Outdated Development Regulations.** The City needs to update its land development regulations. In particular, while the codes do not prohibit mixed-use, they could be revised to specifically encourage this type of development and additional connectivity between uses in appropriate areas.
- 3. Appropriate Infill Development.** There are currently no regulations to insure new development compliments and is cohesive with the City's historic areas. Design

standards for infill development and/or the establishment of local historic districts and a design review board should be considered.

4. **Community Green Spaces are Needed.** Aside from a small park adjacent to Piedmont College, there are no community green spaces.
5. **Lack of Tree Ordinance.** A tree ordinance is needed to prevent the clear-cutting of lots for development. The town currently has no mechanism to preserve existing trees on developing parcels. Without tree ordinances new subdivisions are often devoid of mature trees and require decades for the establishment of tree canopy.
6. **Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Traditional neighborhoods developments may not be viable in every context, but they should be required when developing adjacent to or within the core downtown area of the city.
7. **Update Land Use Regulations.** Demorest is beginning to experience similar development pressures to those that are being felt in other parts of the county. In order to ensure that the growth occurs consistently with the community's vision for the future, the City's land use ordinance should be updated (or replaced with a zoning ordinance) to reflect recommendations made during the comprehensive planning process, particularly as they relate to the Future Development Map.

9.3 Future Development in Demorest

9.3.1 Introduction

The Future Development Map is a vital tool that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in the City of Demorest. The Future Development Map is on the community's vision for the future and was developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level and includes the entire area within and surrounding the city. Some of these character areas also cross over into unincorporated Habersham County in an effort to reduce land use and development conflicts at city's limits. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

Like Habersham County, the City of Demorest elected not to complete a Future Land Use Map, the map associated with previous comprehensive planning processes. Traditionally, future land use maps were short range planning tools which tied the desired land uses of the community's future vision to a jurisdiction's zoning or land development. Text has been included in the Character Area Narratives accompanying the Future Development Map to provide this guidance. If a Future Land Use map is not subsequently developed and adopted, the guiding language of the city's zoning ordinance must be amended to directly relate zoning decisions to the Future Development Map.

9.3.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Habersham County and its municipalities, including the City of Demorest. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the city. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The city's character areas are described and defined individually in the following narratives and are mapped in Figure 9-1.

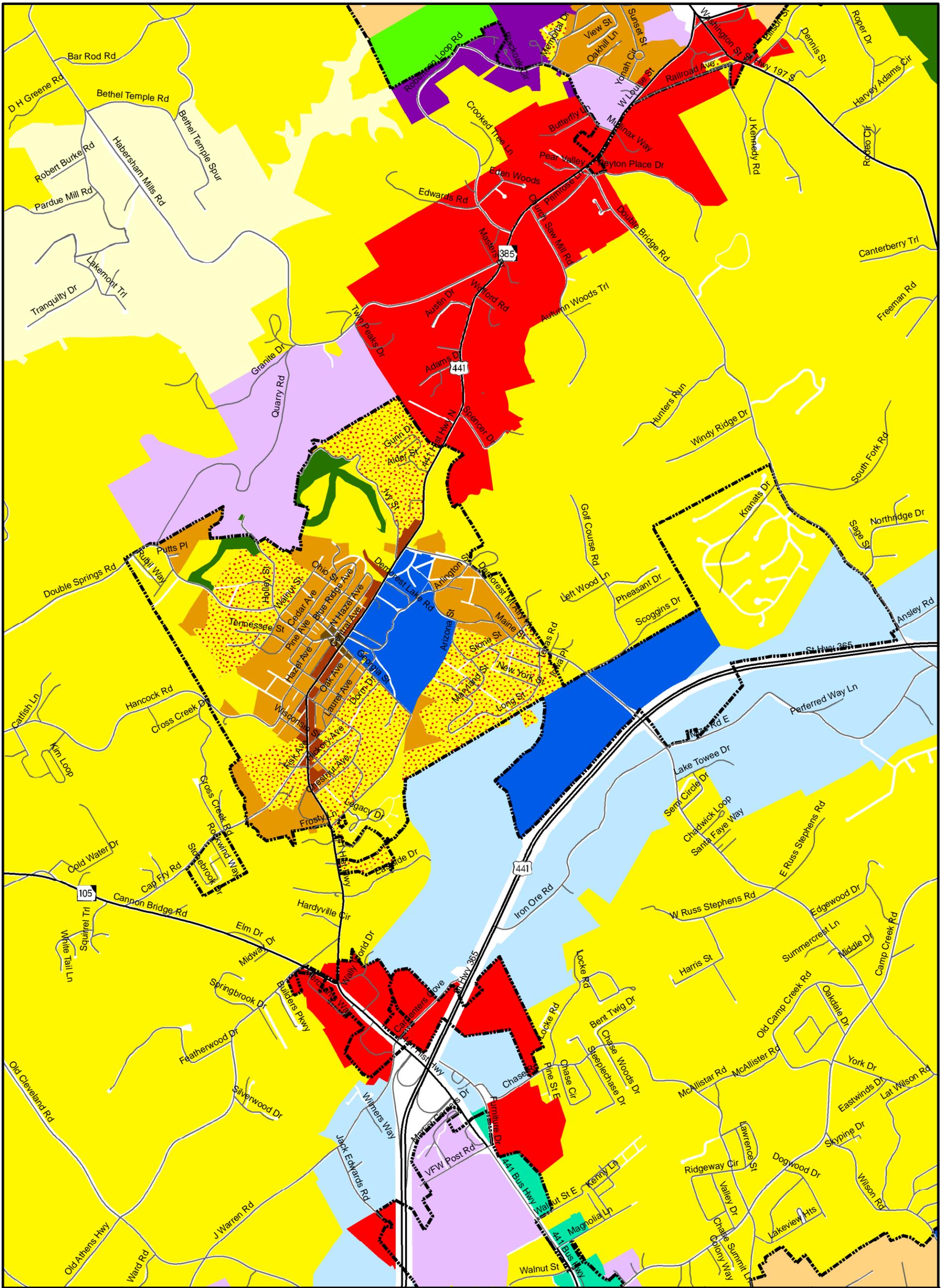
The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

- Siting and configuration of lots.

- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county and municipalities.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for changes to development regulations and development of design guidelines where appropriate.



Resource Conservation

Existing Character Description: This character area is intended to protect sensitive natural resources, especially floodplains. There are two areas shown on the Future Development Map, one contains the large expanse of floodplain in the northernmost part of the city, and another much smaller area south of the Piedmont College campus.

Vision for the Area: Generally, conservation areas will remain undeveloped due to their environmental sensitivity. The area may be used as passive recreation.

Appropriate Land Uses: None; development of conservation character areas is not encouraged.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Flood hazard prevention ordinance or floodplain regulations.
 - Water supply watershed protection ordinance.
 - Participation in national flood insurance program.
 - Acquisition of land or protection through conservation easement.
 - Use restrictions through land use or zoning ordinance.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Open Space Preservation.
- Environmental Protection.

Developing Residential

Existing Character Description: This character area corresponds with properties that have been subdivided and developed as conventional suburban subdivisions during the past several years. Also, this character area corresponds with properties that have not yet been developed to any significant degree but are anticipated to be subdivided and developed for new, detached, single-family dwellings. Since these areas are mostly undeveloped, there are opportunities to influence their character in the future.

The Developing Residential character area applies to a large area in the eastern part of Demorest, north of State Route 365, and at other, smaller locations in the southern and western parts of the city.

Vision for the Area: The vision is to promote neighborhood stability, adequate public facilities, and to ensure connections, both pedestrian and vehicle, to abutting and surrounding properties where compatible.

These areas will be suburban in character, with curvilinear roads and cul-de-sacs and fee-simple ownership of individual lots is the predominant development form. Residential lot sizes may vary within this area, based on whether they are connected to sewer. Lots connected to public water supply and on-site sewage management (septic tank) system may be larger than the minimum lot size required of the County Health Department.



Setbacks are large and yards are provided on all sides of dwellings. Open space features are incorporated into the subdivision design as possible.

Appropriate Land Uses: Predominantly detached, single-family, site-built dwellings on individual lots. Supportive civic and recreational uses may be included, such as churches, schools, community centers, and parks.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Use restrictions through land use or ordinance.
 - Public or private capital funding for sidewalks and new connections.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Opportunities.
- Infill Development.

Mixed Residential

Existing Character Description: This designation corresponds with areas that are already predominantly developed with some diversity in residential building types (e.g., duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, and/or manufactured home parks). Several mixed residential character districts exist in Demorest. Two large areas adjoin the Piedmont College Educational Campus area within the original square city limits. Two others are located in the north part of the city, along Porter Street and around an existing manufactured home park west of old Highway 441 Business Route.

Vision for the Area: Lots shall be large, but may contain more than one dwelling unit on a given lot. The street pattern in these areas is more similar to traditional neighborhood development principles than conventional suburban subdivision characteristics, in that cul-de-sacs generally do not exist and road patterns resemble a “grid” or “modified” grid pattern. Densities are higher than other residential areas in most cases, and hence these areas need to be connected to the public sanitary sewer system. Compatible infill development will be encouraged in these areas, as multiple housing options may provide access to housing that is more affordable than that found in the more suburban areas of the city.

Appropriate Land Uses: Combinations of residential dwelling types, including detached, single-family, site-built units; manufactured homes on individual lots; duplexes, townhouses; apartments; and manufactured home parks. Supportive civic and recreational uses may be included, such as churches, schools, community centers, and parks.



Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Use restrictions through land use or ordinance.
 - Traditional neighborhood development ordinance.
 - Infill development compatibility requirements.
 - Community development and redevelopment programs.
 - Housing code and property maintenance enforcement.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Choices.
- Infill Development.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Traditional Neighborhood.

Traditional Neighborhood

Existing Character Description: This character area corresponds with the originally settled lot pattern of the city next to the downtown commercial core. These areas were not influenced by zoning or land use regulations, and they developed according to “traditional neighborhood” development patterns. Many, but not all, of the lots within this area have buildings which meet eligibility requirements to be called “historic” given their age (i.e., constructed prior to 1940).

This character area applies to the City of Demorest’s earliest settlement lots, located immediately adjacent to the downtown core, primarily on the west side of old Historic Highway 441 Business Route, but also including smaller neighborhoods on the east side of that route, abutting the Piedmont College educational campus to the north and south.

Vision for the Area: Grid-street pattern with blocks (the original development pattern in Demorest). Generally residential land uses (historic or older homes) with smaller lots and dwellings built closer to the street than those in other character areas. Infill and redevelopment, and/or land use changes, may or may not be appropriate given the specific context of the neighborhood and the property’s location in relation to downtown.

Appropriate Land Uses: Primarily detached, single-family uses on individual lots. Non-residential uses, such as offices and institutions, within existing residential structures may be appropriate subject to design compatibility, in areas where expansion of the downtown core into such neighborhoods may be appropriate.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:



- Develop a Local Historic Preservation District, Ordinance, Commission and Design Guidelines.
- Survey and nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places as appropriate.
- Use restrictions through land use or zoning ordinance.
- Develop a traditional neighborhood development ordinance for this area.
- Develop compatibility requirements for infill development in this area.
- Pursue appropriate community development and redevelopment programs.
- Strongly enforce housing and property maintenance codes.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Heritage Preservation.
- Sense of Place.
- Traditional Neighborhood.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Housing Choices.

Education Center

Existing Character Description: This category combines two very different types of institutional land uses, the historic Piedmont College campus in downtown Demorest, and new educational campuses for county public schools.

The in-town, historic campus of Piedmont College is compact, pedestrian-oriented, and has open spaces incorporated into the campus. New schools, located at the intersection of Demorest-Mt. Airy Road and State Route 365, depend on automobile and bus transportation and are not connected with other land uses.

Vision for the Area: Historic campus (in the case of Piedmont College), or institutional complex of buildings, related to one another, and served by surrounding off-street parking. Bus travel design characteristic dominate the development pattern in the case of county public schools.

Appropriate Land Uses: Primarily single-function institutional uses, with several buildings of varying sizes and heights, along with incidental open space or recreation, off-site parking, and accessory uses.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Pursue a cooperative relationship with the Board of Education and Piedmont College in order to better coordinate land use decisions and institutional goals.



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partnerships that enhance the community’s learning environment.

- Take an active community role in campus master planning.
- Pursue opportunities to coordinate Demorest’s economic development needs with the education programs offered by community institutions.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Educational Opportunities.
- Employment Options.
- Open Space Preservation
- Regional Identity (Piedmont College only).
- Heritage Preservation (Piedmont College only).
- Sense of Place (Piedmont College only).

Downtown

Existing Character Description: This area is comprised of the five blocks in the center of Demorest, which are the historic commercial core of the city, bisected by Old Historic Highway 441 Business Route. Development in this area is compact and pedestrian-friendly. The area has been aided by concentrated public investment.

Vision for the Area: New development will follow the original downtown pattern of small rectangular blocks. Buildings are brought up to the street with little or no setback from the road and development follows “Main Street” principles. Consistent with historic district guidelines developed in alignment with the principals governing historic districts placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Appropriate Land Uses: Predominantly commercial, services, office and civic-institutional uses. Residences on upper stories of multi-story buildings are appropriate, as are adaptive reuse of structures for mixed uses.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Undertake streetscape improvements to enhance the aesthetics of the area and pedestrian orientation.
 - Encourage public-private partnerships to continue investment in the area and redevelopment of historic buildings.



- Make use of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to foster continued revitalization.
- Establish a local Historic District by ordinance governed by a Historic Preservation Commission charged with implementing design guidelines.
- Pursue National Register of Historic Places designation for eligible structures.
- Ensure compatible development and uses through land use or zoning ordinance.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity
- Heritage Preservation.
- Sense of Place.
- Employment Opportunities.
- Appropriate Businesses.

365 Corridor

Existing Character Description: This area is dominated by linear, highway-oriented commercial development on sites with frontage on SR 365.

Vision for the Area: New commercial projects will be planned at the individual site level but with consideration of inter-parcel access among compatible properties. This area will continue to be auto-dependent.

Appropriate Land Uses: Highway-oriented commercial land uses, offices, services, and institutions. Generally, residential is not provided (though not necessarily discouraged) because land values are prohibitive for residential due to highway frontage and access.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop access management standards for this area to reduce traffic conflicts and maintain roadway efficiency.
 - Undertake streetscape improvements to allow for multi-modal transportation options along the corridor.
 - Ensure compatible uses through continued enforcement of the City’s land use ordinance.
 - Develop corridor-specific quality development regulations.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Employment Opportunities.
- Regional Solutions.
- Appropriate Businesses.

Historic 441 Mixed-Use Corridor

Existing Character Description: This character area applies to both sides of the entire Old 441 Business Highway, except for the “Downtown” character area at the center point of the City. Until the 1990s this historic roadway was the primary route for points north in the region. Today, this corridor is no longer the primary travel route, and so businesses along the corridor have been vacated or converted to other uses. Some disinvestment in older, no-longer-viable commercial uses has occurred, leading to the need to consider public and/or private redevelopment options. This corridor is shared with Clarkesville, and it has great potential for regionally significant tourism redevelopment.

Vision for the Area: The desired pattern is an improved corridor, infused with some regional public investment, to promote redevelopment and connect the corridor to nearby neighborhoods with pedestrian connections. Linear development of mostly single-function commercial, automobile-dependent in one and two-story structures along the highway.

Appropriate Land Uses: A mix of uses will be promoted, including businesses and offices, as well as single-family residences.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop access management standards for this area to reduce traffic conflicts and maintain roadway efficiency.



- Develop a Master Plan for the corridor.
- Undertake streetscape improvements to allow for multi-modal transportation options along the corridor.
- Ensure compatible uses through continued enforcement of the City’s land use ordinance.
- Develop corridor-specific quality development regulations.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Regional Identity.
- Employment Opportunities.
- Regional Solutions.
- Appropriate Businesses.

9.4 City of Demorest Implementation Strategies

Introduction

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 9.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (one to five years), or Long-Range (more than five years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this plan, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Short-Term Work Programs of the City of Demorest (Section 9.6) – linking appropriate short-term items to the 2009 to 2013 Short-Term Work Program. *Please also see Countywide Implementation Strategies, which are also applicable to Demorest as well as all other jurisdictions participating in this plan.*

Jurisdictions and Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
Alto	Alto (Town of)
Clarksville	Clarksville (City of)
Cornelia	Cornelia (City of)
Demorest	Demorest (City of)
DPC	Demorest Planning Commission
DPD	Demorest Police Department
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GDCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
GDED	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GHPD	Georgia Historic Preservation Division
Habersham	Habersham County
HCCC	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
HCIDA	Habersham County Industrial Development Authority
HCHS	Habersham County Information Technology Department
HCPD	Habersham County Planning Department
HCRoD	Habersham County Roads Department
HCRecD	Habersham County Recreation Department
HCWD	Habersham County Water Department
Mt.Airy	Mount Airy (Town of)
NEGHA	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
NEGRDC	Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
PC	Piedmont College
TPL	The Trust for Public Land
USHUD	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

9.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Limited Employment Opportunities.
2. Attraction of Small Businesses to Downtown Area.
3. Increased Leisure/Entertainment Offerings.
4. Limited Sewer Capacity.

With a historic downtown core and the benefits of a four year college, Demorest is well-positioned to attract small businesses and build its leisure opportunities for community members. The City will need to think strategically about needed improvements to create desired change.

ED-1. Limited Employment Opportunities

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify businesses that the City should recruit and support. Part of this process should include an inventory of existing skill-sets of the resident labor force.	Short-Term	Demorest	HCCC
Work with the Habersham County Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Development Authority to develop marketing materials to help attract businesses to available building sites in the community. These materials should include a list of vacant and developable sites within the city.	Short-Term	Demorest	HCCC HCIDA GDED

ED-2. Attraction of Small Businesses to Downtown Area.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop incentives for businesses to locate in the historic center of town, such as infrastructure improvements.	Ongoing	Demorest	HCIDA GDED
Increase the demand for downtown businesses by encouraging infill housing development near Piedmont College and the historic downtown core.	Ongoing	Demorest	
Identify funding sources (including grants, SPLOST, etc.) for making needed infrastructure and streetscape improvements downtown.	Short-Term	Demorest	GCF GDCA GDOT
Consider establishing a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to spearhead downtown improvement efforts	Long-Term	Demorest	

ED-3. Increased Leisure/Entertainment Offerings

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Survey Piedmont College students and area residents on leisure/entertainment offerings in the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>
Utilize the community survey to develop a strategic plan for creating downtown leisure facilities, programs, or events. Coordinate those plans with the County's Recreation Department.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC HCCC HCCRecD</i>
Support community activities, such as festivals, that reinforce City traditions and help preserve local heritage	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	

ED-4. Limited Sewer Capacity

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a master plan for expanding the City's sewer system. The City should work collaboratively with other area jurisdictions to develop an efficient sewerage system.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCWD Alto Cornelia Mt. Airy Clarkesville HCIDA</i>
Review available sewerage capacity when permitting new developments within the City's sewer service area.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

9.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. High Vacancy Rates.
2. Increase Home Ownership Rates.
3. Senior Housing.
4. Design Guidelines for New Construction.
5. Property Maintenance Program.

Demorest is projected to increase its senior and student population over the planning period. To properly prepare, the City should address existing issues while thinking entrepreneurially about the likely housing needs and preferences of its growing population.

H-1. High Vacancy Rates

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Increase code enforcement to identify unoccupied units that are in need of either repair or removal.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPD</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with appropriate regional and state agencies to develop a rehabilitation program for existing housing units. The program should include funding assistance to help for needed repairs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCPD GDCA NEGHA USHUD</i>
Develop a housing search program with Piedmont College to help connect off-campus college students with available housing in the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>

H-2. Increase Home Ownership Rates

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Participate with others in the development of a homebuyer education program.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCPD NEGRDC GDCA USHUD</i>
Help implement county, regional, state, and federal homeownership assistance programs to help low-moderate and first time homebuyers with down payment assistance.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCPD NEGRDC GDCA USHUD</i>

H-3. Senior Housing

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify areas that are appropriate for senior housing. Reduce regulatory barriers in those areas to ensure that it is feasible to build such housing in the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>
Encourage redevelopment downtown to consider mixed use development that would appeal to the area's growing retirement population.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCCC GDED</i>
Develop recommended standards for housing units to ensure accessibility for seniors and the disabled, including, for instance, "no-step" entrances and at least one bathroom on the ground floor.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	

H-4. Design Guidelines for New Construction

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review existing development regulations in conjunction with the Future Development Map to identify areas that would benefit from design guidelines. Areas that would likely benefit from this include the downtown historic district and mixed residential areas.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Draft and adopt design guidelines as determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

H-5. Property Maintenance Program

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a property maintenance program in conjunction with code enforcement efforts, providing community members with needed resources and support rather than heavy fines.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPD GDCA USHUD</i>
Partner with Piedmont College volunteer and academic enrichment programs to develop a housing assistance program to help those with physical and financial limitations.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC NEGRDC USHUD</i>
Consider applying for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds or private funds to improve neighborhood conditions and housing in low- and moderate-income areas	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>Habersham</i>

9.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Demorest Lake.
2. Protection of Trees.
3. Protection of National Register Historic Districts.
4. Design Guidelines.
5. Continuation of Community Traditions.

Demorest has under-tapped natural and cultural resources. The following implementation strategies should help the City work towards preserving and maximizing the enjoyment of these resources by area residents and community members over time.

NCR-1. Demorest Lake

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a plan and secure funding for the removal of the unsafe dam at Demorest Lake, which is owned by the city.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>
Participate in the college's effort to master plan the area left by Demorest Lake once the dam is removed and the lake is drained	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>

NCR-2. Protection of Trees

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees lost to development with trees of like species and value.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>
Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>

NCR-3 and NCR-4. Protection of National Register of Historic Districts and Design Guidelines.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Prepare, adopt, and enforce a local preservation ordinance which designates one or more local historic preservation districts, establishes and historic preservation commission and requires certificates of appropriateness for material changes in appearance within such districts	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC HCHS GHPD</i>
Develop design guidelines for the construction of new structures within historic districts.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC HCHS GHPD</i>
Develop consistent signage to identify historic resources in the community.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC HCHS GHPD</i>

NCR-5. Continuation of Community Traditions.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Secure the viability of community festivals and events by developing a special commission or board to coordinate such events.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	
Advertise City festivals and activities in local newspapers, flyers, and other appropriate media as deemed appropriate by event/festival planners.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDED</i>
Identify additional land for festivals and events, including acquisition if necessary.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC TPL</i>

9.4.4 Community Facilities and Services

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Water Supply.
2. Need for Additional Police Patrolling.
3. Limited Communication between Government and Residents.

4. Piedmont College.
5. Improvements to Downtown Park.

Water supply is one of the most important topics that Demorest must address in the near future. Other community services and facilities will need to be improved over time to ensure that residents feel well connected and safe within the community.

CFS-1. Water Supply.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement measures identified in the County's 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to meet the City's long-term water supply needs.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCWD Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Mt. Airy</i>
Work with the other area governments to develop a more efficient water system.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCWD Alto Cornelia Clarkesville Mt. Airy</i>

CFS-2. Need for Additional Police Patrolling

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Hire additional police staff to meet the need for increased patrolling in the area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPD</i>
Develop a neighborhood watch system throughout the City's residential and commercial areas. This program will help lower the need for patrolling in the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>DPD</i>	<i>Demorest</i>
Develop a partnership with the campus security at Piedmont College to effectively protect both residents and students alike.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>DPD</i>	<i>PC</i>

CFS-3. Limited Communication between Government and Residents.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review existing communication strategies with residents and develop a plan for better connecting with community members.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	
Develop a website to connect community residents with current events. The City should investigate the possibility of coordinating with the County to accomplish this.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>Habersham</i>

CFS-4. Piedmont College.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify facility-sharing possibilities with the college and create a formal procedure for reserving and using those facilities to City and community led events.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>
Link any newly created city website to the College and vice versa.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>
As a part of new communication efforts, include relevant news from Piedmont College in city communication materials/resources.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>PC</i>

CFS-5. Improvements to Downtown Park.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Survey residents on needed facility for downtown park.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCRcd</i>
Identify funding sources for paying for improvements to parks and other sites.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCRcd</i> <i>GDCA</i> <i>GDNR</i> <i>GCF</i>

9.4.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Creation of an Annexation Policy.
2. Redevelopment and Improvement of Historic 441 Corridor.

Water and annexation policies should be a primary focus of the City over the next 5 to 10 years. Several other intergovernmental coordination members apply to all Habersham jurisdictions. These strategies are addressed in the Countywide Implementation Strategies.

IC-1. Creation of Annexation Policy.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Prepare an annexation policy that articulates those conditions that make annexation an appropriate policy decision. Include in the study an assessment of the potential impacts of annexation.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>Clarkesville</i> <i>Habersham</i>
Participate in annexation and land use dispute resolution processes as established by Habersham County.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>Habersham</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work closely with Habersham County and state and regional agencies to ensure that new community facilities and services built in close proximity to Demorest support the needs of local residents and businesses.	Ongoing	Demorest	Habersham

IC-2. Revitalization and Improvement of Historic 441 Corridor.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work in conjunction with Habersham County and Clarkesville to revitalize the historic 441 road corridor and transform it into a thriving, regionally important tourism-based corridor.	Short-Term	Demorest	Clarkesville Habersham
Improve the visual quality of local streets and state routes through streetscape improvements (e.g., sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, etc.). Focus community improvement initiatives on the downtown area as well as along and within the Historic 441 corridor.	Short-Term	Demorest	Clarkesville Habersham
Create gateways to the City that produce a sense of arrival. These entryways may incorporate streetscape elements, signage, and landscaping that enhance the image and function of the City.	Short-Term	Demorest	
Support community-based partnerships for streetscape beautification.	Short-Term	Demorest	

9.4.6 Transportation

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Lack of Pedestrian Network.
2. Road Network.
3. Red Light at Central Avenue and Georgia Avenue.
4. Parking Solutions.

While Demorest is centrally-located along Historic 441, this location can be both a service and problem with the community. Transportation and land use strategies should be considered simultaneously to improve the city’s pedestrian network, traffic flow, and parking facilities.

T-1. Lack of Pedestrian Network.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete pedestrian overpass between Piedmont College and the historic downtown commercial area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDOT</i>
Complete a walkability audit to determine the most effective locations for investing in sidewalk infrastructure.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDOT</i>
Develop a sidewalk installation and repair program.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	
Identify funding sources for future improvements the pedestrian network.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDOT</i> <i>GDCA</i>
Connect sidewalk network to potential countywide trail system as appropriate.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>HCRD</i>
Consider appropriate pedestrian infrastructure requirements for new development as part of the revised development regulations	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	

T-2. Road Network.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Conduct an analysis and provide recommendations for improved access management along Historic 441 as new development occurs	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>Habersham</i> <i>GDOT</i>
Require a traffic study and the mitigation of traffic impacts by the land developer when a development proposal would be expected to generate 1,000 vehicle trips or more, or 100 or more vehicle trips during any a.m. or p.m. peak hour,	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	
Monitor the performance of existing traffic calming measures that slow speeding and/or discourage cut-through traffic. Install new measures where need, maintain them where appropriate, and replace or remove them where performance is unsatisfactory	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	
Identify dangerous or problematic intersections in the city, due to poor alignment or intersection geometries, or substandard pavement widths, and develop plans to correct them	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>Habersham</i> <i>GDOT</i>

T-3. Red Light at Central Avenue and Georgia Avenue.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Install red light at the intersection of Central Avenue and Georgia Avenue. Ensure that the new light is coordinated with the planned pedestrian overpass (discussed as an implementation strategy under T-1).	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDOT HCRD</i>

T-4. Parking Solutions.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a local parking study to determine where parking problems exist in the community, including current inadequacies and best practices, projected future parking supply/demand, and review of development regulations that impact parking supply.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>
Amend development regulations per the parking study to better meet the parking needs and desired development patterns in the city.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

9.4.7 Land Use

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement Needed.
2. Outdated Development Regulations.
3. Appropriate Infill Development.
4. Community Green Spaces are Needed.
5. Lack of Tree Ordinance.
6. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.
7. Adopt Zoning Ordinance or Updated Land Use Ordinance.

Many of Demorest’s land-use concerns are tied to infill development and issues surrounding existing development patterns and regulations. Changes to existing development regulations and conservation of community greenspace will help retain the small-town character and unique attributes of Demorest as growth occurs both within the City and in adjacent areas.

LU-1. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement Needed.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review existing code enforcement practices and identify area for improvements. Implement changes as determined from analysis.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a streamlined system for community members to report alleged code violations. As an element of this, create a consistent response system, increasing the validity of the community's code enforcement procedures.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPD</i>
Amend development regulations as appropriate to meet community appearance preferences. Allow for period of public comment prior to making any changes to existing codes.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

LU-2. Outdated Development Regulations.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Update Development Regulations, using the Comprehensive Plan (particularly the Future Development Plan) as a guide.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>
Ensure that as development occurs negative views are screened through site planning as well architectural and landscape devices.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>
Develop lighting requirements or guidelines that promote energy efficiency and safety and reduce light pollution or "sky-glow," light trespass on adjacent properties, and glare.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

LU-3. Appropriate Infill Development.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop design guidelines for the construction of new structures within historic districts.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GHPD HCHS</i>
Consider adopting sign regulations to help develop consistent community character in the city as development and redevelopment occurs. It may be appropriate to have unique regulations for the downtown historic core.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDCA DPC GHPD</i>
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDCA HCDA HCCC</i>

LU-4. Community Green Spaces are Needed

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete a needs assessment for community green spaces. Identify funding sources for acquiring additional greenspace.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDNR TPL</i>

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Draft and adopt a conservation subdivision ordinance. The ordinance would allow developers to build at greater densities if they set aside a portion of their property for conserved greenspace, which would be available to the public.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC GDCA</i>

LU-5. Lack of Tree Ordinance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a tree ordinance to preserve the tree cover in the town. The ordinance should require tree replacement for sites where tree preservation is not possible.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>
Identify public spaces and rights of way that could benefit from additional trees or vegetation. Over time, work with state and local agencies to identify cost-effective ways to increase tree cover in areas where tree loss has already occurred.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDNR</i>

LU-6. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>GDCA HCDA</i>
Review and amend town’s development regulations to support mixed use developments in appropriate areas of the community. Utilize the Future Development Map when making decisions on such development types.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

LU-7. Update Land Use Regulations.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Prepare amendments to existing land use ordinance or prepare and adopt a zoning ordinance to reflect recommendations made during the comprehensive planning process.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Demorest</i>	<i>DPC</i>

9.5 City of Demorest Policies

General policies are designed and adopted to reflect and represent the community’s vision and priorities, confirmed during the planning process. These general policies are constructed to reflect the values of Demorest residents and other contributors to the community’s vitality. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Community Vision and addressing the Community’s Issues and Opportunities. These policies will guide day-to-day decisions of City officials and are intended to be general in nature, reflecting city-wide needs. The general policies will be referenced in staff reports and will play a guiding role in permitting decisions, rezoning, and budget preparation. Geographic-based policies are included in Section 9.3 as a part of the description of the Future Development Map.

Similar to the Issues and Opportunities section, the following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

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

9.5.1 Economic Development

- The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in the community should be suitable in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the community or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities (Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business).
- A range of job types should be provided in Demorest to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce (Quality Community Objective, Employment Options).
- Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in the City – to permit City residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions (Quality Community Objective, Educational Opportunities).
- Promote heritage tourism in Demorest as a way to educate citizens and visitors of the city’s history and cultural identity and to enhance the local economic base.
- Work in conjunction with Habersham County and Clarkesville to revitalize the historic 441 road corridor and transform it into a thriving, regionally important tourism-based corridor.
- A primary cornerstone of the city’s economic development strategy will be to promote Demorest as “the” place for small conventions in the region.
- Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the City.

- Partner with private industry and/or other agencies to promote economic development opportunities that will benefit the city, county, region, and state.

9.5.2 Housing

- Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the City (Quality Community Objective, Housing Opportunities).
- Encourage “life cycle” or “mixed generation” communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.
- Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity to health care facilities.
- Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.
- Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs to improve areas of substandard housing. Also, encourage participation in housing rehabilitation program for existing housing units, where available.
- Reduce the incidence of code violations within the city, since such violations threaten to reduce property values of adjacent properties and contribute to neighborhood decline.

9.5.3 Natural & Cultural Resources

- The natural environment should be preserved as much as possible.
- Prevent development from occurring in, or significantly encroaching upon environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas.
- The location and intensity of development should be sited so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality
- Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).
- Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains.
- Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Encourage development that maintains existing topography where practical and retains ridge lines.
- Encourage conservation subdivision development where opportunities exist.
- Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
- Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees lost to development with trees of like species and value.
- Support community activities, such as festivals that reinforce City traditions and help preserve local heritage.
- 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 (Quality Community Objective, Historic Preservation).

9.5.4 Community Facilities and Services

- Increase municipal facilities and services such as police, fire, and administration, as needed in proportion to population and employment increases.
- Ensure that the police department has adequate personnel, equipment, and training.
- Secure safety of property and life through fire suppression equipment (fire department) and fire prevention activities (county fire marshal).
- Efficiently operate Demorest's municipal water and sanitary sewer services. Encourage water conservation programs.
- Plan, construct and maintain park and recreation facilities and open spaces in the city, to supplement countywide park and recreation facilities.
- The City should confine its investment in civic buildings to the downtown, in order to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in the downtown.
- Identify, and capitalize on, opportunities for innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various city facilities and services, especially those opportunities that may arise for partnering with Piedmont College.
- Participate in preparation of disaster preparedness and emergency management plans in conjunction with Habersham County.
- Make the best possible use of technology and embrace the concept of "e-governance."

9.5.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- 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 (Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation).
- 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 (Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions).
- Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate.
- Avoid competition between Demorest and the nearby cities, and turn competitive situations into opportunities for cooperation.
- Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.
- Cooperate with Habersham County and other municipalities to ensure that municipal and county water systems provide service to areas agreed upon for each provider, and that such systems are interconnected and coordinated for efficiency with regard to water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution.

- Work closely with the Habersham County Board of Commissioners and the County Building and Planning Department to avoid potential land use conflicts and service delivery issues in the areas surrounding the city limits.
- Work closely with Habersham County to help ensure that the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is renewed as an important source of county and municipal capital improvements funding. Consider municipal boundary expansion opportunities as appropriate, including properties identified as potential annexation areas and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation.
- Annexation should not take place if it would substantially transform or threaten to overwhelm the small town character of Demorest.

9.5.6 Transportation

- Maintain active involvement in transportation planning activities by Habersham County, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, and Georgia Department of Transportation.
- Improve geometrics of local street intersections where they pose traffic safety problems.
- Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities downtown, including public parking. On-street parking opportunities and shared parking opportunities should be explored and provided where appropriate.
- Improve the network of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks) in the city. Create a safe and accessible pedestrian network throughout the City.
- Pursue opportunities to construct multi-use trails or greenways in the city.
- Consider extension of the city's grid-street pattern of streets in new developments and subdivisions, where feasible and practical.
- Apply state and local standards for access management along arterial and collector streets, including but not limited to specifications for curb cut location and separation and installation of deceleration lanes.
- During site plan and development permit review, measures should be made to connect compatible land developments with regard to pedestrian and vehicular access.

9.5.7 Land Use

- Use the Future Development Map (Character Areas) as a guide to decision-making.
- Protect the city's established residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
- Promote infill housing in existing historic or traditional neighborhoods, if it complements and emulates the character of the existing neighborhood.
- Designate and maintain some residential neighborhoods that provide for mixes of housing types, that provide adequate choices for a variety of households, and that respond to needs for affordable, workforce housing.
- Development in downtown should include mixed uses developed at a pedestrian scale.
- Screen negative views through site planning as well as architectural and landscape devices.

- New development in the city's inner neighborhoods (i.e., those close to downtown) should observe and maintain the existing pattern of skinny streets and unique intersection geometrics.
- Enhance the City of Demorest's image as a unique community and retain that image in attractive and orderly development that preserves existing character of a historic community.
- Cultivate distinctiveness so that the City of Demorest remains unique among Habersham County communities.
- Improve the visual quality of local streets and state routes through streetscape improvements (e.g., sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, etc.). Focus community improvement initiatives on the downtown area as well as along and within the Historic 441 corridor.
- Pedestrian lighting and street furniture should be consistent throughout the City, unless varied to be consistent with character. Street furnishings and landscape elements should possess long-lasting quality and be well-maintained.
- Ensure that new developments respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences, to maintain small town character.
- Implement some means of design control or guidance in new non-residential development through requirements in the zoning ordinance and other appropriate means, but balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of non-residential development with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.
- Encourage outdoor lighting that promotes energy efficiency and safety and reduces light pollution or "sky-glow," light trespass on adjacent properties, and glare.
- Support community-based partnerships for streetscape beautification.

9.6.1 City of Demorest Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the community’s vision for the City of Demorest.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Economic Development and Redevelopment				
Conduct an inventory and prepare a list of vacant and developable sites within the city.	2009	N/A	Volunteers	N/A
Survey Piedmont College students and area residents on leisure/entertainment offerings in the community.	2009	Unknown	Downtown Coordinator	Operating Budget; College
Develop a strategic plan for creating downtown leisure facilities, programs, or events.	2010-2011	\$10,000	Downtown Coordinator	Operating Budget
Advertise City festivals and activities in local newspapers, flyers, and other appropriate media as deemed appropriate by event/festival planners.	2009-2013	\$1,500	Downtown Coordinator	Operating Budget
Consider establishing a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to spearhead downtown improvement efforts.	2009	N/A	Downtown Coordinator	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Housing				
Develop a housing search program with Piedmont College to help connect off-campus college students with available housing in the community.	2009-2010	N/A	Volunteers	N/A
Develop and disseminate standards for housing units that ensure accessibility for seniors and the disabled, including, for instance, “no-step” entrances and at least one bathroom on the ground floor.	2009-2010	N/A	Staff	N/A
Initiate a municipal code enforcement program or partner with Habersham County or other municipalities for these services.	2009-2010	\$35,000-\$40,000	City Manager / City Council	Operating Budget
Participate in the development of a homebuyer education program in partnership with other agencies and private groups.	2009-2010	N/A	Volunteers	N/A
Apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds or private funds to improve neighborhood conditions and housing in low- and moderate-income areas.	2009-2013	GMRDC Technical Assistance	City Manager / City Planner	N/A
Historic Preservation				
Update of the survey of historic resources in Demorest.	2009	\$5,000	City Manager	Operating Budget
Add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.	2009-2013	\$2,000 per nomination	Volunteers	Operating Budget

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Historic Preservation Ordinance	2009	\$2,000	City Council	Operating Budget
Prepare, adopt, and implement historic district design guidelines to insure appropriate scales, setbacks, materials, and signage are achieved	2009	\$5,000	City Planner	Operating Budget
Community Facilities				
Hire additional police staff to meet the need for increased patrolling in the area.	2009-2013	Unknown	Police Chief	Operating Budget
Develop a neighborhood watch system throughout the city's residential and commercial areas.	2010	N/A	Volunteers and Police Chief	N/A
Develop a partnership or secure an agreement with the campus security at Piedmont College to coordinate the effective protection of residents and students alike.	2009-2010	N/A	City Council and Police Chief	N/A
Complete the removal of the unsafe dam at Demorest Lake.	2009-2010	Unknown	City Council	Capital Budget
Implement measures identified in the County's 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to meet the City's long-term water supply needs.	2009-2013	Per adopted Plan	City Council/ City Manager	Per adopted Plan
Add an additional 6.9 MGD of capacity for water treatment to serve demand in 2030.	Long Range	Unknown	Public Works	Per adopted Plan

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Implement or participate in the implementation of water conservation programs.	2009-2013	N/A	Public Works	N/A
Review available sewerage capacity when permitting new developments within the City's limits.	2009-2013	N/A	City Planner	N/A
Develop a master plan for expanding the City's sewer system.	2011	\$30,000	Consultant	Water and Sewer Fund
Identify facility-sharing possibilities with Piedmont College and create a formal procedure for reserving and using those facilities to City and community-led events.	2009-2013	N/A	Volunteers	N/A
Identify and acquire additional land for festivals and events.	2013 or long range	Unknown	Downtown Coordinator	Capital Budget
Complete a needs assessment for community green spaces.	2011	\$15,000	Consultant	Operating Budget
Plan and install improvements to downtown park.	2009-2013	Per streetscape plan	Public Works	Capital Budget
Community Beautification and Enhancement – complete downtown streetscape improvements.	2009-2013	To be Determined	Volunteers	TEA Grant
Community Beautification and Enhancement – identify public spaces and rights of way that could benefit from additional trees or vegetation.	2009-2013	To be Determined	Volunteers	

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Community Beautification and Enhancement – install gateway improvements.	2009-2013	To be Determined	Contractors	Capital Budget
Review existing communication strategies with residents, and develop a plan for better connecting with community members.	2009	N/A	City Manager	N/A
Develop an official city website.	2009	\$5,000	City Manager	Operating Budget
Develop a streamlined system for community members to report alleged code violation.	2010	N/A	City Manager/ City Planner	N/A
Consider long-range needs for municipal administrative space, and plan for construction of a new city hall.	Long range	Unknown	City Manager or Consultant	Capital Budget
Intergovernmental Coordination				
Participate in the development and revision of the County Service Delivery Strategy.	2009	N/A	City Manager/ City Council	N/A
Reconsider, revise and readopt existing intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate	2009-2010	N/A	City Manager/ City Council	N/A
Develop an annexation policy to define when annexation is or is not in its best interest and to define its expectations for prospective developers.	2010	N/A	Volunteers	N/A

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Land Use				
Revise development regulations with an eye toward the preservation of natural resources.	2009	\$2,500	Consultant	Operating Budget
Develop a streamlined system for community members to report alleged code violations.	2009	No cost other than staff time	City Planner	Operating Budget
Prepare and adopt a zoning ordinance, replacing the city's land use ordinance.	2009	\$5,000	Consultant	Operating Budget
Transportation				
Complete pedestrian overpass between Piedmont College and the historic downtown commercial area.	2009-2010	Unknown	Public Works	Capital Budget; College
Install a traffic signal at the intersection of Central Avenue and Georgia Avenue.	2009-2010	\$150,000	Public Works	Capital Budget; Georgia DOT
Complete a local parking study.	2009-2010	\$15,000	Volunteers or City Planner	Operating Budget
Complete a walkability audit to determine the most effective locations for investing in sidewalk infrastructure.	2010	N/A	Volunteers	N/A
Develop a sidewalk installation and repair program and secure funding for its implementation.	2010	\$25,000 annually	Public Works	Capital Budget

9.6.2 City of Demorest Report of Accomplishments

The following table identifies the status of those items included in the City of Demorest 2003-2007 Short Term Work Program.

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Postponed</i>	<i>Dropped</i>	
Community Facilities					
Remodel Outside of City Hall		X			
Purchase Property and Construct New Police Department		X			
Construct New Shop for Water Department and Public Works Department		X			
Adding Additional Employee to Have a Full-time Fire Department		X			
Construct Watershed and Water Plant		X			
EPD-Required Renovations to Wastewater Plant		X			
Complete Programmed Road Resurfacing		X			
Revise Short-term Work Program		X			

10.2 Town of Mount Airy Issues and Opportunities

Effectively implementing Mt. Airy’s vision requires a well-defined implementation program. The first step in developing this implementation program is the identification of core community issues and opportunities. These topics form the basis for the community’s long and short-term action plan, which begins in Section 10.4 and is carried through to the Short Term Work Program, Section 10.6. Issues and opportunities were first drafted in the analysis phase of the Comprehensive Plan (see *Community Assessment*) and then later refined through public discussions, input from elected officials, and analysis by Comprehensive Planning staff. These items are organized under key planning areas:

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

10.2.1 Economic Development

1. **Commercial Development.** The town has a limited amount of light commercial. The city should work on attracting more of this type of development to the area, particularly to provide local residents/workers with convenient options for meeting basic needs. By making more services local, community members would spend less money on gas and re-funnel dollars into the town's economy.
2. **Revitalization of Downtown.** Other local municipalities have been successful in securing grant funds for revitalization and economic development projects. Mt. Airy has the opportunity to follow in their footsteps by developing a revitalization strategy and identifying potential grants to pursue to fund related efforts. This type of community investment will help the town attract tourism income and provide local residents the option of staying close to home rather than traveling to another jurisdiction for retail and services. Efforts should focus on downtown commercial and civic areas but should also incorporate elements to revitalize adjacent residential neighborhoods. The City has applied for a grant to develop a sidewalk system that link housing and commercial uses.
3. **Need for Professional Businesses.** Mt. Airy has a limited number of job opportunities. The Town should develop a strategy for attracting new businesses and employers to the area that help diversify the local economy. New businesses in the city would help improve the tax base and provide income for improvements in local services and facilities, including such needs as recreational facilities and infrastructure. When possible, more emphasis should be placed on low-impact, high-tech industries. The Town is currently working towards attracting businesses and light industry that will enhance the local economy and tax base.

10.2.2 Housing

1. **Greater Housing Diversity.** Housing diversity in the Town of Mt. Airy is limited. In 2000, about 25 percent of housing units were mobile homes/trailers and another 71 percent of units were detached single family residences. The quality of these two types of housing often varies greatly, suggesting that Mt. Airy has a disparity of housing for those people in the middle income range. Greater housing diversity may help improve the quality of housing for current and potential residents with low to moderate incomes, including the growing senior population. The addition of new subdivisions has helped diversify the community's housing options over recent years.
2. **Improved Housing Standards.** The Town has recently adopted new standards for housing, which are being enforced by the Town's building inspector. These efforts will help preserve the neighborhoods over time.

10.2.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

1. **Documentation of Historic Resources.** On the Natural, Archaeological, Historic Resources Geographic Information System (NAHRGIS) database, approximately 10 sites were identified as "appearing to meet National Register criteria" within the town limits of

Mt. Airy. A brief review of those resources should be conducted to identify exceptionally significant structures. The process to add them to the National Register of Historic Places should be undertaken.

2. **Mt. Airy School House.** The Town is currently making plans to convert the Mt. Airy School House into a usable site. Possible uses include converting it to a new city hall with a community center.

10.2.4 Community Facilities and Services

1. **Water Supply.** Sufficient water supply to keep pace with projected growth is an issue within Mt. Airy. The county and its municipalities have recently completed a 50-year Comprehensive Water Development Plan to study and address this issue. The findings of this plan estimate that the Town will need to add an additional 3.3 MGD of capacity to serve demand in 2030. Mt. Airy currently relies on a system of wells for their water supply. Although the Town is currently working on up-grading its well system, groundwater supplies are insufficient to fully meet future demand.
2. **Sewer Service.** The Town of Mt. Airy currently does not have a centralized sewer system. The town's population is projected to increase by approximately 1,000 residents or 150 percent by 2029. This will undoubtedly cause significant development pressures. To develop at densities greater than 1-acre lots, the town will be required to construct a sewer system or purchase capacity from neighboring jurisdictions. The City of Cornelia has plans to eventually run a sewer line into Mt. Airy. The Town should work with Cornelia to see these plans through.
3. **Increased Crime.** As the area's population has increased, Mt. Airy has been experiencing an increase in crime. To keep crime rates low, it may be necessary for the Town to look at adding additional staff to its police force. Limited funding for such additions may call for encouraging creative strategies for deterring and combating crime, such as neighborhood watch programs, increased lighting, and increased fines/penalties for violations. There are plans to extend police service hours as tax revenue dollars allow. These adjustments should help maintain low crime rates over time.
4. **Streamline Payment System for Community Services.** Currently, town residents receive multiple bills for services provided by the Town. Efforts to consolidate these bills should be made. The Town is looking into making these changes currently. Such efforts would limit paper waste, improve efficiency, and help ensure that residents and businesses receive all applicable bills in a timely manner.

10.2.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

No intergovernmental coordination issues and opportunities particular to Mount Airy along have been identified at this time. Please see countywide issues and opportunities for those that are applicable to all communities in the Habersham County.

10.2.6 Transportation

1. **Railroad Crossing Safety.** Mt. Airy needs to review the railroad crossings in the town periodically to see if any safety improvements are needed.

2. **Expansion of Pedestrian Facilities.** The town currently needs a sidewalk system, which should include a sidewalk installation and repair program, as well as funding sources. The Town has applied for a grant to help develop a pedestrian network that would link the town park, residential areas, and business sites. In addition, many pedestrian crossing locations lack safety improvements such as crosswalk striping, refuges, and signals.
3. **Multi-Use Trails.** Multi-use trails can be found within the Lake Russell Recreation Area. At this time these trails are not sufficiently maintained. Mt. Airy has the opportunity to work with park officials to improve the conditions of the trails and expand recreational opportunities for residents. The Town would eventually like to link this trail system with its planned pedestrian network.
4. **Coordination of Transportation Improvements and Land Use.** As additional growth comes to Mt. Airy, transportation improvements and surrounding land development should be coordinated. Particular emphasis should be given to making the core downtown roads, including Main Street, viable activity centers. Some ways of accomplishing this include creating pedestrian friendly walkways, smart parking design, and safe intersections for both cars and pedestrians.

10.2.7 Land Use

1. **Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement is Needed.** There are many instances of code violations within the town. Violations bring down the property values of adjacent properties and contribute to neighborhood decline. The Town has recently adopted new housing regulations. Measures should be taken to ensure that new and old codes are enforced.
2. **Infill Development.** Mount Airy has limited infrastructure and a need to revitalize its downtown. With this in mind, the Town should encourage infill development, including infill housing over greenfield development when possible. Mt. Airy should look into the feasibility of providing incentives to businesses that locate in areas where infrastructure and development already exist.
3. **Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Growth.** The Town needs to develop a capital improvement program that is coordinated with the future land use plan to insure that new development is provided with adequate services and does not put a burden on existing residents and facilities. In particular, the Town should make sure that road infrastructure precedes housing development.
4. **Lack of Tree Ordinance.** Through the visioning process, community members regularly highlighted the importance of preserving the town's existing trees. A tree ordinance is needed to prevent the clear-cutting of lots for development. The town currently has no mechanism to preserve existing trees on developing parcels. Without tree ordinances new subdivisions are often devoid of mature trees and require decades for the establishment of tree canopy.
5. **Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Traditional neighborhood developments may not be viable in every context, but they should be required when developing adjacent to or within the Main Street District, identified on the Future Development Map.

10.3 Future Development in Mt. Airy

10.3.1 Introduction

The Future Development Map is a vital tool that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in the Town of Mt. Airy. The Future Development Map is on the community's vision for the future and was developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level and includes the entire area within and surrounding the town. Some of these character areas also cross over into unincorporated Habersham County in an effort to reduce land use and development conflicts at town's limits. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

Like Habersham County, the Town of Mt. Airy elected not to complete a Future Land Use Map, the map associated with previous comprehensive planning processes. Traditionally, future land use maps were short range planning tools which tied the desired land uses of the community's future vision to a jurisdiction's zoning or land development. Text has been included in the Character Area Narratives accompanying the Future Development Map to provide this guidance. If a Future Land Use map is not subsequently developed and adopted, the guiding language of the town's zoning ordinance must be amended to directly relate zoning decisions to the Future Development Map.

10.3.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Habersham County and its municipalities, including the Town of Mt. Airy. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the town. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The town's character areas are described and defined individually in the following narratives and are mapped in Figure 8-1.

The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

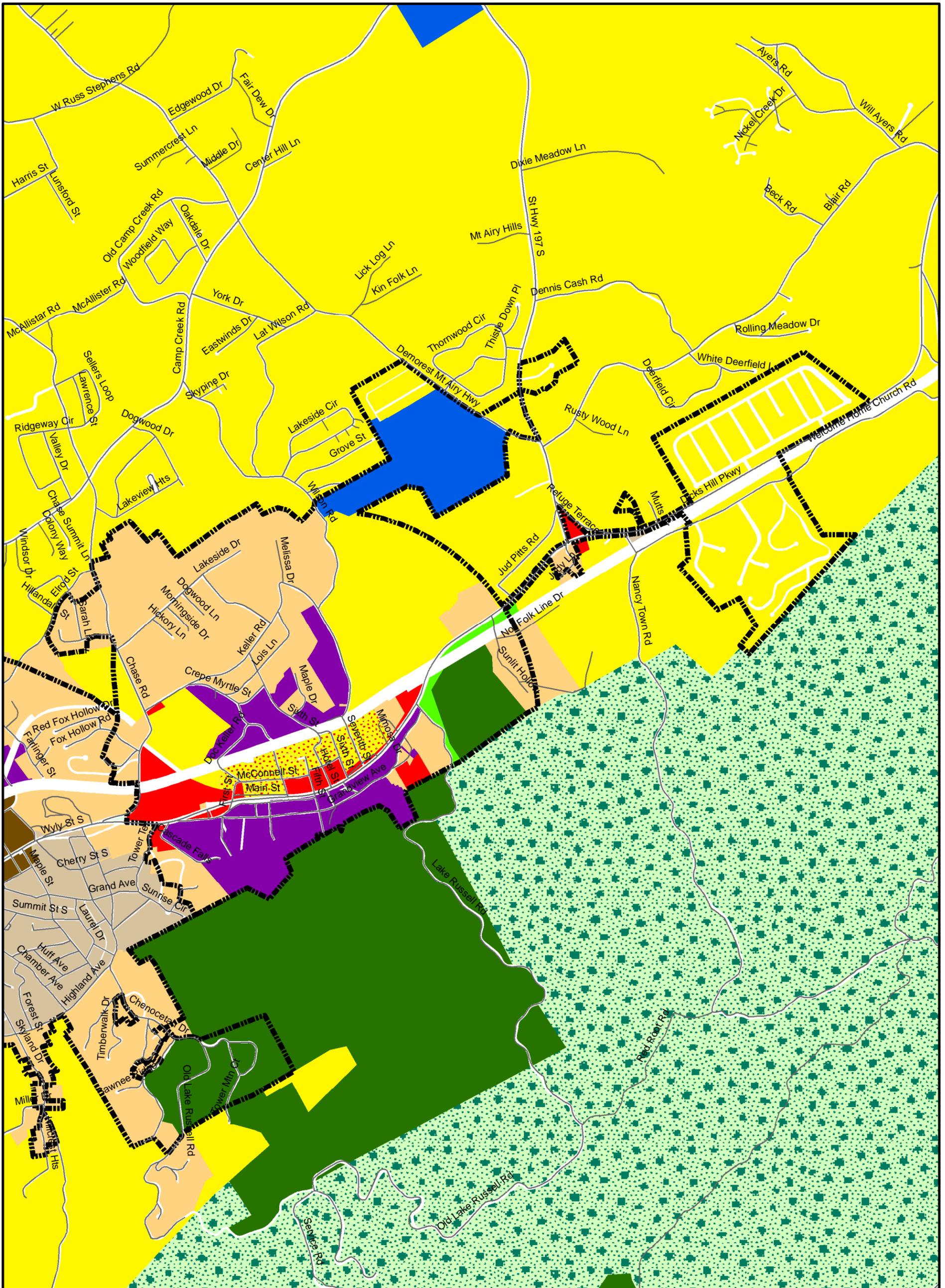
- Siting and configuration of lots.

Town of Mt. Airy Community Agenda

- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county and municipalities.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for changes to development regulations and development of design guidelines where appropriate.



**Habersham County 2029
Comprehensive Plan**

*Figure 10-1: City of Mt. Airy
Future Development*



Future Development

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Resource Conservation | Revitalization Area |
| Greenway | Education Center |
| Developing Residential | Commercial |
| Stable Neighborhood | Downtown |
| Mixed Residential | Industrial/Institutional |
| Historic Area | |

- State & Federal Highways
- Local Roads
- National Forest
- City Limits



May 2008

Revitalization Area

Existing Character Description: These areas are located south of Grandview Avenue and in the area bounded by Sixth and Seventh Avenues. They are neighborhoods that have most of their original housing stock in place, but where housing conditions are worsening due to low rates of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance.

Vision for the Area: Through community based efforts this area will become a vital and stable residential neighborhood with a variety of affordable housing options and supportive commercial uses.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Attach and detached single-family residential uses, including mobile and manufactured housing, and neighborhood serving commercial uses.

Zoning Classifications: The areas in this neighborhood are presently zoned for residential use, however the area can be rezoned to allow higher density residential development and commercial uses if needed to allow for growth or improvement.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage strategic public investments to improve conditions.



- Allow appropriate infill development
- Encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.
- The town will purchase vacant properties in the neighborhood and offer them to developers willing to provide architecturally compatible infill development.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Options.

Commercial

Existing Character Description: The commercial areas of Mt. Airy are comprised of the lands on both sides of the town's high-volume roadways, Old 123, Nancy Town Road and State Hwy 197.

Vision for the Area: These areas will be thriving commercial corridors with a variety of retail and service uses appropriate for serving the needs and providing employment options for Mt. Airy residents.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Retail and service uses.

Zoning Classifications: Commercial.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - The town will install curbs and drainage ditches as appropriate to facilitate stormwater management.
 - Provide paved shoulders that can be used by bicycles or as emergency breakdown lanes.
 - Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to developments.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Appropriate Businesses.
- Employment Options.
- Environmental Protection.

Developing Residential

Existing Character Description: These are areas where pressures for the typical types of residential subdivision development are greatest (due to the availability of water service). Without intervention, these areas are likely to evolve with low pedestrian orientation and street patterns lacking connectivity. These areas are located adjacent to Demorest-Mt. Airy highway and in the northeast quadrant of the town.

Vision for the Area: These areas will develop into family-oriented residential subdivisions with recreational amenities and neighborhood serving commercial uses to enhance the quality of life of residents.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential and neighborhood scaled commercial uses.

Zoning Classifications: These areas are zoned for residential use. Areas can be rezoned for commercial if necessary.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Develop and adopt a traditional neighborhood development (TND) district ordinance to promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions.
 - New development should be a master-planned with mixed-uses, blending residential development.



There should be strong connectivity and continuity between developments.

- Pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services will be required as well as street connectivity within new developments and connectivity of residential areas to adjacent properties/subdivisions.
- New residential development will have multiple access points to promote connectivity and reduce concentrated traffic congestion.
- Require street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- The existing tree canopy will be preserved through the adoption of a tree preservation ordinance that will apply to residential property development.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Options.
- Environmental Protection.
- Transportation Alternatives.
- Growth Preparedness.

Greenway

Existing Character Description: This area is found adjacent to US 123 from the town's boundary to Lake Russell Road and is comprised of the undeveloped land paralleling the roadways.

Vision for the Future: This green gateway into the town will be maintained and preserved so as to provide delineation between the town and the unincorporated county

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Open space and commercial uses.

Zoning Classifications: Commercial, Conservation.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Enact guidelines for new development that preserves the scenic value of the corridor, such as the requirement of thick buffers of natural vegetation between development and the roadways while allowing for commercial growth.



Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Environmental Protection.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Growth Preparedness.

Mixed Residential

Existing Character Description: This area is found in central Mt. Airy along Crepe Myrtle Street and Keller Road. The area contains a mix of income levels and types of housing units including both single family and multi-family.

Vision for the Future: A neighborhood having relatively well-maintained housing possessing a distinct identity through architectural style, lot and street design, and has higher rates of home-ownership.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Single-family residential uses.

Zoning Classifications: Residential

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage a variety of housing types including apartments, town homes, and single residences.
 - Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.
 - Reinforce neighborhood stability by encouraging more homeownership and the maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.



- Support the development of architecturally compatible infill housing on vacant properties in the neighborhood.
- Pursue options for the development of a well-designed new neighborhood activity center to provide a focal point for the neighborhood, as well as appropriately-scaled retail establishments serving neighborhood residents.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Housing Options.

Resource Conservation

Existing Character Description: This area is comprised of the portion of the Lake Russell Recreation Area found within the town's boundaries. These areas include undeveloped, natural lands with significant natural features including scenic views, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, watersheds and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development.

Vision for the Area: This area is in the National Forest, there are no plans to develop this area.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Conservation, passive recreation, U.S. Federal Forest

Zoning Classifications: N/A.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Maintain natural, rural character by prohibiting new development and promoting use of conservation easements.
 - Widen roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary and then carefully design widening so that the roadway



alterations have minimal visual impact.

- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Environmental Protection.

Stable Neighborhood

Existing Character Description: These areas are found in newly annexed portions of the Town along US 123, Demorest Mt. Airy Highway, and Chase Road. The areas contain typical suburban residential development

Vision for the Area: A vibrant residential community that maintains its value over time.

Appropriate Land Uses and Zoning Classifications:

Land Uses: Residential

Zoning Classifications: Residential.

Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Encourage new development in this area to better conform with traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles.
 - Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.



- Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walk-ability within existing neighborhoods.
- Permit accessory housing units, or new well-designed, small-scale infill multi-family residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Sense of Place.
- Housing Options.
- Infill Development.
- Traditional Neighborhoods.

Education Center

Existing Character Description: This area, bordering on Demorest- Mt. Airy Road, is currently vacant land owned by the Board of Education.

Vision for the Area: The vision for this area is to create an appropriate environment around a new elementary school. The impact of automobiles on pedestrian and bicycle traffic is minimized by constructing sidewalks and bicycle paths to connect campus areas to surrounding neighborhoods. Limited retail and office development is encouraged that complements school needs. Development strategies are coordinated between local governments and the School System. School traffic is coordinated with local traffic to mitigate congestion. Development is compact in form centered around the school campus cluster.

Appropriate Land Uses: Residential and commercial uses appropriate for locating next to an elementary school. Businesses such as neighborhood stores, small restaurants, and service stations are encouraged.



Implementation Strategies:

- Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2008 Habersham County Comprehensive Plan including:
 - Zone land adjacent to the new school, allowing only residential and commercial uses appropriate to that area.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Area:

- Educational Opportunities.
- Growth Preparedness.

10.4 Town of Mount Airy Implementation Strategies

Introduction

The following Implementation Strategies address the issues and opportunities raised in Section 10.2. Action items are identified as well as an estimated timeframe for their completion. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (one to five years), or Long-Range (more than 5 years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this Plan, which are also included with each action item. These Implementation Strategies are also connected to the Short-Term Work Programs of the Town of Mount Airy (Section 10.6) – linking appropriate short-term items to the 2009 to 2029 Short-Term Work Program. *Please also see Countywide Implementation Strategies, which are also applicable to Mount Airy as well as all other jurisdictions participating in this plan.*

Jurisdictions and Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Abbreviation	Responsible Party/Partner
CoHA	Cornelia Housing Authority
CoPD	Cornelia Police Department
Cornelia	Cornelia (City of)
Demorest	Demorest (City of)
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GDATE	Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education
GDCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
GDED	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD)
Habersham	Habersham County
HCCC	Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
HCHS	Habersham County Historical Society
HCIDA	Habersham County Industrial Development Authority
HCPD	Habersham County Planning Department
HCRoD	Habersham County Roads Department
HCSD	Habersham County Sheriff's Department
HCWD	Habersham County Water Department
MAPD	Mt. Airy Police Department
Mt. Airy	Mount Airy (Town of)
NEGHA	Northeast Georgia Housing Authority
NGTC	North Georgia Technical College
NPS	National Park Service
NTHP	National Trust for Historic Preservation
NSR	Norfolk Southern Corporation
Path	The Path Foundation
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TPL	The Trust for Public Land

10.4.1 Economic Development

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Commercial Development.
2. Revitalization of Downtown.
3. Need for Professional Businesses.

Mt. Airy’s small size and limited population curb its economic development capabilities. Some of the town’s best assets are its people and small-town feel. With this in mind, economic development efforts should focus on revitalizing the core Main Street District and strengthening business recruitment efforts.

ED-1. Commercial Development

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Survey community members to determine services that would be best supported by the local economy.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCCC</i>
Review and strengthen the Town’s strategy for attracting desired services and commercial businesses.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCCC</i>

ED-2. Revitalization of Downtown

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop incentives to help attract developers and businesses to downtown area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA GDED HCCC</i>
Complete a downtown redevelopment plan to help with the revitalization of the Main Street District.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA GDED</i>
Work with GDOT and other transportation partners to identify funding programs to help make the portion of US 123 in downtown more conducive for a downtown area. Improvements may include traffic calming devices, sidewalk infrastructure, and streetscape improvements. The City has applied for a sidewalks grant to help pay for some of these improvements.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDOT HCRoD</i>

ED-3. Need for Professional Businesses.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop incentives to help attract developers and businesses to downtown area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDED</i>

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Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop stronger partnership with North Georgia Technical College to connect local residents with training opportunities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDATE NGTC</i>
Choose businesses to support and recruit in the downtown area by analyzing local resources and needs. The Town should work closely with the City of Cornelia and other County agencies to identify a specialization that fits well with the area's overall economic development plan.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>Cornelia HCIDA HCPD</i>

10.4.2 Housing

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Greater Housing Diversity.
2. Improved Housing Standards

With a diversifying population, Mt. Airy should focus on diversifying its housing stock during the planning period. Part of these efforts should include preserving the Town's existing housing stock.

H-1. Greater Housing Diversity

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review manufactured housing regulations and update as determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	
Develop a home repair and assistance program to help preserve the Town's existing housing stock. The Town should work closely with relevant state and local agencies to make such programs feasible.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>NEGHA CoHA</i>
Encourage conservation of land within new subdivisions by creating incentives for developers to permanently set aside land for park space, trails, etc.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>TNC NPS</i>
Review existing development regulations for impediments to developing a diverse housing stock. Amend development regulations as determined appropriate.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA GMRDC</i>

H-2. Improved Housing Standards.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Consistently enforce housing regulations to maintain the character of existing communities. These efforts should be coordinated with regular patrolling and building inspector responsibilities, if possible.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>MAPD</i>

10.4.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Documentation of Historic Resources.
2. Mt. Airy School House.

Most of Mt. Airy’s natural and cultural resource strategies are shared with the county. The below strategy will help maintain Mt. Airy’s character and potentially, over time, help bring additional resources to the community.

NCR-1. Documentation of Historic Resources

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review those sites listed on the NAHRGIS website for those worth pursuing as National Register of Historic Places sites and work with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to pursue their designation. This designation could lead to some tourist traffic and also open up new funding channels for the repair of existing resources.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCHS GHPD NTHP</i>
Develop marketing/educational materials of town’s historical resources for community members and tourists.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCHS GDED</i>

NCR-2. Mt. Airy School House

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Begin renovations of the Mt. Airy School House.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	
Identify and apply for funding sources to pay for the conversion of the Mt. Airy School Site.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA GCF</i>

10.4.4 Community Facilities and Services

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Water Supply.
2. Sewer Service.
3. Increased Crime.
4. Streamline Payment System for Community Services.

The Town’s most important implementation strategies over the planning period revolve around monitoring, updating, and improving existing infrastructure systems. Streamlining other community services will also help avoid tax increases to continue the Town’s existing level of service to its residents.

CFS-1. Water Supply.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete upgrades to existing well system.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	
Develop a strategy and funding sources for connecting with other area water systems to alleviate dependence the town’s systems of wells. The Town is already connected with the cities of Demorest and Cornelia for emergency use. By extending this service to include non-emergency sources, the Town will be better prepared to support potential businesses locating in the community.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCWD Cornelia Demorest</i>
Monitor wells regularly to assure that the town’s water quality remains healthy as growth occurs in the town and surrounding areas.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GEPD</i>

CFS-2. Sewer Service

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with Cornelia to implement existing plans to extend the City’s sewerage system to Mt. Airy.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>Cornelia Demorest Habersham</i>
Monitor new septic tank and related technology and adjust septic system requirements as determined appropriate to preserve the quality of the town’s underground water supply.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GEPD</i>
Complete an inventory of appropriate businesses that can operate efficiently without a sewerage system.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>HCIDA</i>

CFS-3. Increased Crime.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Implement plans to extend police patrolling to a 24-hour service.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>MAPD</i>
Develop a neighborhood watch system throughout the town's residential and commercial areas.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>MAPD</i>
Communicate regularly with other adjacent law enforcement efforts to identify areas for collaboration.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>MAPD</i>	<i>HCSD CoPD</i>
Work on developing a partnership with the Cornelia Police Department to address issues occurring along the city/town border.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>MAPD</i>	<i>CoPD</i>

CSF-4. Streamline Payment System for Community Services

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Complete an analysis of the existing payment systems for services provided to both businesses and residents of the town. Part of the analysis should include input from community members.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>Demorest</i>
Implement changes to the payment system as recommended by the payment system study.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>Demorest</i>

10.4.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

Please see the Countywide Implementation Strategies for a full list of strategies that affect all jurisdictions participating in this plan.

10.4.6 Transportation

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Railroad Crossing Safety.
2. Expansion of Pedestrian Facilities.
3. Multi-Use Trails.
4. Coordination of Transportation Improvements and Land Use.

Transportation improvements are some of the biggest and most costly needs that a community faces over time. The strategies outlined below should help ensure that the Town's transportation system becomes safer and more focused on multi-modal methods over time.

T-1. Railroad Crossing Safety.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Review railroad crossings on a regular basis and make needed repairs and improvements as appropriate.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDOT NS</i>

T-2. Expansion of Pedestrian Facilities

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a sidewalk installation and repair program.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	
Identify funding sources for future improvements the pedestrian network.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDOT</i>

T-3. Multi-Use Trails.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Work with appropriate Federal and local partners to complete a needs assessment for trail repairs at the Lake Russell Recreation Area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>NPS</i>	<i>Mt. Airy Cornelia Path</i>
Develop a strategy for connecting existing trails with planned sidewalk networks and potential trail systems in Mt. Airy, neighboring Cornelia, and approaching county trails.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>NPS Cornelia Path</i>

T-4. Coordination of Transportation Improvements and Land Use.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Consult the Future Development Map and Future Land Use Plan when making road improvement and development decisions.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDOT HCRoD</i>
Develop a transportation strategy for the Main Street District when completing revitalization plans the Main Street District.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDED GDOT</i>

10.4.7 Land Use

Issues and Opportunities Addressed

1. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement is Needed.
2. Infill Development.
3. Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Growth.
4. Lack of Tree Ordinance.
5. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.

A notable portion of Mt. Airy’s land mass is part of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Land use strategies over the next 20 years should focus on the utilization of existing resources and infrastructure and preserve the town’s natural beauty and resources.

LU-1. Consistent and Effective Code Enforcement is Needed.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Enact community design standards to ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the character of the community. These standards will help code enforcement officials identify code violations more easily.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA</i>
Develop a stream-lined system for community members to report alleged code violation. As an element of this, create a consistent response system, increasing the validity of the community’s code enforcement procedures.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>MAPD</i>

LU-2. Infill Development.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA</i>
Develop incentives to help attract developers and businesses to downtown area.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDED HCIDA</i>

LU-3. Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Growth.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a capital improvement program to coordinate infrastructure with projected growth in the town. Coordinate the capital improvement program with updates to the Town’s Short Term Work Program.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	

LU-4. Lack of Tree Ordinance.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop a tree ordinance to preserve the tree cover in the town. The ordinance should include a tree replacement clause for sites where tree preservation is not possible.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GEPD GFC</i>

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Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Identify public spaces and rights of way that could benefit from additional trees or vegetation. Over time, work with state and local agencies to identify cost-effective ways to increase tree cover in areas where tree loss has already occurred.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>TPL GDNR GFC</i>

LU-5. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Action Item	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Partners
Develop an infill development program to encourage infill development in areas of the community where infrastructure already exists. This program should include development incentives and improvements to existing infrastructure when funds are available.	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA</i>
Review and amend town's development regulations to support mixed-use developments and neighborhood commercial in appropriate areas of the community. Utilize the Future Development Map when making decisions on such development types.	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Mt. Airy</i>	<i>GDCA</i>

10.5 Town of Mount Airy Policies

General policies are designed and adopted to reflect and represent the community's vision and priorities, confirmed during the planning process. These general policies are constructed to reflect the values of Mt. Airy residents and other contributors to the community's vitality. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Community Vision and addressing the Community's Issues and Opportunities. These policies will guide day-to-day decisions of Town officials and are intended to be general in nature, reflecting city-wide needs. The general policies will be referenced in staff reports and will play a guiding role in permitting decisions, rezoning, and budget preparation. Geographic-based policies are included in Section 10.3 as a part of the description of the Future Development Map.

Similar to the Issues and Opportunities section, the following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

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

10.5.1 Economic Development

- We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our community's economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.
- We will target reinvestment to declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference to new economic development projects in Greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of our community.
- We will seek to balance the supply of housing and employment in our community and consider their location in relation to each other.
- We will take into account access to housing and impacts on transportation when considering economic development projects.
- We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.
- We will consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will continue to recognize and support the key role of area educational

institutions in our economic development practices.

10.5.2 Housing

- We will eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.
- We will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- We will create affordable housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community.
- We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
- We will accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in each neighborhood.
- We will encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (homeownership).
- We will increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.
- We support dispersion of assisted housing throughout the community in order to diversify neighborhoods and eliminate pockets of poverty.

10.5.3 Natural and Cultural Resources

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- We will minimize inefficient land consumption and encourage more compact urban development in order to preserve green open space and natural resource areas.
- We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- We will factor potential impacts on air and water quality in making decisions on new developments and transportation improvements.
- Infrastructure networks will be developed to steer new development away from sensitive natural resource areas.
- We will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new development.
- We will promote low impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites.
- We will work to redirect development pressure away from agricultural areas in order to conserve farmland to protect and preserve this important component of our community.
- We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.
- We will promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.
- We will help preserve our community's heritage by supporting the preservation of our built environment and community traditions.

10.5.4 Community Facilities and Services

- Our community will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.
- We will protect existing infrastructure investments (i.e., already paid for) by encouraging infill redevelopment, and compact development patterns.
- We will ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.
- We will limit development within our community to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure.
- We will ensure that capital improvements needed to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.
- We will coordinate provision of public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact urban development.
- The community will use sequential, phased extension of utilities and services to encourage rational expansion of development to areas immediately contiguous to already developed areas of the community.
- Our community will use planned infrastructure expansion to support development in areas identified (in the comprehensive plan) as suitable for such development.
- The community will 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.
- We will invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.
- We will work with the local school board to encourage school location decisions that support the community's overall growth and development plans.

10.5.5 Intergovernmental Coordination

- We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection)
- We will pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions
- We will consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- We will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.
- We will engage in cooperative planning between the local government and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities.

10.5.6 Transportation

- We will make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.
- We will target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the community (recognizing that ready availability of transportation creates demand for land development in adjacent areas).

- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be appropriately designed, using context sensitive design considerations, to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be designed to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, as well as local vehicular circulation.
- We support creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- We will encourage new development that supports and ties in well with existing and planned public transit options in the community.
- We will ensure (through traffic calming and other design considerations) that excessive vehicular traffic will not harm the peaceful nature of our residential neighborhoods.

10.5.7 Land Use

- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.
- We want development whose design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- Our community will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
- We will preserve the rural character of our community and provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the community.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- We will encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- We are committed to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community, where people have easy access to schools, parks, and necessary services (grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important to our community.
- We are committed to providing pleasant, accessible public gathering places and parks throughout the community.
- We are committed to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas within our community in preference to new development in Greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of the community.
- We support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
- We encourage mixed-use developments that are human-scale and less auto-oriented.
- We support increases in residential density in areas where community design standards, environmental constraints and available infrastructure capacities can satisfactorily accommodate the increased density.
- We support new land uses that contribute to protecting the environment and preserving meaningful open space.
- We support new land uses that enhance housing options in our community.

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- We will encourage development of a rational network of commercial nodes (villages, or activity centers) to meet the service needs of citizens while avoiding unattractive and inefficient strip development along major roadways.
- We are open to land planning and development concepts that may be new to our area but have been tried successfully in other places.

10.6.1 Town of Mt. Airy Short Term Work Program 2009-2013

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve the community’s vision for the Town of Mt. Airy.

Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Economic Development				
COMPLETE COMMUNITY SURVEY	2009	\$2,000	Mt. Airy/ HCCC	GENERAL FUND
DEVELOP INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT BUSINESSES	2009	\$2,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND
DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN	2010	\$25,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND / DCA GRANTS
INVENTORY OF APPROPRIATE BUSINESSES	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Mt. Airy Town Administration	NA
Housing				
REVIEW HOUSING REGULATIONS	2009	\$10,000	Mt. Airy Administration / Consultant	GENERAL FUND / DCA GRANTS
DEVELOP CODE ENFORCEMENT	2010	\$50,000	Mt. Airy, GDCA	GENERAL FUND
CREATION OF LAND CONSERVATION HOUSING INCENTIVES	2010	\$10,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration / Consultant	GENERAL FUND

Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Natural and Cultural Resources				
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES DESIGNATIONS	ongoing	\$8,000 ech.	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND/ GRANTS/ PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS
SCHOOLHOUSE RENOVATIONS	2013	\$500,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND/GRANTS
Community Facilities and Services				
SPRING CLEAN-UP WEEK	ongoing	\$2,000 PER YEAR	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND
REPLACE OLD WATER METERS	ongoing	\$2,000 PER YEAR	Mt. Airy Town Administration	WATER FUND
SIGN MAINTENANCE	ongoing	\$ 500 PER YEAR	Mt. Airy Town Administration	STREET FUND
PARK IMPROVEMENTS	ongoing	\$1,000 PER YEAR	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND
UPGRADE 6" WATER LINE	2009	\$500,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	WATER FUND/GRANTS
REPLACE 2" METAL LINES	2010	\$100,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	WATER FUND/GRANTS
CEMENTARY IMPROVEMENTS	ongoing	\$2,000 PER YEAR	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND
UPGRADE WELLS	2009	\$50,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	WATER FUND
POLICED 24 HOURS	2009	\$50,000	Mt. Airy/ Police Department	GENERAL FUND

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Activity	Years	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SYSTEM	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Mt. Airy/ Police Department	NA
ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PAYMENT SYSTEMS	2009	N/A to be completed by staff & elected officials	Mt. Airy Town Administration	NA
Transportation				
REPAIR SIDEWALKS	2011	\$100,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration	GENERAL FUND/GRANT
TRANSPORTATION STUDY FOR MAIN STREET DISTRICT	2010	\$25,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration / Consultant	GENERAL FUND/GRANT
SIDEWALK INSTALLATION AND REPAIR PROGRAM	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Mt. Airy Town Administration	NA
Land Use				
DEVELOP A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM	2012	\$5,000	Mt. Airy, GEPD, GFC	GENERAL FUND
DEVELOP A TREE ORDINANCE	2009	N/A to be completed by staff	Mt. Airy Town Administration / Other Habersham Co. governments	NA
REVIEW AND AMEND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS	2009	\$50,000	Mt. Airy Town Administration / consultant	GENERAL FUND / GRANTS

10.6.2 Town of Mt. Airy Report of Accomplishments

The following table identifies the status of those items included in the Town of Mt. Airy 2003-2007 Short Term Work Program.

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Dropped	
Spring Clean-Up Week	X				Ongoing, Completed Every Year
Water Lines Mapped	X				
Water System Maintenance		X			Carried Over to Short Term Work Program
Well Metering	X				
Replace Water Meters		X			Carried Over to Short Term Work Program
Storm Drains		X			Included with Water System Improvements
Traffic Sign Maintenance		X			Carried Over to Short Term Work Program
Street Cleaning Service		X			
Paint Railroad Underpasses	X				
Paint City Hall	X				Vinyl Sidings
Park Improvements, Refurbish Caboose	X				
Purchase Small Truck	X				
Resurface Cascade Falls Road	X				
Joint Effort to Combine Water and Sewer with Demorest and Cornelia via Habersham County & Sewer Authority		X			

Project	Implementation				Status Notes
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Postponed</i>	<i>Dropped</i>	
Renovate City Hall			X		City Hall Being Moved to New Location in Future
Phase I: Replace All 2" Galvanized Water Lines	X				
Phase II: Replace All Deteriorated Galvanized Water Lines Larger Than 2"			X		Postponed Due to Lack of Money
Nominate Old School to the National Register				X	Not Enough Community Interest

11 Supporting Plans

Supporting plans are an optional addition to the Community Agenda that focus on special areas, situations or issues of importance to the community. The supporting plans represent how community agencies will coordinate with Habersham County as it grows and realizes its visions for the future. They also outline the visions of different community agencies and their individual actions and contributions in executing the community's comprehensive plan.



11.1 VISION STATEMENT

OVERALL VISION OF THE HABERSHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

To create a positive business climate that will enhance the quality of life in our area.

TOURISM

Continue to increase marketing efforts for Habersham County as a tourism destination.
Educate Chamber members and general public on the importance of tourist hospitality.
Update as needed brochures on dining, lodging and shopping information.
Continue advertising campaign.
Send information on Habersham County to major regional magazines and television programs.
Educate community on the importance of tourism hospitality and tourism as economic Development.
Continue support of Maudlin House Visitor's Center.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monitor and keep SPLOST funds on track.
Communicate the importance of good economic development to the community.
Continue to work on Industrial Park and recruitment of new industry.
Continue and improve existing industry support.
Coordinate opportunities for industrial development in the county with state and utility managers.

Help educate the community on the economic benefits of existing businesses and facilities such as the Aquatic Center and Habersham County Medical Center.
Promote the need for a balanced tax base.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Understand and address the needs of the business community.
Continue implementation of Entrepreneur Friendly plan for the county.
Support the Clarkesville and Cornelia Downtown Merchants' Associations
Support festivals – Mountain Laurel, Big Red Apple, Demorest 4th of July and Chattahoochee Mountain Fair.
Continue support for the Adult Leadership program.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Educate business leaders as to how they can use the US Congress and Georgia Legislature to influence issues in their companies.
Assist and be involved in enhancing the relationship between elected officials and the community.
Communicate through the Chamber newsletter potential issues affecting business climate.

EDUCATION

Provide opportunities for youth to stay or return to Habersham County to live and work.
Promote vocational education in the schools and community.
Support quality educational services through community involvement and encouragement.
Continue support of Youth Leadership Program at Habersham Central High School.
Continue support of STAR Student/Teacher program.
Continue support of GOAL program.
Continue support of Youth Leadership Program.

AGRI-BUSINESS

Protect agriculture industry in Habersham County and promote agri-tourism.
Encourage and develop communications with agri-businesses.
Support agricultural opportunities for the youth of Habersham County.
Co-sponsor Farm/City Week with Farm Bureau.
Participate in Kids' Fun & Farm Week in September.
Coordinate with Governmental Affairs committee youth trip to the capital.
Work closely with Tourism committee promoting agri-tourism.

11.2 Habersham County Medical Center



Vision Statement

Habersham County Medical Center will be recognized by the residents, employers and leaders of its service area as the preferred provider of health care services. The hospital will be seen a model community hospital, providing excellent primary and defined secondary care services and integrating its programs with those of other health care organizations. Habersham County Medical Center will thereby promote the best possible care at the lowest possible cost. Important to this vision will be increased market share and reliance on Habersham County Medical Center's services, along with continued financial viability. To achieve the vision, Habersham County Medical Center will strive continuously to improve its present high quality inpatient, outpatient, emergency and long-term care services, and will seek to develop new ones in accordance with community need.

11.3 Habersham County School System

Vision/Mission/Beliefs

The Habersham County School System has had a formal vision/mission/beliefs in place since 1998 when a team of school and system employees met to formulate statements and concepts that accurately reflected the beliefs, hopes, and aspirations of the school system. The formulated ideas were shared with school system staff at each facility, and opportunities were provided for suggestions and revisions. Each year since that time, the system has revisited the statements at least annually, or as necessary. In the 2006-07 school year, the vision/mission/beliefs were reviewed and revised three times. These changes were made based on growth in the system enrollment, changes in the demographic scenario, and accomplishment of system goals and objectives. In November, staff made the decision to rework the system vision so that it was more concise and understandable. The vision/mission/beliefs will continue to be a work in progress for the system so long as it is making progress towards its vision.

The school system vision/mission/beliefs are posted on the system website, and this set of statements provides the base for all decision making in the school system. Resources are allocated on the basis of activities and purchases tying to the vision/mission/beliefs and supporting the school improvement plan. All meetings at schools and at the system level serve as times to reiterate the system's vision/mission/beliefs and to talk about how the work being discussed can perpetuate its vision and goals. Comments are sought from staff members, parents, and community representatives routinely as the Board of Education and Superintendent meets with them in monthly linkage session or staff meetings. A comment box on the website provides a venue for comments regarding the vision/mission/beliefs as well as other activities of the school system.

Vision (Revised May 2007)

The Habersham County School System will be a learning organization that is open and inviting and composed of competent, caring individuals that value life-long learning and the worth and dignity of all people. It will deliver a rigorous, stimulating curriculum that is standards-based, student-centered, and focused on results which will enable all students to reach their maximum potential and become productive citizens able to compete in an international community. Teachers will be empowered to be inventors and creators of student work which is engaging, challenging, compelling, meaningful, and results in high quality learning.

The Habersham County School System will provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained, and safe facilities with those conditions and support systems that ensure an optimal student learning experience. It will cooperate with the family, community, social services, business, and

government entities as they work together to meet the needs of children and to plan, develop, and evaluate educational programs and services.

Mission (Revised May 2007)

The mission of the Habersham County Schools System is to provide quality experiences for its students and employees.

Motto (Revised August 2007)

Students ➡ Learners ➡ Leaders

We will succeed by:

Meeting or exceeding the needs of our students and other stakeholders. Continually improving our processes, products and services. Demanding quality from each other. Empowering each other to take responsibility for customer concerns and ideas. Working together as a team. Learning from our mistakes. Valuing and rewarding each others' efforts.

System Beliefs (Revised May 2007)

- We believe the ability of students to learn is limitless if given the right environment, a competent teacher with high expectations, and opportunities to experience success through challenging work.
- We believe the purpose of schools is to create quality work for students that will result in all students being successful and experiencing a sense of satisfaction as they acquire knowledge, skills, and understanding that society believes to be important.
- We believe the factors that determine the opportunity to learn include a safe, encouraging and nurturing environment; competent leaders; work that is challenging, engaging, meaningful and relevant; high expectations; involved, concerned, and supportive parents/caregivers.
- We believe the role of the family and community in relation to students and in relation to schools is to provide support. It takes everyone working together and being committed to student success.
- We believe the kind of society for which children are being prepared is a global, information-based society that is rapidly changing and requires creative thinkers and problem solvers.

Supporting Plans

- We believe the focus of school activity is to engage students in meaningful, real-life learning experiences that will produce quality results, meet student and societal needs, and prepare them to be life-long learners.
- We believe the rules, roles, and relationships that should govern behavior within schools, between schools and the district-level office, and between schools and the community should be a collaborative effort based on trust and agreed upon by consensus with the goal of doing what is best for all children.
- We believe the obligation of the system to employees and the role of the system in encouraging and supporting improvement is to provide leadership, professional learning, support and encouragement, focus on vision, resources, and commitment to change in an environment of trust in order to achieve the system's mission.

11.4 North Georgia Technical College

11.4.1 Vision

Our vision is that North Georgia Tech will be the preferred provider of technical and adult education, offering quality education and training in convenient locations at a cost its customers can afford. Programs and services will help individuals to succeed as they enter a workforce where the work environment is highly technological yet demands sensitivity to human needs. The college's faculty and staff will be recognized as leaders in workforce development and will be competent to meet the various needs of North Georgia Tech's customers.

We envision a community climate of continuous learning that provides a diversified student population with the opportunity to obtain an education in non-traditional settings and on non-traditional schedules. Collaboration with other institutions, agencies, and organizations will provide our customers with the highest quality of services in the most cost-efficient way.

11.4.2 Mission

North Georgia Technical College is a public, residential, multi-campus, two-year technical college whose mission is to provide quality technical education, adult literacy education, continuing education, and business and industry training to individuals who can benefit from these programs and services. These efforts improve the quality of life of individuals by preparing them to succeed as literate and technically competent members of the workforce and by promoting the economic growth and development of the Northeast Georgia region. The college offers both traditional and distance learning courses that lead to the certificate, the diploma, and the associate degree.

The college encourages the development of the whole individual in a learning-centered environment while maintaining measures of cost effectiveness and fiscal soundness in program planning, implementation, and services. Instruction in work ethics is emphasized, and lifelong learning is promoted. A highly competent, professional faculty and staff is customer focused and dedicated to providing high quality, accessible education and training through continuous improvement efforts.

11.4.3 Mission for Habersham County

The mission of North Georgia Technical College for Habersham County is to provide quality technical education, adult education, continuing education, and business and industry training to people in the county who can benefit from these services. North Georgia Technical College's overall mission is to put people to work and to support and strengthen the economic development efforts of the county.

Of prime importance are the collaborative efforts with the Habersham County School System, Piedmont College, and all other educational endeavors in the county. The creation of a charter high school in partnership with the Habersham County Schools is a critical part of these efforts.

The College will continue to provide support for the stay-in-school efforts in the county. Achieving additional accreditations are also a part of the mission of NGTC so that citizens in Habersham County will have access to an even broader range of postsecondary education opportunities.

The mission of NGTC also involves a willingness and a commitment to work on a daily basis with the community as a whole to offer assistance in any of the areas of the College's expertise.

11.5 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan

Soque River Watershed Protection Plan



Prepared by the
Soque River Watershed Partnership

Funding for this project is provided
by a U.S. EPA CWA § 319(h) grant

Administered by the
Non-Point Source Program
Environmental Protection Division
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Soque River Watershed Protection Plan

Prepared by the Soque River Watershed Partnership

March 2008

Lead Organization: City of Clarkesville

Project Manager: Soque River Watershed Association

Partners:

North Georgia Technical College
GA DNR Wildlife Resources Division
City of Cornelia
Habersham Co. Chamber of Commerce
GA Poultry Federation
City of Baldwin
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Fieldale Farms
GA Soil & Water Conservation Commission
Habersham / White Co Homebuilders Association

UGA Cooperative Extension
GA Forestry Commission
U.S. Forest Service
City of Demorest
Habersham County
Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
City of Mount Airy
Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D
GA Mountains RDC

Chestatee —
Chattahoochee RC&D

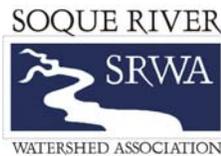


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Soque River is the northeastern-most tributary of the Chattahoochee River and has a number of beneficial uses both locally and regionally within the State. The river serves as the drinking water source for the City of Clarkesville and tributaries to the river provide water for other localities in Habersham County. Additionally, the river supplies an estimated 1/6 of the inflow to Lake Lanier, the major drinking water reservoir for the City of Atlanta. The Soque is also renowned for the recreational opportunities it provides; primarily fishing. The watershed covers approximately 160 square miles and rests wholly within Habersham County, thus presenting a unique opportunity for watershed protection and management while avoiding jurisdictional conflicts.

As in much of Georgia, rapid population growth in Habersham County is expected to increase the demand for water supplies while adding stressors to aquatic systems. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs documented a 30% increase in the population of Habersham County between 1990 and 2000 (GADCA 2006). Growth estimates by the State Office of Planning and Budget forecast an additional 37% increase in population in the County between 2000 and 2015 (GAOPB 2005). These figures together represent a near doubling of the population of the county in a 25 year span.

The Soque River Watershed Partnership (the Partnership) was formed to take advantage of the opportunity for local protection of water resources and in response to water quality concerns and the anticipated impacts of rapid growth in the watershed. The Partnership is comprised of numerous local and state agencies and organizations and is guided by a Steering Committee of stakeholders and a Technical Advisory Committee of scientific and resource professionals. Partnership formation was driven by a concern for the sustainability of local water supplies and the identification of impaired waters in the watershed.

Recent surveys by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) identified stream segments in the watershed that do not meet state water quality standards. These stream segments have subsequently been placed on the State's 303(d) list of impaired waters. Specifically, two segments of the Soque River (totaling 35 miles) are not supporting designated uses due to violations of the fecal coliform bacteria standard from unspecified non-point source (NPS) pollution. Additionally, two segments of Hazel Creek (totaling nine miles), a tributary to the Soque, are not supporting designated uses due to NPS sediment impacts on instream habitat and biota (GAEPD 2008).

In recognition of these water quality impairments from NPS pollution, the Partnership applied for and received CWA §319(h) funding from the USEPA and administered through GAEPD. The funding was to complete a comprehensive watershed assessment to document current biological, chemical, and physical conditions in the watershed. The data was then used to draft this watershed protection plan for use by citizens and municipalities to make informed decisions about the future use and protection of water resources in the watershed.

INTRODUCTION

The Soque River Watershed comprises 160 square miles, or 57% of the land area of Habersham County (Figure 1). The watershed is unique for its size in that it lies wholly within the boundaries of a single county. This presents a rare opportunity for local resource protection while avoiding jurisdictional conflicts.

The headwaters of the river flow from National Forest lands off of Tray Mountain and run together in the Blue Ridge Physiographic province (Level IV ecoregion 66d – Southern Crystalline Ridges and Mountains) to form the main-stem of the Soque. The river continues down through the Piedmont (Level IV ecoregion 45a – Southern Inner Piedmont) to the confluence with the Chattahoochee River. The Soque is the northeastern most tributary to the Upper Chattahoochee River (8-digit HUC 03130001).

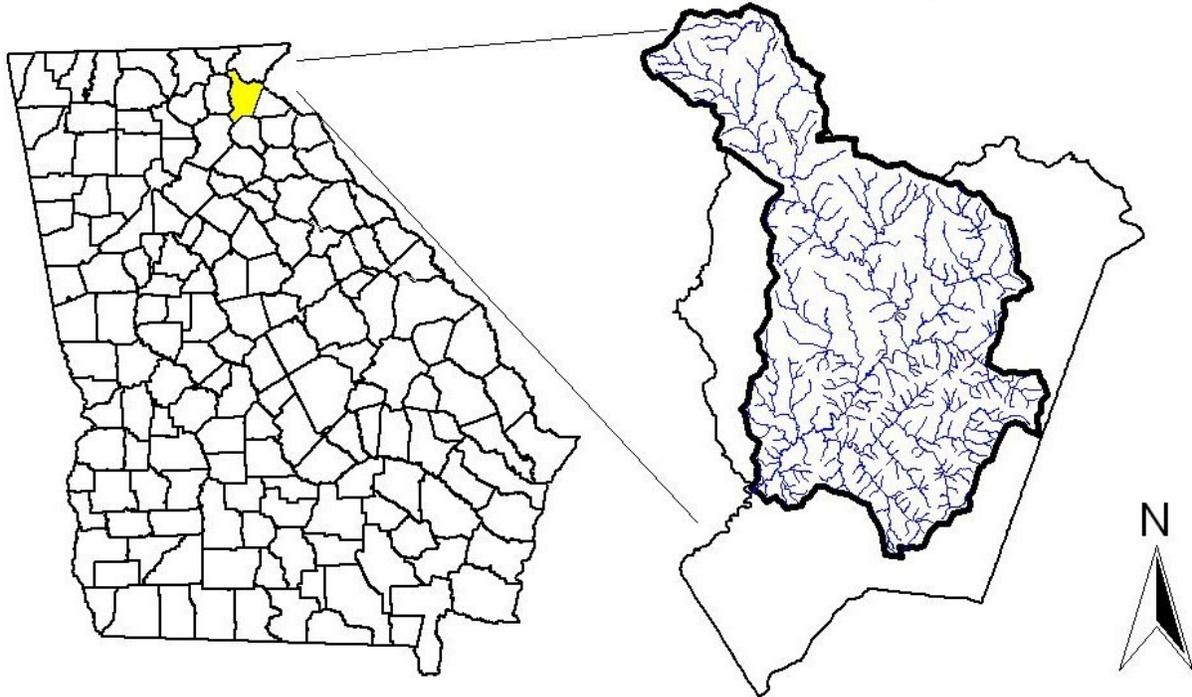


Figure 1. Location of Habersham County and the Soque River Watershed

The river serves as the water supply for the City of Clarkesville. Additionally, Hazel Creek and Camp Creek, tributaries to the Soque, supply water for the City of Cornelia. Other localities in Habersham County, the cities of Demorest and Baldwin, obtain drinking water from the Chattahoochee River below the confluence with the Soque. Municipal water supplies for Mount Airy and Alto come from groundwater wells within the watershed. Nearly every Habersham County resident who drinks water from a public supply drinks at least some water from the Soque River. The river is also important to the local economy. The two biggest sources of revenue in the county are agriculture and tourism – both highly dependant on the river and watershed, both for resource availability (agriculture) and aesthetic beauty (tourism). The Soque is also nationally renowned as a trophy trout stream, a status that requires high quality, clean water.

In response to problems already identified in several stream segments and threats from rapid development and other sources, a broad coalition of groups, known as the Soque River Watershed Partnership (SRWP), joined together to perform a watershed-wide assessment of surface water quality. This assessment was funded by a 319(h) grant awarded to the City of Clarkesville, which began in 2004 and concluded in March 2008. The purpose of that first-round 319 grant-funded project was to gather data needed to complete a Watershed Protection Plan, through which the Partnership can address the highest priority threats to water quality and watershed integrity.

Measures to eliminate pollution sources that have contributed to the designation of four stream segments in the watershed as “Impaired Waters” by the State of Georgia and the USEPA will be the highest priorities in this protection plan (Table 1). A map showing the impaired stream segments in red is also included in Figure 3. The goal of the plan is to implement management strategies to improve water quality in the listed stream segments to the point that they are removed from the list of impaired waters. Other streams and subwatershed areas will also be targeted as high priorities for corrective and protective actions, due to findings of significant water quality problems in those areas. Further, the corrective actions proposed here will carry out portions of the pertinent Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plans (State of Georgia, Recommended Tier 2 TMDL Implementation Plan: Hazel Creek; Recommended Tier 2 TMDL Implementation Plan: Soque River, Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, 2004).

Table 1. Stream segments not supporting designated uses in the Soque River Watershed

Waterbody	Reach Location	Criterion Violated	Potential Cause	Designated Use	Extent
Soque River	Goshen Creek to SR 17, Clarkesville	Fecal Coliform	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	29 miles
Soque River	SR 17, Clarkesville to Chattahoochee	Fecal Coliform	Urban Runoff	Fishing	6 miles
Hazel Creek	Law Creek to Soque River	Biological Impairment – Macroinvertebrate from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	5 miles
Hazel Creek	Reservoir No. 12 to Law Creek	Biological Impairment – Fish from Sediment	Non-point Source Pollution	Fishing	4 miles

Source: State of Georgia 2008 Draft 305(b)/303(d) List

All watershed protection and management strategies detailed in this plan should be evaluated and adapted to best meet local needs and ensure progress towards the attainment of water quality standards. Furthermore, action should not be limited to the contents of this plan. Other alternatives should be considered as additional information or resources become available.

WATERSHED CONDITIONS

For the purpose of this plan, the Soque River Watershed has been further divided into tributary subwatersheds (Figure 2). This division will enhance the identification, prioritization, and implementation of protection efforts and corrective actions. A summary of landcover for subwatersheds (and for the entire Soque River Watershed) used in this plan is included in Table 2. Subwatersheds will be listed in all tables in the order in which they enter the main-stem of the river from north to south.

Table 2. Area and landcover for subwatersheds of the Soque River

Subwatershed	Area (mi²)	% Forest*	% Agriculture**	% Urban***
Headwaters	17.3	90.9	5.4	3.1
Raper Creek	9.6	91.2	4.2	3.7
Shoal Creek	9.8	82.9	5.9	6.5
Deep Creek	30.2	57.5	23.6	11.3
Beaverdam Creek	14.6	59.7	23.7	7.5
Hazel Creek	31.9	46.8	24.5	16.3
Yellowbank Creek	6.7	48.3	28.9	7.9
Total Watershed	159.8	64.3	18.3	9.6

* % Forest includes deciduous, evergreen, and mixed forest

** % Agriculture includes pasture land, row crops, orchards, and vineyards

*** % Urban includes low and high intensity residential, industrial, commercial, transportation, and utilities

Physical, chemical, and biological data collected during the watershed assessment indicate significant relationships among those variables and landcover (Figure 4) in the watershed. For example, high levels of urbanization are strongly correlated with increasing fine sediment in streams and fewer numbers and types of benthic macroinvertebrates that are intolerant of NPS pollution. Conversely, heavily forested areas had less instream sediment and a greater diversity and abundance of stream organisms intolerant of pollution (SRWP, 2008). It is noteworthy that the landcover data used in the assessment is somewhat dated (NARSAL, 2001). It is expected that even more forested and agriculture lands have been converted to developed areas between then and now.

The assessment identified watershed areas and stream segments both in need of continued protection and corrective action. Primary sources of bacteria identified included livestock, humans, and urban runoff (domestic pets and humans). Sediment inputs were primarily attributed to land disturbing activities (improperly managed construction sites), streambank erosion, and dirt roads. NPS management measures will be targeted towards reducing pollutant inputs from these sources.

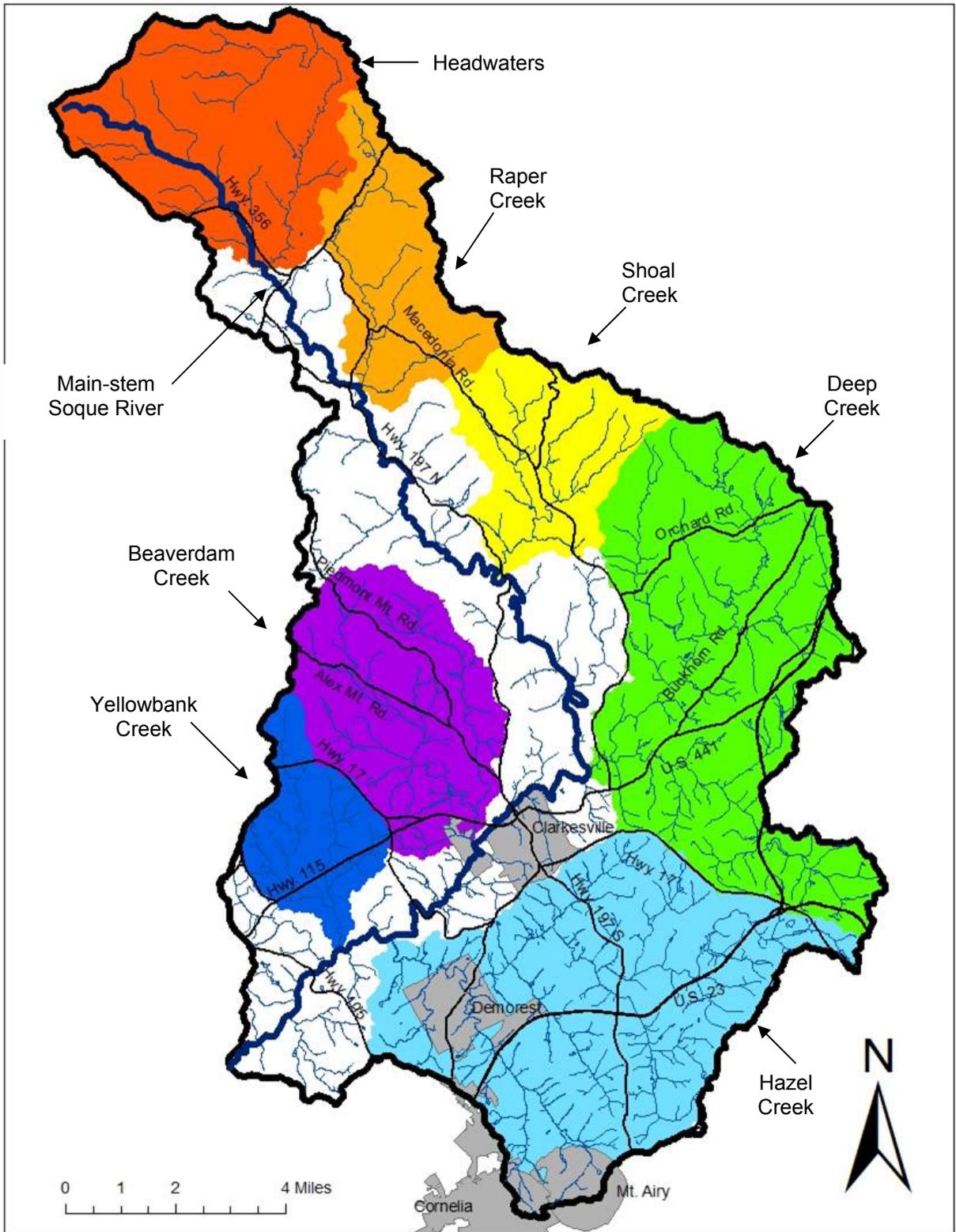


Figure 2. Subwatersheds of the Soque River Watershed

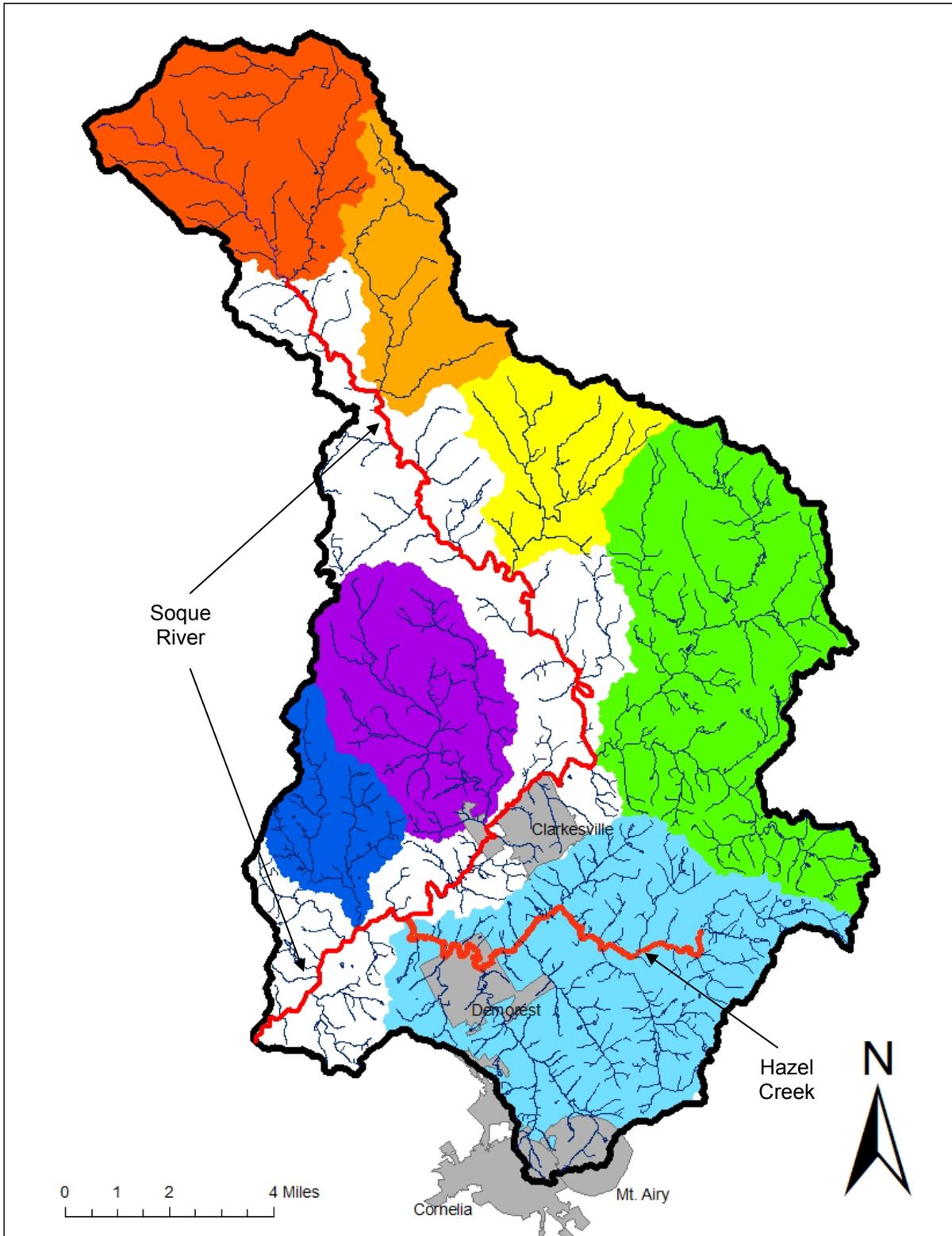


Figure 3. Stream segments not meeting designated uses (impaired)

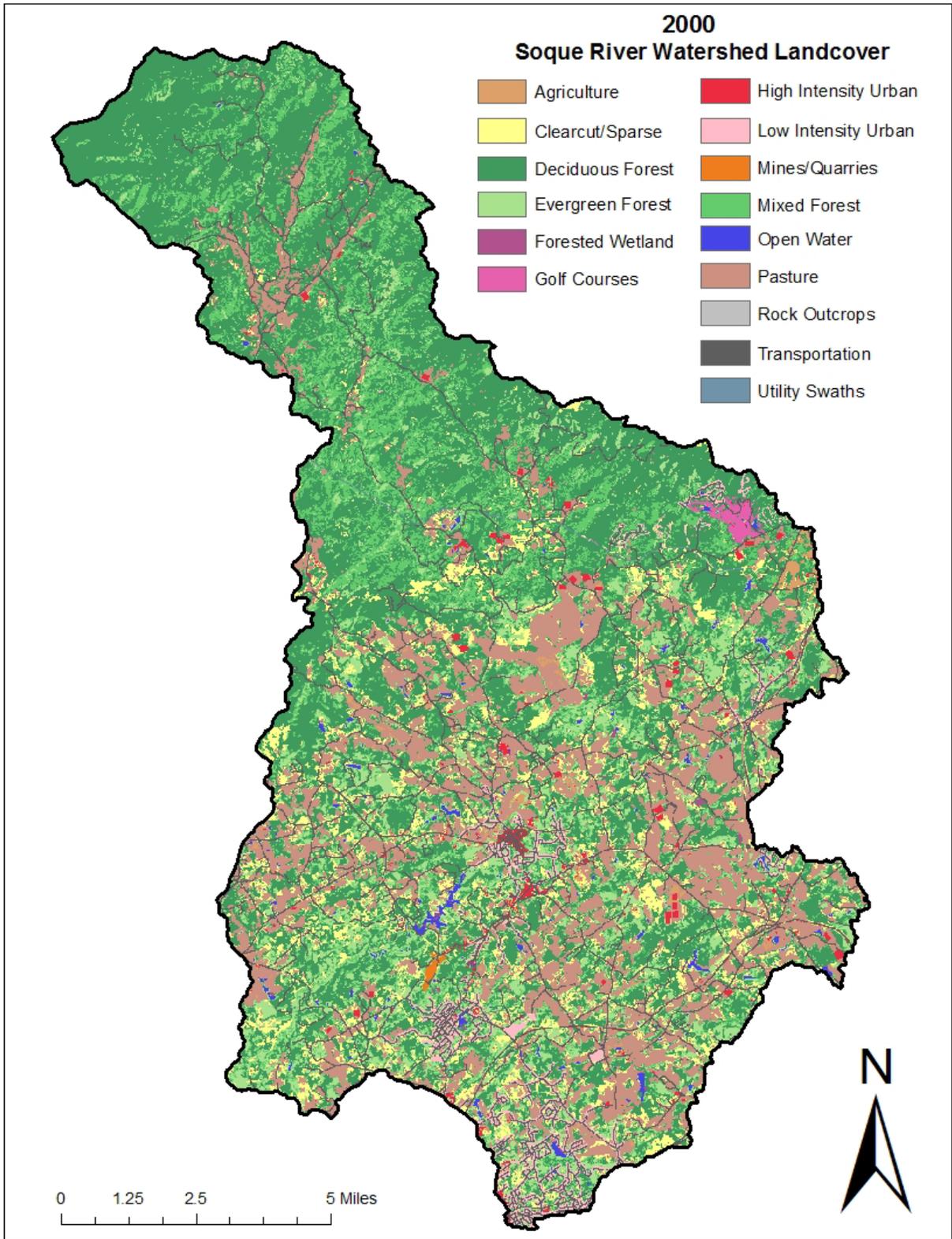


Figure 4. Landcover in the Soque River Watershed

POLLUTANT SOURCES AND CAUSES

Source assessments for this plan focus on fecal coliform bacteria and sediment, the causes of the failure to meet designated uses and water quality standards. Potential pollutant sources were considered and evaluated using data collected during the watershed assessment. Potential sources of bacteria include wildlife, livestock, humans, pets, broken sewer lines and overflows due to rain events, point source discharges (Figure 6), and failing septic systems. Potential sources of sediment include all land disturbing activities, streambank erosion, and dirt roads.

Bacterial samples were taken quarterly at 76 sites in the watershed over a period of two years, and *E. Coli* was used as an indicator organism indicative of the level of bacterial pollution (Figure 5). Tributaries draining to the upstream listed Soque River reach (29 mile segment) include the Headwaters, Raper Creek, Shoal Creek, and Deep Creek. The three remaining major tributaries drain to the downstream listed reach of the Soque (6 mile segment). Data were evaluated using a geometric mean for comparison with USEPA recommended levels for *E. Coli* (126 colony forming units / 100 mL of water) (Table 3). Bacterial load reductions were estimated for each sample point in the subwatershed under consideration and loads were modeled for comparison with actual data. Corrective actions to reduce bacterial inputs will be prioritized using these data.

Table 3. Bacterial sample sites by subwatershed

Subwatershed	Total Sites (n)	# Impaired Sites	% Impaired
Headwaters	8	1	12.5
Raper	9	2	22.2
Shoal	11	7	63.6
Deep	14	8	57.1
Beaverdam	9	7	77.8
Hazel	17	13	76.5
Yellowbank	8	8	100.0
Total Watershed	76	46	60.5

Sediment data (suspended sediment concentration) were collected as baseflow and stormflow throughout the subwatersheds and on the mainstem of the Soque River. Although Hazel Creek is the only stream in the watershed listed for sediment impacts on biota, excessive erosion and sedimentation is a concern throughout the watershed. Sediment loads generally increased from north (more forested) to south (more disturbed) in the watershed (Table 6). Excess sediment has many detrimental effects on aquatic life and increases the cost to treat drinking water. Corrective actions will focus on lands that drain to Hazel Creek, but will also be undertaken where sediment inputs are identified elsewhere. It is understood that education will be necessary for property owners and land disturbers to effectively reduce sediment inputs over time.

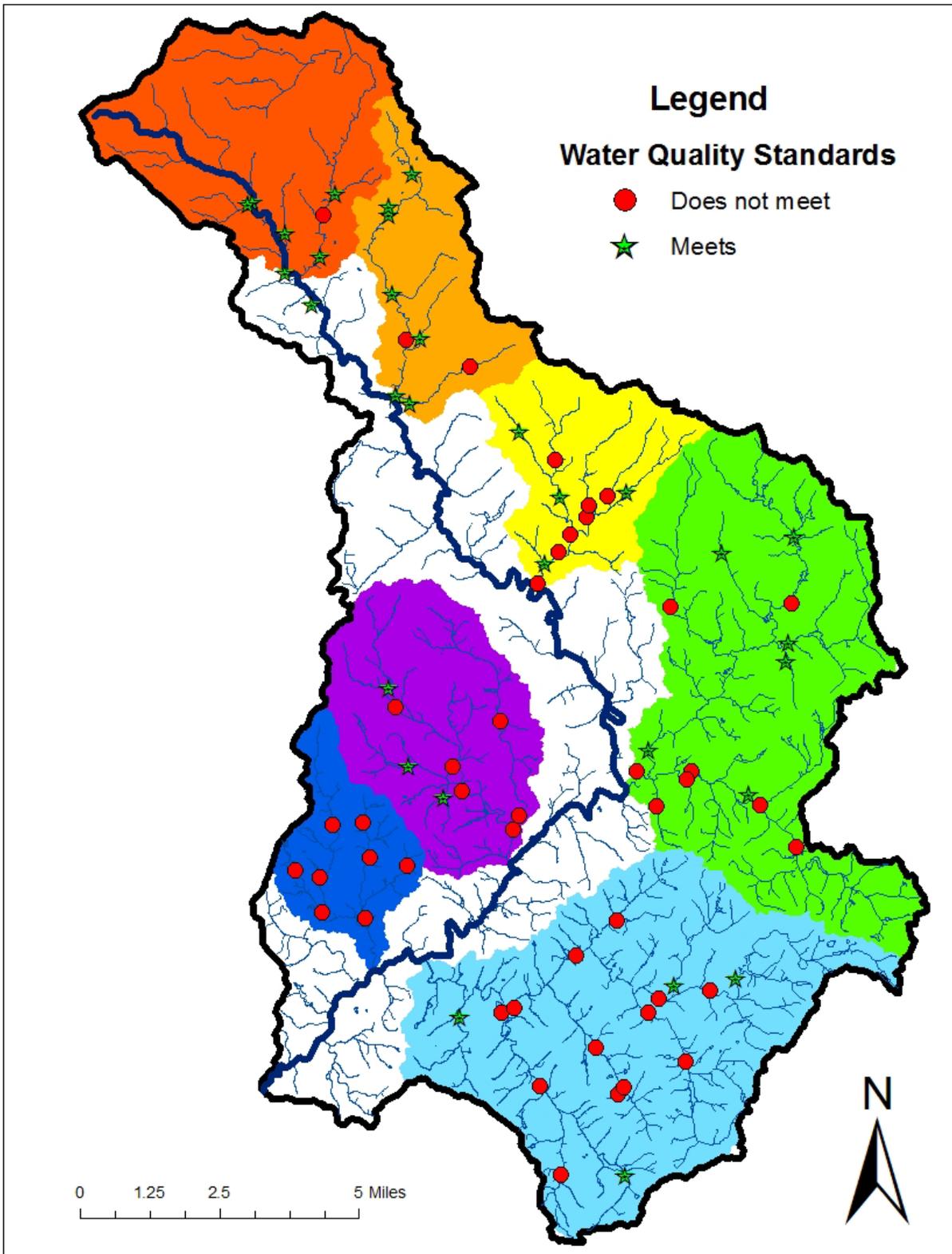


Figure 5. Bacterial sample locations

POLLUTANT LOAD REDUCTIONS

Pollutant load reduction estimates needed to meet water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria and suspended sediment were modeled, calculated and compared with field collected data to refine prioritization of corrective actions. Necessary load reductions will be discussed as pollutant specific. However, it is anticipated that management and protection strategies will address both bacteria and sediment in many instances.

BACTERIA

Fecal coliform bacteria data for the entire Soque River Watershed were modeled using the Bacteria Source Load Calculator (Virginia Tech, 2007), which requires user defined inputs for potential pollutant sources. These input data were gathered from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division (wildlife), University of Georgia Cooperative Extension (livestock), Habersham County Health Department (septic systems), and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (human population). Fecal coliform production loadings from various sources are found in Table 4. It is assumed that the agricultural and wildlife contributions are higher in more forested and agricultural areas of the watershed and that urban contributions (humans and pets) are more significant in rapidly developing areas with more impervious surfaces.

Table 4. NPS fecal coliform production loadings – entire Soque River Watershed

Source	Loading	% of total
Agriculture	4.88Ex10 ¹⁵	49.1
Wildlife	7.36Ex10 ¹⁴	7.2
Human	2.21Ex10 ¹⁵	22.2
Pet	2.10Ex10 ¹⁵	21.0

Model results do provide a starting point to prioritize management decisions. In this case, more specific watershed data are available from the watershed assessment. To further refine the available control measures and corrective action locations, field collected data were analyzed by subwatershed. The results of needed load reduction percentages, based on bacteriological sample data, are included in Table 5.

Table 5. Bacterial load reductions needed to meet water quality standards by subwatershed

Subwatershed	# Impaired Sites	Range (% Reduction)	Mean (% Reduction)
Headwaters	1	63.5 (one site)	63.5
Raper	2	7.0 – 78.6	42.8
Shoal	7	6.4 – 84.6	46.8
Deep	8	34.6 – 87.9	53.5
Beaverdam	7	26.5 – 90.4	59.3
Hazel	13	8.9 – 86.0	54.3
Yellowbank	8	13.9 – 92.6	68.1
Total watershed	46	6.4 – 92.6	60.5

SEDIMENT

Sediment load reductions were derived using data from a recent United States Department of Agriculture Study (USDA, 2006). In that study, the Chattahoochee River at Cornelia, below the confluence with the Soque River, was estimated to yield 147.6 tons/year/mi². Using that value for the Soque River Watershed, and accounting for landcover variables, it is possible to estimate the contribution of the subwatersheds in this study to the overall load. A breakdown of suspended sediment yield and load estimates by subwatershed is included in Table 6. According to the Hazel Creek TMDL Implementation Plan, the sediment load in that subwatershed needs to be reduced by 60% to meet unimpaired standards for habitat and biota (GMRDC, 2004a). Due to existing and potential future landcover variables, it is anticipated that some subwatersheds will require less attention (Headwaters, Raper, and Shoal) while others will need extensive management and protection measures (Hazel and Yellowbank particularly) to reduce sediment loads to acceptable levels.

Table 6. Suspended sediment yield and load by subwatershed

Subwatershed	Yield (tons/year/ mi²)	Load (tons/year)
Headwaters	104.8	1813
Raper	104.8	1006
Shoal	115.1	1128
Deep	165.3	4992
Beaverdam	159.4	2327
Hazel	202.2	6450
Yellowbank	196.3	1315
Whole watershed	147.6	23586

NPS MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Achievement of the estimated load reductions needed to attain water quality standards and promote the integrity of aquatic life will require multiple concurrent resource protection and management strategies. Specific projects will be considered on a case by case basis among the subwatersheds with the highest priority needs. The goal of this plan is to implement measures to greatly reduce or eliminate pollutant sources resulting in progress towards attainment of desired water quality standards. Many of these best management practices (BMPs) will be designed, installed, and maintained as part of a system of measures to control pollutants – not as stand alone practices. As priority sites are identified for protection and corrective action, site-specific conditions will be evaluated and recommendations made to best control pollutants by cost-effective measures in that particular situation.

A number of specific sites were identified during the watershed assessment that require attention to reduce pollutant loads (Figures 6 and 7). As part of the upcoming Clean Water Act § 319(h) implementation grant, entitled *Soque River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation*, the Partnership will begin addressing these sites and adapt strategies as new data and information become available to achieve desired goals. Specific project activities at these sites over the next three year grant period are included below.

Bacterial Pollution Control – Through our monitoring program, we have measured high bacterial levels in each of five subwatersheds within the Soque watershed. These include: Beaverdam Creek, Deep Creek, Shoal Creek, Yellowbank Creek, and Hazel Creek. The Deep Creek and Shoal Creek subwatersheds feed the Soque River in the 29 mile segment listed for fecal coliform bacteria pollution. The other three are tributaries to the River in the downstream listed 6 mile segment. By taking bacterial samples from 8 to 17 sites within each subwatershed (dependant upon subwatershed size and access), we have narrowed down the potential areas of impact on stream quality from pathogens in each area. Upstream of each site with consistently high bacterial counts, we have begun identifying specific causes for the contamination. In many of these cases, we know that cattle in streams and cattle stream crossings are contributing to water quality problems. We also are seeking to identify failing residential drain fields and other possible sources of fecal coliform bacteria in each targeted watershed area. We will continue to identify even more specific sites likely contributing these types of pollution. We plan to identify a number of sites in each of these subwatersheds where we can work with landowners to do one of two measures. For farms, we will install fencing and alternative water sources to get cattle out of streams and improve or eliminate stream crossings. Fencing will also allow for the reestablishment of stream buffers to filter pollutants from overland runoff. For residential sites with failing or problem drain fields, we will make repairs or replace system components to eliminate leakage to surface waters.

The upstream listed segment of the Soque River is drained by 4 major subwatersheds, two of which contribute relatively little to total bacterial loading (Headwaters and Raper Creek). Therefore, we will concentrate our efforts for the upstream segment in the two remaining subwatersheds, Shoal Creek and Deep Creek. In the Shoal Creek

subwatershed, we have already identified a farm where we will work with owners to provide fencing and alternative water supplies. We have also identified two more with whom we intend to work on similar projects. As the Shoal Creek drainage is relatively small and contains a very large percentage of national forest land, we believe these projects could eliminate the bacterial problem identified there, to the extent possible. In the Deep Creek subwatershed, which is a much larger area and includes another relatively large tributary named Glade Creek, we plan to address at least 5 farm and/or septic tanks projects. As stated above, we have pinpointed the specific portions of this drainage that contribute to the high bacterial levels and have begun to identify landowners with whom we can work. We expect that these projects in the subwatersheds that drain to the upstream listed portion of the Soque River can eliminate much of the bacterial pollution that contributed to its listing and could allow its removal upon completion.

The major subwatersheds draining to the lower listed segment of the Soque (Yellowbank, Beaverdam, and Hazel Creeks) each have a number of bacterial problems and certainly contribute to the failure to meet water quality standards of the Soque's lower reaches. Therefore, we will complete farm and/or drain field projects in these subwatersheds also. The Yellowbank drainage is the smallest of these three but shows some of the highest bacterial counts in our sampling and we will target at least 4 sites in this area. Beaverdam Creek's drainage is somewhat larger, but we believe that addressing 4 additional sites there can have a significant affect on the problems in that subwatershed. Hazel Creek subwatershed is large and very heavily impacted. As described below, we will also be addressing sediment inputs to Hazel Creek and those projects will likely include bacterial pollution reductions also. In addition to those two projects, we plan to address at least 3 more aimed particularly at fecal coliform pollution sources, for a total of 5 in the Hazel Creek area. Overall then, we propose to complete at least 20 corrective actions in these 5 subwatersheds to eliminate sources of fecal contamination in the Soque River and its tributaries.

Sediment Pollution Control – In the portion of the Hazel Creek drainage that contributes to the segment listed as an “impaired” water body, we propose to install measures to stabilize stream banks and then reestablish vegetative buffer zones along the streams. We have identified a number of potential sites already, including ones on Little Hazel Creek, Law Creek, and an unnamed tributary adjacent to the Law Creek drainage. In some of these areas there is major bank instability and sloughing of dirt into the stream channel during higher flows. We will install tree revetments, tree plantings or other measures as appropriate for each of two sites in this subwatershed to alleviate these sources. Armored reinforcement of the banks (such as rip-rap) will be used only as a last resort, and will be integrated as much as possible with vegetative solutions. We will work with technical experts from County government, the NRCS, USEPA, and others to design these installations to be most effective and sustainable. We will also do plantings, using native plant species wherever possible, to reestablish adequate buffer zones along these stream segments. Silvicultural activities, while not widespread in Habersham County, should be considered as a potential source of sediment. All such activities should be conducted in accordance with *Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry* (Georgia Forestry Commission, 1999).

Stormwater Management Measures – Also in the Hazel Creek drainage area, we will identify at least two sites where we can work with land owners to install rain gardens and/or storm water management measures. These measures will slow runoff and lessen the drastic impacts from increased magnitudes and frequencies of runoff events that have resulted from greater urbanization and impervious cover. Stormwater BMPs are targeted first towards reducing and preventing pollutants associated with runoff and then with treating or filtering the stormwater to reduce NPS pollutants delivered to streams.

The BMPs listed below are grouped according to the target pollutant for reduction, however, it is anticipated that a number of management practices will result in the effective reduction of both fecal coliform bacteria and suspended sediment loadings. These BMPs will be used to address the target area “hot spots” identified during the watershed assessment. In addition to these target pollutants, control and management measures to address stormwater runoff are included as options. Decreasing the volume of this runoff from urbanizing areas is expected to reduce the concentration of target (and many other) pollutants delivered to streams as well as lessen excessive erosion that comes with periodic high flows associated with increasing area of impervious surfaces. Descriptions of various BMPs that may be used to control or eliminate pollutant sources are included below and were obtained from four primary sources and are all based on Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Practice Standards:

- 1) Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture*, 2007
- 2) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency *National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Urban Areas*, 2005
- 3) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency *National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Agriculture*, 2003
- 4) Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission *Field Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia*, 4th edition, 2002.

FECAL COLIFORM BMPs

Alternative Water Sources – includes using troughs and tanks to provide livestock with watering sources away from streams to reduce direct fecal coliform contribution and associated erosion. This measure is often used in conjunction with exclusion fencing.

Exclusion Fencing – provides barriers to prohibit livestock from freely entering streams. Allows for periodic “turning out” of animals to graze in the vegetated buffer for short periods of time thus controlling areas where fecal loadings are present.

Critical Area Planting – establishes permanent vegetation (preferably native plant material) in highly erodible areas to reduce sediment and filter bacteria. Critical area plantings may reduce sediment runoff by as much as 75%.

Riparian Herbaceous Cover – uses grasses, forbs, and trees directly on banks to protect wildlife habitat, provide wildlife habitat, and to stabilize streambanks and channels.

Riparian Forest Buffers – uses trees, shrubs, and grasses to filter surface runoff prior to entering streams. This practice can reduce sediment loads in surface runoff by 50-75%.

Filter Strips – are vegetated areas between cropland, grazing land, or disturbed areas and surface waters to protect water quality. Filter strips may remove as much as 50-80% of nutrients and sediment from surface runoff.

Stream Crossings – provide a stable streambed and reduce erosion where livestock must access streams.

Nutrient Management – assists growers and producers in improving farm management and litter or manure application strategies.

Animal Waste Storage – include composters and stack houses for manure and litter storage. Proper composting reduces viable bacteria and nutrient concentrations.

Septic System Repair – reduces fecal coliform loads where on-site sewage disposal systems are not properly designed, installed, or maintained.

Sewer Inspections – can prevent and detect bacterial loading from broken pipes or overflowing manholes. This practice includes the removal of storm drains that are hooked to sanitary sewers which may overwhelm the capacity of the sewer during periods of heavy rains resulting in overflows.

SEDIMENT BMPs

Heavy Use Area Protection – reduces sediment and bacterial runoff by protecting areas with heavy livestock traffic such as troughs and feeding areas.

Pasture and Hayland Planting – prevents soil erosion by establishing native vegetation (preferable) or introduced forages in fields or pastures.

Grassed Waterways – are natural channels to slow the flow of water, remove excessive sediment and nutrients, and prevent gully erosion.

Field Borders – are permanently vegetated buffers around pastures to reduce soil erosion.

Conservation Cover – is the establishment of permanent vegetative cover to prevent erosion and protect water quality on retired agricultural land.

Prescribed Grazing – manages grazing animals for long term benefits; promotes vegetative quality and quantity and reduces erosion.

Streambank and Shoreline Protection – stabilizes and protects streambanks to reduce erosion and prevent water quality degradation.

Stream Channel Stabilization – strengthens or stabilizes the bed or bottom of the channel in very specific instances when normal protection and riparian buffers are inadequate to protect water quality.

Tree/Shrub Establishment – slows runoff and allows for increased infiltration of runoff, thus reducing pollutant concentrations.

STORMWATER BMPs

Many urban stormwater BMPs are available and should be considered on a site specific case by case basis (USEPA, 2005). The importance of proper site design and consideration of new construction is vital, however there are also things that can be done in already developed areas to minimize and treat runoff. There are two broad categories of stormwater BMPs that will be considered under this plan: 1) BMPs that prevent runoff, and 2) BMPs that treat stormwater to remove potential pollutants before they reach streams. There are many excellent publications and resources available on BMP selection, installation, and maintenance. The measures indicated here are not exhaustive. Additional research is recommended to refine this menu of selections.

Runoff Prevention BMPs – are the most effective measures to control NPS pollution. It is much easier to prevent pollution than to address problems where pollution has already occurred. These measures are aimed at preventing runoff and subsequent pollutant transport and include:

Impervious surface reductions – through street and parking lot design and the use of new technologies like permeable pavement and green roofs.

Construction practices – to ensure that grading and clearing are done appropriately and that a system of BMPs is considered prior to development. This includes measures for mass grading, sequencing development, and maintaining the proper site specific BMPs.

Soil erosion control on exposed soils – using mulches, blankets and mats, vegetative measures, structural methods, inlet protection, silt fence, check dams, and temporary sedimentation basins or traps (GSWCC, 2002).

Stormwater Treatment BMPs – are designed to remove pollutants carried in runoff before they reach surface waters and include:

Infiltration systems –promote rainfall infiltration prior to runoff. These measures include basins, trenches, and rain gardens. When more water soaks in, less runs off (and fewer pollutants are delivered to streams).

Filtration systems – to remove excess pollutants from stormwater runoff by bioretention, filter strips, and maintenance of stream buffers.

Retention and Detention systems –retain pollutants and detain stormwater for release more slowly over time. These measures can help reduce stormwater volume and pollutant concentration and help prevent harmful effects of stormwater on aquatic life.

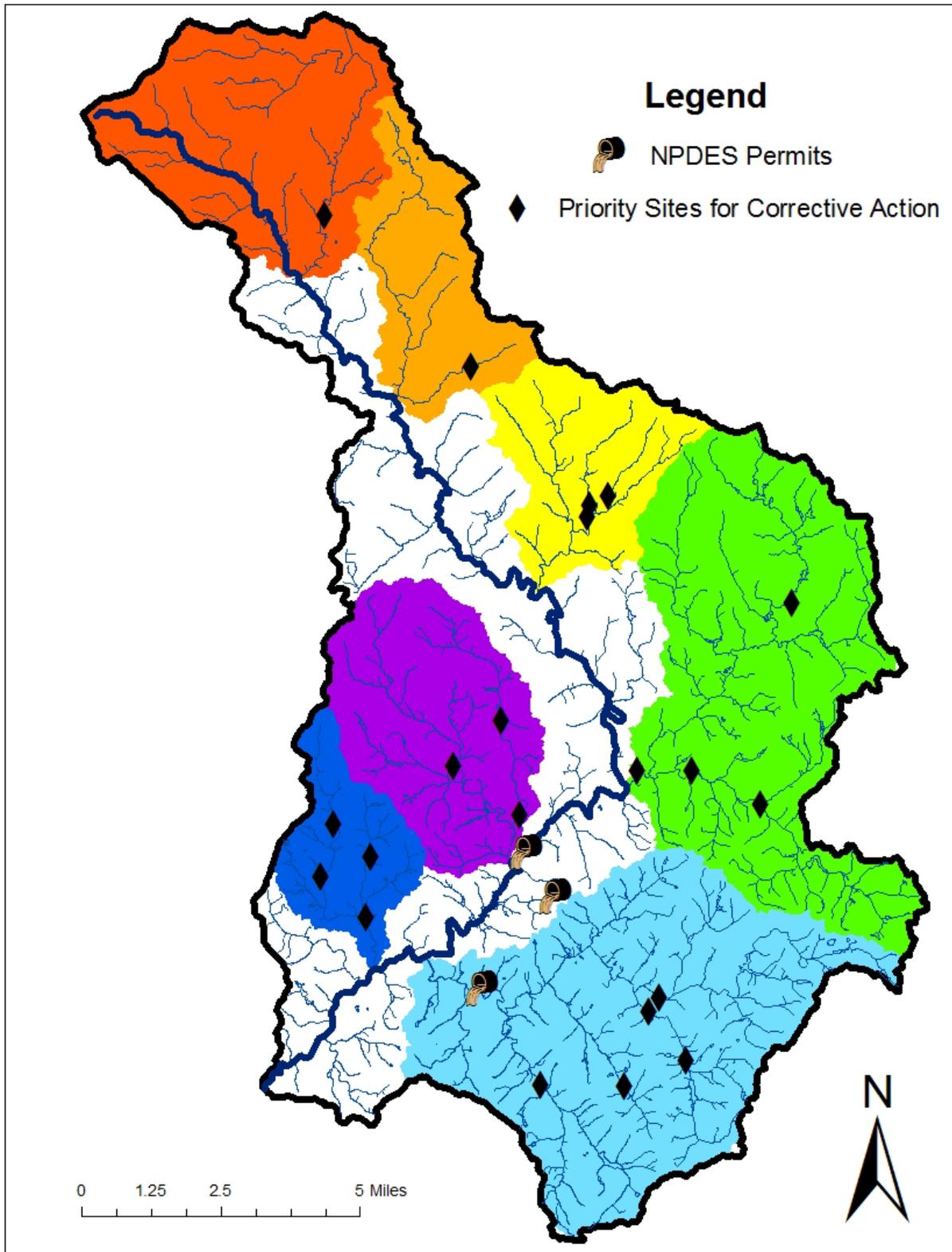


Figure 6. NPDES permitted discharges and priority sites for corrective action (bacterial)

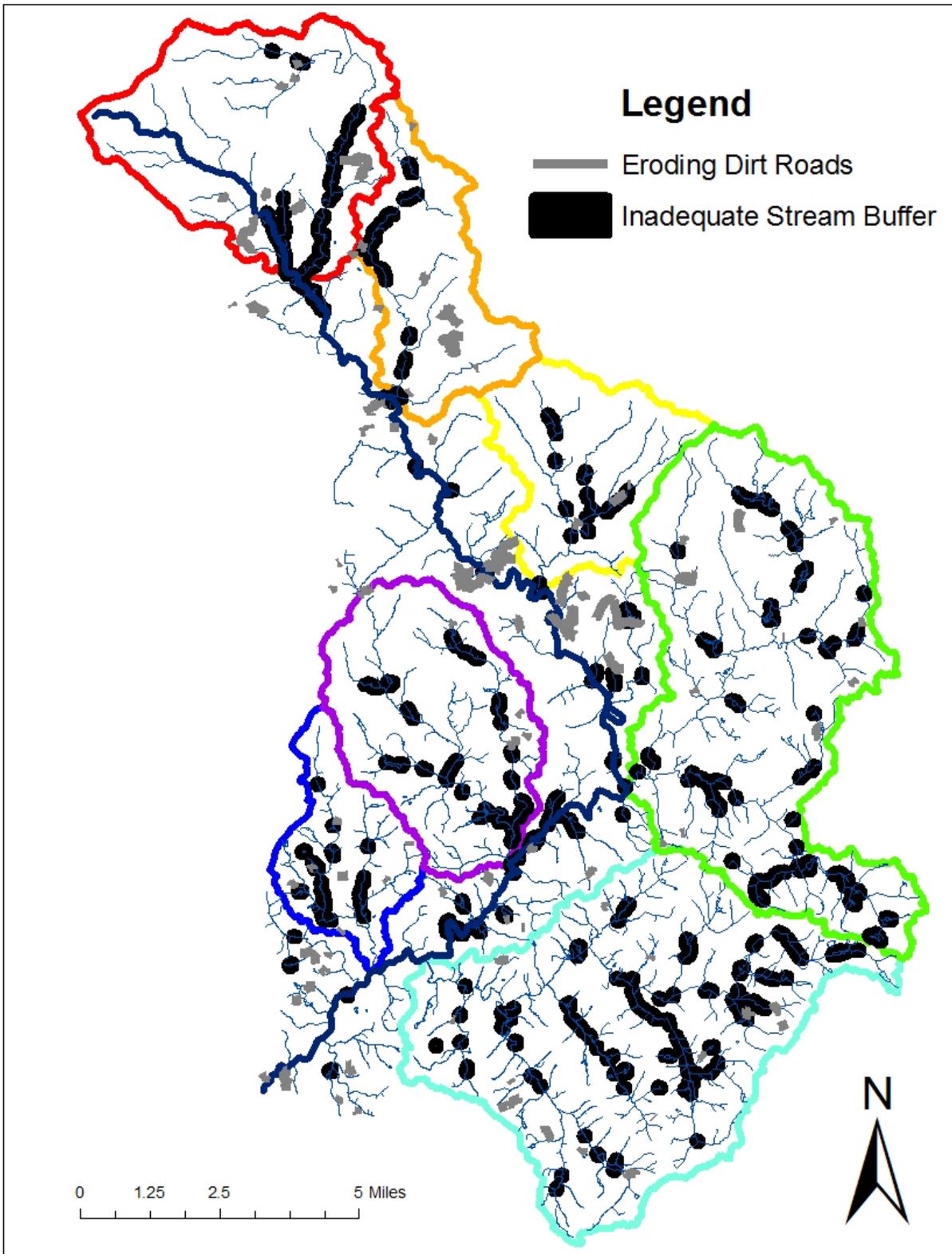


Figure 7. Priority sites for corrective action (Sediment – dirt roads and streambank erosion)

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT

Public education about water quality threats and methods of resource protection are an essential component of this plan. The educational component will include measures aimed at increasing public awareness of water quality problems and providing solutions. Specific attention will be paid to working with middle school aged children to increase their knowledge of water related issues. Additionally, homeowners will be targeted and encouraged to take control of their stormwater to reduce runoff and increase infiltration. Examples and demonstrations of simple BMPs for residential stormwater will be provided to encourage their implementation. Specific components of the educational program will include:

- Articles about water quality issues in Partnership member newsletters and the local newspaper
- Continued work with GA Cooperative Extension and the 4-H program on water related curriculum and homeowner BMPs
- Classroom and lab activities with children in the local school system
- Speaking engagements with local community and civic groups
- Purchase of an EnviroScape to demonstrate principles of non-point source pollution in schools and for civic groups
- Additions to the Partnership website with educational links for teachers to serve as a clearinghouse of water quality information
- A yearly field day for all Habersham County 6th graders with 8-10 stations covering different aspects of water quality (e.g. macroinvertebrates, chemistry, fish, buffer zones, importance of clean water etc.)
- A summer day camp for 7th and 8th graders who show an interest in the environmental sciences (based on recommendations from local science teachers). Potential activities include tours of water treatment facilities, trips to local farms to look at agricultural BMPs, field work with water chemistry and aquatic biology/ecology, estimating stream discharge etc.
- Public meetings to inform citizens about Partnership activities
- Fact sheets about BMPs that highlight successes
- Increased participation in Adopt-a-Stream (AAS) by local school, civic, and neighborhood groups. The SRWP Watershed Coordinator will become a certified AAS trainer and promote the program locally.
- Storm drain stenciling to increase awareness of the direct connections between runoff and surface waters

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation of this plan will begin with the *Soque River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation* 319(h) grant in April 2008. The new grant will run for a period of three years. Interim milestones for the grant are included in the next section. A revised implementation schedule will be developed during the grant period to reflect knowledge gained from additional monitoring. Sites for corrective action will be continually re-prioritized as problems are addressed and new information becomes available.

INTERIM MILESTONES

MILESTONE	STARTING DATES	COMPLETION DATES
Execute contract with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.	1/08	3/08
Sign Interagency Agreement Between SRWA, NGTC, and City of Clarkesville	1/08	3/08
Hire Contract Worker to Assist with Technical and Procedural Items with Corrective Actions	4/08	5/08
Corrective Actions Aimed at Bacterial Pollution – Farm Projects and Drainfields (20)	4/08	12/10
Stream bank stabilization and buffer zone restoration and enhancement projects (2)	4/08	12/10
Maintain and Improve Partnership Web Site	4/08	3/11
Environmental Field Day educational event for 6 th Graders	4/08	4/10
Water Quality Monitoring Around Corrective Action Sites in Accordance With Existing QAPP	4/08	3/11
Steering Committee Meetings (2/year)	4/08	3/11
On-site Stormwater Management Measures Installed (2)	6/08	12/09
First Public Meeting	6/08	8/08
Submit semi-annual report for GRTS update (each February 28 th and August 31 st) Submit annual load reductions each August 31 st .	8/08	3/11
Environmental Summer Camp for 7 th & 8 th Graders	7/09	7/10
Publish BMP Fact Sheets	9/08	1/11
Workshop and Brochure On Homeowner Stormwater Management Solutions	1/10	7/10
Second Public Meeting	8/10	1/11
Submit final project close-out report to the GAEPD and the USEPA for review and approval	3/11	3/11

MONITORING PLAN

All monitoring will be in accordance the Soque River Watershed Partnership Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) used for the watershed assessment (approved by USEPA and GAEPD in January 2005). The QAPP contains Standard Operating Procedures for field data collection and laboratory analyses to ensure the quality of the data. In addition to data collected during the watershed assessment, it is suggested that fish data be added to the biological information already available.

Routine monitoring for sediment and bacteria will continue and we will work to refine “hot spot” locations for corrective action. The goal is to ensure that BMPs are implemented in places where they will result in water quality improvements and progress towards attainment of water quality standards and designated uses. In all cases where BMPs are installed or management measures implemented, both pre- and post- activity monitoring will occur (upstream/downstream). We will evaluate and assess physical, chemical and biological variables, as applicable.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the specific implementation activities mentioned in this document, a number of local measures are available and recommended to enhance water quality protection. Many of these recommendations may be addressed through proper enforcement of existing laws and regulations (e.g. the Georgia Erosion and Sediment Control Act). The current draft Comprehensive Plan for Habersham County and associated localities contains a number of sections that deal with natural resource protection. The Comprehensive Plan should be used as a guide, in conjunction with this Watershed Protection Plan, for making decisions about the use and protection of water (and other natural) resources in the watershed and county. If not currently addressed, it is also recommended that municipalities investigate the possibility of local ordinances, guidelines, or mechanisms for:

- Mass grading
- Stream buffer protection
- Stormwater management
- Performance based zoning
- Protection of sensitive ecosystems and water supply watersheds
- Farmland preservation
- Water conservation and increased efficiency
- Limiting impervious surfaces
- Greenspace
- Slope restrictions for development
- Transferable development rights
- Land acquisition
- Conservation easements

Consideration in implementing local water quality and quantity protections must also be given to the Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan that recently passed as a resolution in the Georgia Legislature. Additional recommendations for citizens and localities will be added as applicable for the term of implementation of this grant and beyond. Model ordinances to address some of the issues above are available through the River Basin Center at the University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology (www.rivercenter.uga.edu). Additional codes and ordinances are available at www.stormwatercenter.net and www.municode.com. It is also recommended that the SRWP seek lessons learned from other watershed partnerships across the state and nation (e.g. the partnership to develop and implement the Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan).

TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Funding for three years of implementation of the Soque River Watershed Protection Plan has been secured via a Clean Water Act § 319(h) grant administered through GAEPD. A project budget for the first three years of implementation is included in Tables 7 and 8. It is important that the work started during this time be continued over a longer period in order to meet the CWA goal to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity” of surface waters in the Soque River Watershed. The ultimate success of this project will be judged by our ability to implement management and protection strategies that result in documented water quality improvements in impaired and other stream segments. The total amount of funding needed to meet these goals is unknown at this time. The initial three year implementation will provide insight as to how much capital may be needed to meet and maintain the pollutant load reductions necessary to meet water quality standards. The SRWP will investigate additional sources of funding to achieve these goals (included below). More grant possibilities will be considered and researched during the implementation phase from available sources.

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Flood Hazard Mitigation and Riverine Ecosystem Restoration Program – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – is a watershed based program to mitigate flood hazards and restore riverine ecosystems.

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership – provides funding for habitat plans for aquatic organisms.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Program – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore or improve native habitats for fish and wildlife (may be used to restore riparian buffers and degraded wetlands).

Five Star Restoration Program – USEPA – provides challenge grants for restoration projects involving partnerships.

River Network Partner Grants – River Network – may be applied for by conservation groups (Soque River Watershed Association) to help build a volunteer base to implement protection and management strategies.

Watershed Assistance Grants – USEPA via River Network – to provide small grants to local watershed partnerships for organizational development.

Water Protection and Conservation Grants – Turner Foundation – to protect surface and groundwater from contamination

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – provides technical and financial assistance for watershed protection, water supply, water quality, erosion and sediment control, and fish and wildlife habitat enhancement.

Georgia Wetlands and Stream Trust Fund – to preserve wetlands or streams that need protection.

National Integrated Water Quality Program – USDA – to improve water quality through research, education, and extension activities.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program – USDA – for agricultural BMPs will help meet water quality goals.

Farm Bill Programs – USDA – include the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program where farmers are paid to set aside environmentally sensitive lands from production.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Programs – USDA - is a voluntary program for landowners to implement applicable wildlife habitat practices.

Technical Assistance to Develop and Implement Conservation Programs – USDA – to assist landowners in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating fish and wildlife habitat development projects in Georgia.

Local Funding – from municipalities to partner with local conservation and civic organizations for specific projects.

In addition to funding, the continued support of SRWP members is vital to the success of this project. Key elements of the technical assistance needed from partners are included in Table 9.

Table 7. Three year implementation project budget

Item	Object Class Category	319(h) Grant Funds	Non-Federal Matching Funds	Total
A. PERSONNEL:	City of Clarkesville:			
	One (1) City Clerk – 0.08 FTE (\$38.6K/year) for 3 years (financial administration)	2,000	7,264	9,264
	One (1) City Manager – 0.05 FTE (\$44.5K/yr) for 3 years (landowner relations, workshops, education)	0	6,675	6,675
	One (1) Water Works Superintendent – 0.05 FTE (\$35.2K/yr) 3 years - (workshops, education, technical assistance)	0	5,280	5,280

	UGA Cooperative Extension Service:	0	30,400	30,400
	One (1) Natural Resources Agent – 0.2 FTE (\$38K/yr) for 3 years (landowner relations, workshops, education, technical assistance)			

	Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D:	0	3,640	3,640
	One (1) Project Manager – 0.05 FTE (\$36,400K/yr) for 2 years (Technical advice, assistance, educational events)			

Habersham County:	0	5,250	5,250	
One (1) Inspector – 0.05 FTE (\$35K/yr) for 3 years (technical advice, assistance, educational events)				
North Georgia Technical College:	One (1) Horticulture Instructor – 0.05 FTE (\$45K/yr) for 3 years (assistance with riparian plantings, streambank stabilization, educational events)	0	6,750	6,750
	One (1) Fisheries Instructor – 0.05 FTE (\$38K/yr) for 3 years (technical assistance, monitoring assistance)	0	5,700	5,700

B. FRINGE BENEFITS:	City of Clarkesville:			
	One (1) City Clerk – 0.08 FTE – 33% for 3 years	0	3,057	3,057
	One (1) City Manager – 0.05 FTE – 33% for 3 years	0	2,203	2,203
	One (1) Water Works Superintendent - 0.05 FTE – 33% for 3 years	0	1,742	1,742

	UGA Cooperative Extension Service:	0	10,030	10,030
	One (1) Natural Resources Agent – 0.2 FTE – 33% for 4 years			

	Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D:	0	1,201	1,201
	One (1) Project Manager – 0.05 FTE – 33% for 4 years			

Habersham County:	0	1,733	1,733	
One (1) Inspector – 0.05 FTE – 33% for 4 years				
North Georgia Technical College:	One (1) Horticulture Instructor - 0.05 FTE – 33% for 3 years	0	2,228	2,228
	One (1) Fisheries Instructor - 0.05 FTE – 33% for 3 years	0	1,881	1,881

C. TRAVEL:	SRWA Ex. Director (100 miles/month @ \$0.485/mile) (Site visits, educational events, public meetings)	0	1,746	1,746
D. EQUIPMENT:	N/A	0	0	0
E. SUPPLIES:	Newsletter Supplies	0	1,200	1,200

F.	CONTRACTUAL:			
	Soque River Watershed Association: Project Management	37,620	7,980	45,600
	Personnel: One (1) Project Manager – 0.4 FTE (\$38K) for 3 yrs (project management and coordination)			
	Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D: Technical Assistance	9,990	0	9,990
	Personnel: One (1) Project Consultant – 0.3 FTE (\$33.3K) for 1 year (consultation and technical assistance with BMP installation and landowner relations)			
	Laboratory Services: Pollutant Source Sample Analysis (bacterial ribotyping)	6,000	0	6,000
Corrective Actions :				
Bacterial Control (20 @ \$9,000 each)	180,000	120,000	300,000	
Streambank Stabilization, Buffers (2 @ 15,000)	30,000	20,000	50,000	
Residential Stormwater Management (2 @ 5,000)	10,000	6,667	16,667	
G.	CONSTRUCTION	N/A	N/A	N/A
H.	OTHER:			
	Interagency Agreement with North Georgia Technical College (Table 8)	170,476	29,143	199,619
	Printing:			
Stormwater Management Brochure - (1,000 copies)	0	2,000	2,000	
Corrective Action Fact Sheets (1,000 copies)	0	2,000	2,000	
Educational Programs:				
Enviroscape Display	1,200	0	1,200	
Field Day and Summer Camp Transportation and Supplies	0	4,421	4,421	
Volunteer Time at Events, Educational and Corrective Actions	0	8,000	8,000	
I.	TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES: [Sum of A-H]	447,286	298,191	745,477
J.	INDIRECT CHARGES:	0	0	0
K.	TOTAL: [Sum of I and J]	447,286	298,191	745,477

Table 8. Budget for interagency agreement with North Georgia Technical College

Item	Object Class Category	319(h) Grant Funds	Non Federal Matching Funds	Total
A	Personnel: One (1) Watershed Coordinator – 1.00 FTE (\$40K/yr) 3 years - coordinate corrective actions, monitoring, educational efforts.	120,000	0	120,000
B	Fringe Benefits: One (1) Watershed Coordinator – 1.00 FTE – 33% 3 years	40,000	0	40,000
C	Travel: Watershed Coordinator (600 miles/month @ \$0.485/mile)	10,476	1,969	12,445
D	Equipment: Laptop Computer and Software GIS Software and Equipment (Arcview, Plotter) Monitoring Equipment: ISCO samplers (on loan) (\$450 month) for 2 years Lab Equipment	0 0 0 0	1,500 1,500 10,800 1,000	1,500 1,500 10,800 1,000
E	Supplies: Office supplies Field Supplies (nets, notebooks, waders, tape measure)	0 0	1,350 1,150	1,350 1,150
F	Contractual:	0	0	0
G	Construction:	N/A	N/A	N/A
H	Other: Office Space for Watershed Coordinator (150 sq ft \$1.36/sq.ft + internet access = \$204/month for three years) Local telephone (\$25/month) Conference Facilities (Public Meetings, Workshops)	0 0 0	7,344 530 2,000	7,344 530 2,000
I	Total Direct Charges: (Sum of A-H)	170,476	29,143	199,619
J	Indirect Charges:	N/A	N/A	N/A
K	Total: (Sum of I and J)	170,476	29,143	199,619

Table 9. Roles and responsibilities of participating partner organizations

Organization	Responsibilities
City of Clarkesville	Serve as lead organization. Formation of memoranda of agreement and interagency contracts with other parties. Financial administration of grant funds. Provide support for public information efforts, assist with site identifications and landowner contacts, contributions to matching funds, participation on Steering Committee
Soque River Watershed Association	Project manager and chair of Partnership Steering Committee. Development of educational and informational materials and workshops. Spokesperson for Partnership. Supervise and work with Watershed Coordinator in completion of day-to-day project tasks.
North Georgia Technical College	Provide personnel administration for Watershed Coordinator and office space, lab facilities, meeting rooms for Partnership use. Provide technical expertise and assistance.
UGA Cooperative Extension	Provide technical assistance and connections with farmers. Conduct and participate in educational programs and public meetings.
Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D	Provide technical assistance and consulting for corrective actions and project management issues.
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Provide technical assistance on corrective actions.
Cities of Cornelia, Demorest, Baldwin, and Mt. Airy	Provide support for public information efforts, assist with site identifications and landowner contacts, contributions to matching funds, participation on Steering Committee
Habersham County	Provide support for public information efforts, technical assistance, landowner contacts, contributions to matching funds, participation on Steering Committee.
Homebuilders Assoc. and Habersham County Chamber of Commerce	Provide support for public information efforts, contacts and assistance with businesses and landowners, contributions to matching funds, participation on Steering Committee.
Fieldale Farms and Georgia Poultry Federation	Provide support for public information efforts, contacts with farmers, contributions to matching funds, technical advice, and participation on Steering Committee.
Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Piedmont College	Provide support for public information efforts, technical and scientific advice and assistance, participation on Steering Committee.
GA DNR Wildlife Resources Div., GA Forestry Comm., GA Soil and Water Cons. Comm., Upper Chattahoochee Soil & Water Cons. Dist., GA Mountains RDC, U.S. Forest Service	Provide support for public information and educational programs, technical advice and assistance, data and research sharing, participation on Steering Committee.

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Appendix A

Community Steering Committee Membership List

<u>Mt. Airy</u>					
	Gary Morris	Mayor	P. O. Box 257 Mt. Airy, GA 30563	706-778-6990	gmorris@applebank.net
	Ann Darden	Clerk	P. O. Box 257 Mt. Airy, GA 30564	706-778-6990	anndardentc@hemc.net
	Deloney Gunnely	Administrator	P. O. Box 257 Mt. Airy, GA 30565	706-778-6990	gunnelspd@hemc.net
<u>Board of Education</u>					
	Judy Forbes	Superintendent	P. O. Box 70 Clarkesville, GA 30523	706-754-2110 x16	jforbes@habersham.k12.ga.us
<u>Chamber of Commerce</u>					
	Ed Nichols	Executive Director	P. O. Box 366 Cornelia, GA 30531	706-778-4654	ednichols@alltel.net
<u>Farm Bureau</u>					
	Chip Brooks	Secretary/ Treasurer	1505 Alleys Chapel Road Clarkesville, GA 30523	706-499-3672	chipb@omegacomputers.com
<u>Home Builders Assoc.</u>					
	Beverly Gale	Incoming Pres.	140 Mossy Creek Pt., Cleveland, GA 30528	678-776-0217	paddling@alltel.net
<u>Hospital Authority</u>					
	John Foster	Board Member	P. O. Box 100 Cornelia, GA 30531	706-778-2241/706-778-2764	jcfwcon@windstream.net
<u>Industrial Authority</u>					
	Eddie Hood	Board Member	P. O. Box 37 Cornelia, GA 30531	706-894-3798	eddie.hood@firstgabnk.com
<u>Piedmont College</u>					
	Tom Bowen, PhD.	Vice-President for Administration and Finance	P. O. Box 10 Clarkesville, GA 30523	706-776-0102	tbowen@piedmont.edu
<u>Sogue Watershed</u>					
	Duncan Hughes	Watershed Coordinator	P.O. Box 65 Clarkesville, GA 30523	706-754-7872	dhughes@northgatech.edu

<u>Water Authority</u>					
	Lynne Dockery	Chairman	P. O. Box 706 Cornelia, GA 30531	706-778-3333	ronedoc@hotmail.com
	Terry Lawler	Secretary	55 Laurel Place Drive Cornelia, GA 30531	706-778-8053	tlawler@windstream.net
<u>Citizen Representative</u>					
	Dave Thomas	Citizen	533 Yates Circle Clarkesville, GA 30523	706-754-8664	dthomas500@alltel.net
<u>JJ & G Contact</u>					
Megan Will					
6801 Governors Lake Pkwy; Building 200					
Norcross, GA 30071					
678-333-0461					
mwill@jig.com					

Appendix B

List of Stakeholders Interviewed

**Habersham Interview List
Completed Interviews**

Audrey Turner	Mayor	Alto
Bill Massey	Resident	Alto
Sherry Donnelly	Owner, Gertie Mae's Fresh Flower Shop	Clarksville
David Humphries	Retired Resident	Clarksville
Danny Otter	Large business owner and developer	Clarksville
Angelia Sosby	Small business owner	Clarksville
Martha Richardson	Representative - Habersham County Library	Clarksville
Duncan Hughes	Representative, Soque River Watershed Association	Clarksville
Matt Mixon	Business Owner and Developer (Matt Mixon Insurance Agency & Blackdog LLC)	Clarksville
Brenda Garcia & Merlene Hogsed	Council Member, BHT & Zoning Boards	Cornelia
Jean Armstrong	Business Owner, downtown Cornelia	Cornelia
Paul Reeves	Business Owner, Habersham Hardware	Cornelia
Gay Davis	Citizen, Realtor	Cornelia
Cat Simpson	Owner of downtown businesses	Cornelia
Dr. Audrey Milo	Resident	Cornelia
Micheal Armstrong	Business Owner, downtown Cornelia	Cornelia
Fred Earhart	Resident	Demorest
Marta Adair	Resident	Demorest
Sue Bearden	Resident	Demorest
Tom Bowen	Resident	Demorest
Ed Nichols, Mike Kelley, Mille Stevens, & Martha Reabold	Chamber of Commerce	Habersham
Jim Butterworth Jr.	Chair County Commission	Habersham
Charlie Miller	Commissioner	Habersham
Gerald Dunham	Commissioner	Habersham
Brent Edwards, Terry Rogers, & John C. Foster	Industrial Development Authority	Habersham
Doug Vermilya	Commissioner	Habersham
Lewis Canup	County Engineer, Former County Manager	Habersham
Rick Austin	Vice Chair County Commission	Habersham
Deray Fincher	Sheriff	Habersham
Tom Braswell	Habersham County Building Director/Interim Planning Director	Habersham

**Habersham Interview List
Completed Interviews**

Mike Vanwinkle, Michele Wetherbee, Louis Bonadies & Dale Van Cantfort	Habersham County Planning Commission	Habersham
Lynne Dockery, Terry Lawler, & Tom Bowen	Water Authority, Piedmont College, and Habersham County Planning Commission (respectively)	Habersham
Carl Hefner	Business Owner, Grandview Auto	Mt. Airy
Sharon & Mike Fleischer	Resident	Mt. Airy
Delon Gunnels	Chief of Police	Mt. Airy Police Department
Dr. Brian Hoffman	Citizen Volunteer	Alto
Barrie Aycock	Citizen Volunteer	Clarksville
Mr. Ben Daniels	Citizen Volunteer	Clarksville
Dave Thomas	Citizen Volunteer	Clarksville
Teresa Franklin	Citizen Volunteer	Cornelia
Richard Webb	Citizen Volunteer	Demorest
Andy Skinner	Citizen Volunteer	Demorest

Appendix C
Visioning Workshop Summaries

Cornelia Visioning Workshop Summary



Workshop Attendees at the Ballard Center

Statistics:

- First of three workshops
- August 16, 2007
- Held at the Ballard Center
- 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- 20 recorded attendees

Overview of Visioning Workshops

In accordance with the *Community Participation Program*, visioning workshops were held during August 2007 in different communities throughout Habersham County in conjunction with the County's Joint Comprehensive Plan. The workshops served multiple purposes:

1. To inform the public about the Comprehensive Plan, including the planning process, major plan elements, and its purpose;
2. To gather community input on major issues and opportunities as well as community preferences; and
3. To begin building consensus around a unified community vision and plan for the future, both on a county-wide and city-level basis.

Workshop Activities

Each of the visioning workshops covered the same material and followed a similar format. As a result, community members were urged to attend one of the three workshops. Beyond informal questions and answers with the project staff, meetings generally followed the below agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Project Overview
3. Quality of Life Issues and Priority Setting Exercise
4. Community Preference Survey and Discussion
5. Closing Remarks
6. Map Exercise

Because each meeting resulted in different input, three separate summaries have been completed for each.

Overview of Cornelia Workshop

The first of the three visioning workshops occurred on August 16th at the Ballard Center in Cornelia. With 20 community members in attendance, the meeting served as a valuable starting point for the visioning process and doubled as a building block for the remaining two workshops.

Attendees

Participants were asked to register their attendance by signing in upon arrival to the Ballard Center. A total of 20 people – ranging from elected officials, local government staff, interested county residents, and others were present. The Community Preference Survey, summarized on

the next page, indicated the following, approximate residential breakdown of attendees: Cornelia, 50 percent; Unincorporated Habersham, 25 percent; Mt. Airy, 13 percent; Clarkesville, 6 percent; and Demorest 6 percent.

Priority Setting Exercise

The priority setting exercise was the first major opportunity for community input at the workshop. This activity focused on policy. The brainstorming session allowed all attendees to express their perspectives on community issues and opportunities that should be priorities over the upcoming years. General comments identified the need to increase school capacity, improve accessibility to the hospital, and alleviate traffic congestion in various areas of the county.

Participants also focused on the need to plan proactively for the future by enforcing a land use plan and building infrastructure to reflect those desired land uses. The group focused on six priority areas in detail. Brief summaries of these discussions follow:

1. **Recreation** – Recreation should be more evenly allocated throughout the community. In particular, there is need for more facilities in the southern area of the county near Cornelia and Mt. Airy. The county needs more soccer fields and non-structured recreation facilities (including a skate park and water park) as well as passive forms of recreation including sidewalks and a rails-to-trails program. SPLOST is a potential source for funding these needs.
2. **Land Use** – The county should have a strong land use plan. Participants noted that this will involve realistic coordination with major land owners – including the National Park Service, government entities, and Georgia Power. Transportation and land use should be coordinated. In particular, commercial and industrial development should be located on the 365 corridor. By concentrating these land uses along 365, quality of life will be improved in other areas of the county.
3. **Water** – Water plays an important role in the community and development will not occur if the county does not have an adequate supply. Better coordination among the county’s multiple governments will help with this issue. A greater emphasis on sewer (over septic) will also make the water system more efficient.
4. **Neighborhood Redevelopment** – Renovation and reclamation of dilapidated housing will help improve some neighborhoods in the community. In Cornelia, there is a need to enforce existing codes and ordinances. The community should also focus on building attractive homes in walkable neighborhoods using existing infrastructure.
5. **Industry** – There is a general need to increase industry in the county to help alleviate the tax burden on residents. Some ways to do this include workforce development (better higher education opportunities, improved graduation rates, etc.), better incentives for industry (such as tax abatements), and a strategic economic development plan that should lead to both a marketing and public relations program. Smaller industries would positively contribute to the community, including technology industries.



6. Intergovernmental Coordination – Better communication is needed among the local governments and between these governments and their citizens. Small communities could benefit by coordinating infrastructure with the County. Joint strategies would also positively benefit the county/municipalities, including a unified subdivision ordinance, county-wide zoning, and a county-wide water and sewer system.

Community Preference Survey

The Community Preference Survey (CPS) was the second major avenue for community input at the workshop. This activity focused on community design. The survey covered a variety of building types that the community will need to build over the planning period to keep up with anticipated growth. The building types included the following:

- Single Family Housing (three types)
- Multi Family Housing (two types)
- Rural Housing
- Workforce Housing
- Office
- Retail (two types)
- Mixed-Use
- Industrial



Using an electronic keypad voting system, attendees reviewed multiple images of structure types and voted on what they would like to see most in their community. For each summary slide, participants were asked to choose one of four images. Keypad voting allowed attendees to see instant results. To further understand these voting responses, community members were encouraged to express characteristics that they did and did not like about particular structures. A summary of these results is included as an appendix to this document. Some characteristics were favored for multiple structures and began to demonstrate a unified sense of community character that is appropriate for the community. Some of these recurring characteristics included privacy, sidewalks, trees, sense of community, traditional building design, and landscaping.

Map Exercise

Due to extended discussions related to the CPS and Priority Setting Exercise, the planned map exercise was not completed.

Concluding Remarks Regarding Workshop

At the meeting's close, attendees were encouraged to complete the community visioning questionnaire (summarized in a separate document) and to attend the Open House once the Community Agenda is completed. The Cornelia Visioning Workshop was an important first step for getting the community excited about planning for the community's future. As is depicted in the August 23rd and August 30th workshop summaries, turnout and the amount of community feedback increased greatly between the first and second visioning workshops. The community input gathered at these meetings will play an important role the Community Agenda document.

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Appendix to August 16 Visioning Workshop Summary: Community Preference Survey Results



Single Family – Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 1	1	5	31.3%
	2	1	6.3%
	3	5	31.3%
	4	5	31.3%
	Total	16	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Homes in Choice 2 are too close together
- Like privacy, sidewalks



Single Family – Group 2 Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 2	1	2	12.5%
	2	12	75.0%
	3	1	6.3%
	4	1	6.3%
	Total	16	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 4 has low infrastructure costs, but no space, grass, etc.

Single Family – Group 3



Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

3

Single Family – Group 3 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 3	1	7	43.8%
	2	4	25.0%
	3	3	18.8%
	4	2	12.5%
	Total	16	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Like Choice 4, single-level, sidewalks, trees

Rural



Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

4

Rural Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Rural	1	6	40.0%
	2	3	20.0%
	3	5	33.3%
	4	1	6.7%
	Total	15	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Comments from Meeting Attendees

None

Workforce Housing





Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

Workforce Housing Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Workforce Housing	1	0	0.0%
	2	4	25.0%
	3	12	75.0%
	4	0	0.0%
Total		16	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Like traditional look

Multi - Family – Group 1





Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

Multi-Family Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Multi - Family – Group 1	1	6	42.9%
	2	3	21.4%
	3	1	7.1%
	4	4	28.6%
Total		14	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 1 – like variety of styles
- Choice 4 – like porches, gives a community feel & opportunities for interaction



Multi-Family Group 2 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Multi - Family – Group 2	1	5	50.0%
	2	0	0.0%
	3	2	20.0%
	4	3	30.0%
	Total	10	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 1 – like reuse
- Choice 3 – too congested
- Choice 4 – nice place to retire



Retail Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Retail – Group 1	1	0	0.0%
	2	8	50.0%
	3	0	0.0%
	4	8	50.0%
	Total	16	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 2 – looks like Cornelia, trees and colors
- Choice 4 – looks like Clarkesville



Retail Group 2 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Retail – Group 2	1	4	22.2%
	2	0	0.0%
	3	8	44.4%
	4	6	33.3%
	Total	18	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 2 – too much asphalt
- Choice 3 – more inviting, can go many places at once
- Choice 4 – like traditional architecture



Office Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Office	1	7	43.8%
	2	2	12.5%
	3	2	12.5%
	4	5	31.3%
	Total	16	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 3 – too much asphalt
- Choice 2 – re-use
- Choice 1 – built-up, so it is cheaper; this is good



Mixed-Use Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Mixed-Use	1	4	23.5%
	2	6	35.3%
	3	4	23.5%
	4	3	17.6%
	Total	17	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop, August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 2 – reuse (good), more interesting, charming; downtowns develop organically



Industrial Voting Results

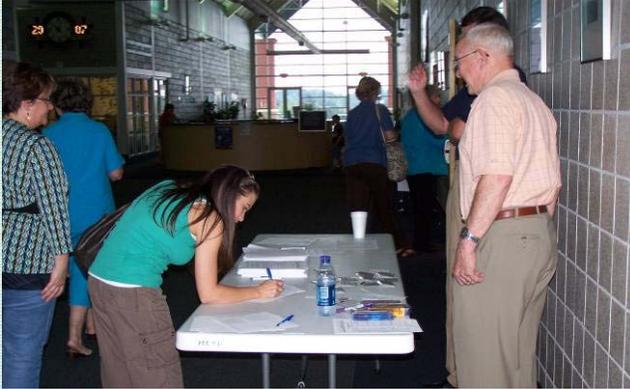
Topic	Choice	August 16, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Industrial	1	0	0.0%
	2	3	21.4%
	3	4	28.6%
	4	7	50.0%
	Total	14	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop, August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Brick looks more permanent
- Like landscaping
- Like buffers and berms

Clarkesville Visioning Workshop Summary



Workshop attendees sign-in before workshop begins

Statistics:

- Second of three workshops
- August 23, 2007
- Held at the Aquatic Center
- 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- 99 recorded attendees

Workshop Activities

Each of the visioning workshops covered the same material and followed a similar format. As a result, community members were urged to attend one of the three workshops. Beyond informal questions and answers with the project staff, the meetings generally followed the below agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Project Overview
3. Quality of Life Issues and Priority Setting Exercise
4. Community Preference Survey and Discussion
5. Closing Remarks
6. Map Exercise

Because each meeting resulted in different input, separate summaries have been completed for each.

Overview of Clarkesville Workshop

The second of three visioning workshops occurred on August 23rd at the Aquatic Center in Clarkesville. With 99 community members in attendance, a good deal of input was collected. The meeting began with a brief discussion of how the Habersham community had changed for the better and worse since 1987. Traffic, water issues, expanding leadership, and better recreational facilities were among those items mentioned that got attendees to start thinking about the 20 year planning period.

Overview of Visioning Workshops

In accordance with the *Community Participation Program*, visioning workshops were held during August 2007 in different communities throughout Habersham County in conjunction with the County's Joint Comprehensive Plan. The workshops served multiple purposes:

1. To inform the public about the Comprehensive Plan, including the planning process, major plan elements, and its purpose;
2. To gather community input on major issues and opportunities as well as community preferences; and
3. To begin building consensus around a unified community vision and plan for the future, both on a county-wide and city-level basis.

Attendees

Participants were asked to register their attendance by signing in upon arrival to the Aquatic Center. A total of 99 people – ranging from elected officials, local government staff, interested county residents, and others were present. The Community Preference Survey, summarized on the next page, indicated the following, approximated residential breakdown of attendees: Cornelia, 1 percent; Unincorporated Habersham, 63 percent; Clarkesville, 26 percent; Demorest, 8 percent; and Other, 1 percent.

Priority Setting Exercise

The priority setting exercise was the first major opportunity for community input at the workshop. This activity focused on policy needs that would help carry-out the community's vision for the future. Attendees were separated into three groups by date of birth. Groups were formed in this way with the hope of eliminating bias that may result from people congregating in groups with like-minded people. The brainstorming session allowed all attendees to express their perspectives and opinions for community priorities over the upcoming years.

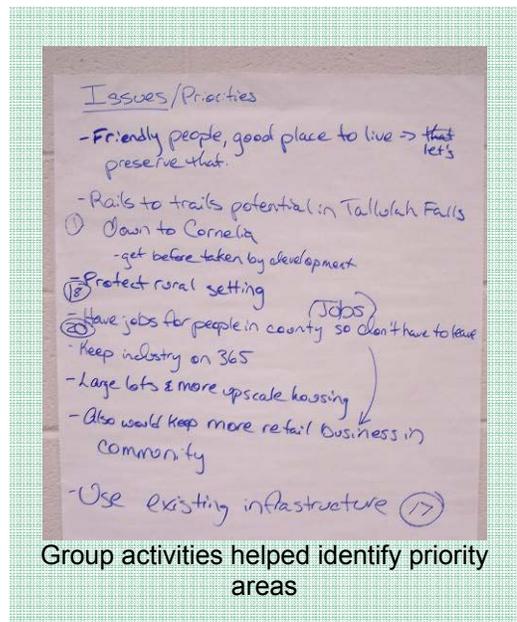
Each group discussed various topics. Below are those topics that each group determined were the most important to pursue:

Group 1, Led by Charlotte Weber, JJG 40 participants, 18 women & 22 men

Priorities included water and sewer, transportation management, industry, impact fees, and the protection of citizens. The group decided that the top three priorities should be protection of cultural and natural resources, consolidation of services, and smart growth.

Group 2, Led by Jonathan Webster, JJG 18 participants, 8 women & 10 men

The group agreed that two main issues should be a priority among all others: intergovernmental coordination and development of water reservoirs. Intergovernmental coordination could potentially lead to the consolidation of city governments. The development of reservoirs is a reflection of the need to resolve water shortages in the community. To meet water needs, it would be wise for Habersham communities to coordinate with other large water stakeholders (e.g. the state, Alto prison, etc.). Funding streams, such as bonds, should also be identified for meeting the costs of related improvements. The other two top priorities identified by Group 2 were transportation improvements and greater economic development efforts.



Group 3, Led by Megan Will, JJG
30 participants, 17 women & 13 men

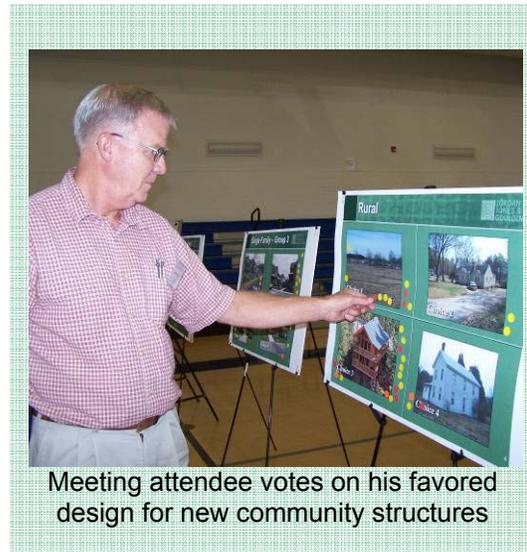
Group 3 prioritized similar issues as Group 1 and Group 2. Issues that were top priorities were the provision of more jobs within the county, protection of the rural setting, transition of 365 to a limited-access highway, and use of existing infrastructure (including preserving historical resources). Developing water and sewer to accommodate anticipated growth and the enforcement and use of plans were underlying issues that were also discussed by the group as high-level priorities.

Community Preference Survey

The Community Preference Survey (CPS) was the second major avenue for community input at the workshop. This activity focused on community design. The survey covered a variety of building types that the community will need to add over the planning period to keep up with anticipated growth. Building types considered included the following:

- Single Family Housing (three types)
- Multi Family Housing (two types)
- Rural Housing
- Workforce Housing
- Office
- Retail (two types)
- Mixed-Use
- Industrial

Unlike the first Visioning Workshop, this task was accomplished by attendees completing a self-led tour of design boards. For each design board, participants were asked to choose one of four images. Each participant voted by placing a sticker on his or her preferred image, registering his or her vote. Each community in the county had its own color coded voting sticker, making the tabulation of individual community results easy. Due to the time constraints of the meeting, limited discussions of the boards followed the voting period. A summary of these comments and results is included as an appendix to this document. Some favorable qualities that were mentioned repeatedly by the group included open space, landscaping, historic characteristics, and an overall sense of permanence.



Map Exercise

Several enlarged maps of Habersham County’s cities and unincorporated areas were on display as attendees left the workshop. Using colored stars, attendees were asked to vote on the following before they left for the night: favorite place (other than your house), best place for a new subdivision, best place for a major employer, and best place for revitalization. **Figure 1** (below) shows some of those areas that repeatedly chosen by community members. Overall results will help redefine character areas that were initially identified in the Community Assessment. They will also help delineate future land uses in the Community Agenda document.

Figure 1: Repeated Selections from Map Exercise

Favorite Place	Best Place for a New Subdivision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downtown areas of Clarkesville ▪ Piedmont College in Demorest ▪ Northeast portion of unincorporated County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West of Swain St. in Clarkesville ▪ Northern area of Demorest that is undeveloped ▪ Southwest area of county, south of 384 ▪ West of US 23, just west of Alto ▪ Just west of Hwy 115, just outside of Clarkesville ▪ East of US 441, just south of Demorest
Best Place for a Major Employer	Best Place for Revitalization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Just west of First St. in Mt. Airy ▪ Southern portion of Clarkesville ▪ Between Alto and Cornelia, east of US 23 ▪ Along GA 15, just southwest of Cornelia ▪ On GA 365 in southern tip of county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downtown Clarkesville ▪ North of Duncan Bridge Road, just south of Cornelia ▪ Just west of US 441, between Clarkesville and Demorest

Concluding Remarks Regarding Workshop

At the meeting’s close, attendees were encouraged to complete the community visioning questionnaire (summarized in separate documents) and to attend the Open House once the Community Agenda is completed. The Clarkesville Visioning Workshop demonstrated the public’s concern for Habersham County’s future. As is reflected in notes from the August 16th and August 30th workshop summaries, community members regularly site and prioritize similar concerns across the county’s communities. This data will help provide joint strategies and policies in the Community Agenda documents of the Comprehensive Plan.



Appendix to August 23 Visioning Workshop Summary: Community Preference Survey Results

Single Family – Group 1



Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

Single Family – Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 1	1	16	22.2%
	2	16	22.2%
	3	33	45.8%
	4	7	9.7%
Total		72	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Single Family – Group 2



Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

Single Family – Group 2 Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 2	1	24	32.9%
	2	37	50.7%
	3	12	16.4%
	4	0	0.0%
Total		73	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 2 – land, open space, conservation subdivision look
- Choice 1 – trees, greenspace, old-fashioned, sense of community, kid-friendly
- Choice 3 – too close to road, too close together, front porches, lacks greenery in front, reducing infrastructure through increased density

Single Family – Group 3



3

Single Family – Group 3 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 3	1	9	15.3%
	2	16	27.1%
	3	24	40.7%
	4	10	16.9%
	Total	59	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Rural



4

Rural Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Rural	1	40	54.8%
	2	2	2.7%
	3	22	30.1%
	4	9	12.3%
	Total	73	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Workforce Housing



5

Workforce Housing Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Workforce Housing	1	3	4.3%
	2	19	27.1%
	3	48	68.6%
	4	0	0.0%
Total		70	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Multi - Family – Group 1



6

Multi-Family Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Multi - Family – Group 1	1	40	56.3%
	2	16	22.5%
	3	11	15.5%
	4	4	5.6%
Total		71	

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007



Multi-Family Group 2 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Multi - Family – Group 2	1	47	67.1%
	2	1	1.4%
	3	9	12.9%
	4	13	18.6%
	Total	70	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Parking spaces, restaurants, aesthetics and architecture
- Lack of Low End Housing
- Nice little houses
- Clarkesville HD –craftsman, farmhouse



Retail Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Retail – Group 1	1	2	2.8%
	2	30	42.3%
	3	0	0.0%
	4	39	54.9%
	Total	71	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Retail – Group 2



9

Retail Group 2 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Retail – Group 2	1	26	35.6%
	2	2	2.7%
	3	39	53.4%
	4	6	8.2%
	Total	73	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 2 – no trees, landscaping, need to drive to access, just a box, sits on corner
- Choice 4 – like signage
- Choice 3 – like a village, mature trees (shade, help with run-off), walkable
- Choice 1 – big setback, multiple tenants, well-done, attractive

Office



10

Office Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Office	1	13	18.8%
	2	10	14.5%
	3	3	4.3%
	4	43	62.3%
	Total	69	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 4 [like] – permanence, parking in the back, residential style, landscaping
- Choice 3 [don't like] – lack of landscaping – no trees; parking in front
- Choice 1 – historical quality, multi-tenant, many trips in one
- Choice 2 – adaptive, re-use

Mixed-Use



11

Mixed-Use Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Mixed-Use	1	9	15.5%
	2	4	6.9%
	3	22	37.9%
	4	23	39.7%
	Total	58	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Industrial



12

Industrial Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 23, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Industrial	1	2	2.9%
	2	3	4.3%
	3	10	14.5%
	4	54	78.3%
	Total	69	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Demorest Visioning Workshop Summary



Workshop attendees listen to an overview of the comprehensive planning process

Statistics:

- Final of three workshops
- August 30, 2007
- Held at Demorest Municipal Building
- 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- 44 recorded attendees

Overview of County-Wide Visioning Workshops

In accordance with the *Community Participation Program*, visioning workshops were held during August 2007 in different communities throughout Habersham County in conjunction with the County's Joint Comprehensive Plan. The workshops served multiple purposes:

1. To inform the public about the Comprehensive Plan, including the planning process, major plan elements, and its purpose;
2. To gather community input on major issues and opportunities as well as community preferences; and
3. To begin building consensus around a unified community vision and plan for the future, both on a county-wide and city-level basis.

Workshop Activities

Each of the visioning workshops covered the same material and followed a similar format. As a result, community members were urged to attend one of the three workshops. Beyond informal questions and answers with project staff, the meetings generally followed the below agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Project Overview
3. Quality of Life Issues and Priority Setting Exercise
4. Community Preference Survey and Discussion
5. Closing Remarks
6. Map Exercise

Because each meeting resulted in different input, separate summaries have been completed for each.

Demorest Visioning Workshop

The final of three visioning workshops occurred on August 30th at the Demorest Municipal Building. With 44 community members in attendance, a wealth of input was collected from community members. The meeting began with a brief discussion of how the area had changed for the better and worse since 1987. Several improvements were identified by attendees, including more schools, improved healthcare facilities and medical staff, better

utilities (including water and sewer), and improved fire protection. Traffic, growth without needed infrastructure, and higher taxes were identified as negative changes in the community. This brief, introductory brainstorming session initiated group thinking regarding the importance of comprehensive planning, setting the tone for the meeting.

Attendees

Participants were asked to register their attendance by signing in upon arrival to the Municipal Building. A total of 44 people – ranging from elected officials, local government staff, interested county residents, and others were present. The Community Preference Survey, summarized on the next page, indicated the following, approximate residential breakdown of attendees: Alto, 12 percent; Cornelia, 9 percent; Unincorporated Habersham, 55 percent; Clarkesville, 3 percent; Demorest, 18 percent; and other, 3 percent.

Priority Setting Exercise

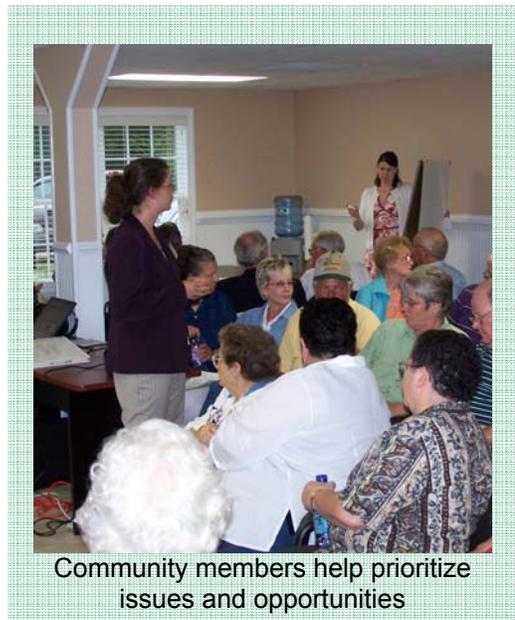
The priority setting exercise was the first major opportunity for community input at the workshop. This activity focused on policy needs that would help carry-out the community’s vision for the future. Attendees were separated into two groups. The brainstorming sessions allowed all attendees to express their perspectives and opinions on community priorities over the upcoming years.

Each group discussed various topics. Below are those topics that each group determined were the most important to pursue:

Group 1, Led by Charlotte Weber, JIG

Group 1 discussed a variety of priorities, reflecting the diverse perspectives of those community members in attendance. Among a long list of topics, the group agreed upon three main priority areas, summarized below:

1. Balancing Growth with Maintenance of Rural Character. This priority area includes integrating housing, industry, and greenspace. Natural resources, including rivers and streams, should be protected to preserve existing habitats and aesthetic characteristics.
2. Water and sewer, fire, police. These services need to be increased, improved, and consolidated. Intergovernmental coordination is essential to accomplishing this.
3. Jobs and Economic Development. County residents need access to higher paying, professional job opportunities. More industry will help also the tax base. Schools (particularly workforce development) and housing should be coordinated with these economic development efforts.
4. Recreation and Arts. There is greater need for tree preservation and facilities such soccer and tennis faculties.



5. Improvement of Road Network. Particular focus should be placed on 365 and its alternative routes.

Group 2, Led by Megan Will, JJG

Many of the same topics discussed in Group 1 were also discussed in Group 2. Those topics that were discussed in the most detail are listed below:

1. Water and Sewer. Water and sewer infrastructure should be cost effective. It may be appropriate to consider the use of impact fees to fund infrastructure.
2. Attraction of High-Tech Jobs/Industry. Several strategies may support this growth, including bringing jet fuel to the airport to expand business opportunities and focusing on telecommuting opportunities. Smaller/low impact businesses should be attracted. It is important to attract industry to have a more balanced economy.
3. Road Improvements. There should be controlled access on 365 so that traffic can maintain a high speed. Corridor management should also be increased – including coordinating land use with transportation and schools. Frontage roads should be prioritized.
4. Greenspace Conservation. This should include the creation of conservation subdivisions and better regulation of noise and light. New energy opportunities will also help contribute to the environment, including curbside recycling, creative energy sources, and energy conservation within public facilities.



The Visioning Workshop notes include a complete list of discussed topics.

Community Preference Survey

The Community Preference Survey (CPS) was the second major avenue for community input. This activity focused on community design. The survey covered a variety of building types including:

- Single Family Housing (three types)
- Multi Family Housing (two types)
- Rural Housing
- Workforce Housing
- Office
- Retail (two types)
- Mixed-Use
- Industrial

Similar to the second Visioning Workshop, this task was accomplished by attendees completing a self-led tour of design boards. For each design board, participants were asked to choose one of four images. Each participant voted by placing a sticker on his or her preferred image, registering their vote. Each community in the county had its own voting sticker, making the tabulation of individual community results easy. Due to the time constraints of the meeting, limited discussions of the boards followed the voting period. A summary of these comments and results is included as an appendix to this document. Some favorable qualities that were mentioned by the group included landscaping, sidewalks, trees, and good aesthetics.

Map Exercise

Several enlarged maps of Habersham County’s cities and unincorporated areas were on display as attendees left the workshop. Using colored stars, attendees were asked to vote on the following before they left for the night: favorite place (other than your house), best place for a new subdivision, best place for a major employer, and best place for revitalization. **Figure 1** shows those areas that were repeatedly chosen by meeting attendees. Overall results will help redefine character areas initially identified in the Community Assessment. They will also help delineate future land uses in the Community Agenda document.

Figure 1: Repeated Selections from Map Exercise

Favorite Place	Best Place for a New Subdivision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Washington St., downtown Clarkesville ▪ Georgia St. and Central Ave. in Demorest ▪ Northwest portion of county, west of GA 197 ▪ Northeast portion of county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West of Cornelia city limits
Best Place for a Major Employer	Best Place for Revitalization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southern tip of County, along GA 15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Just south and west of Clarkesville city limits ▪ Areas of Central Avenue in Demorest ▪ Parts of downtown Cornelia, near Main St.

Concluding Remarks Regarding Workshop

At the meeting’s close, attendees were encouraged to complete the community visioning questionnaire (summarized in a separate document from this) and to attend the Open House once the Community Agenda is completed. The Demorest Visioning Workshop concluded a series of visioning workshops in the community. Although discussions varied slightly from workshop to workshop, community members focused on comparatively similar priorities at all meetings. By considering information collected at these workshops, the Community Agendas will be a strong reflection of the community’s aspirations for Habersham County and its municipalities.

Appendix to August 30 Visioning Workshop Summary: Community Preference Survey Results

Single Family – Group 1



Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

1

Single Family – Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 1	1	6	18.8%
	2	7	21.9%
	3	17	53.1%
	4	2	6.3%
Total		32	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Single Family – Group 2



Choice 1



Choice 2



Choice 3



Choice 4

2

Single Family – Group 2 Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 2	1	7	21.2%
	2	24	72.7%
	3	2	6.1%
	4	0	0.0%
Total		33	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Single Family – Group 3



3

Single Family – Group 3 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Single Family – Group 3	1	2	6.3%
	2	8	25.0%
	3	14	43.8%
	4	8	25.0%
Total		32	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- Choice 3 – attractive, nice landscaping, permanence, sidewalks, promotes more community unity
- Choice 1 (few votes) – “cookie cutter,” no visible partition, wall of houses, isolating, sidewalk part of street – more pavement
- Choice 4 – privacy, separate lot

Rural



4

Rural Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Rural	1	11	34.4%
	2	8	25.0%
	3	13	40.6%
	4	0	0.0%
Total		32	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007.

Workforce Housing



5

Workforce Housing Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Workforce Housing	1	3	7.7%
	2	17	43.6%
	3	19	48.7%
	4	0	0.0%
	Total	39	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop, August 2007

Multi - Family – Group 1



6

Multi-Family Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Multi - Family – Group 1	1	21	65.6%
	2	6	18.8%
	3	1	3.1%
	4	4	12.5%
	Total	32	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop, August 2007

Multi - Family – Group 2



Multi-Family Group 2 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Multi - Family – Group 2	1	15	48.4%
	2	2	6.5%
	3	3	9.7%
	4	11	35.5%
	Total	31	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Comments from Meeting Attendees

- *Should keep multi-family in municipalities*
- Choices 1 and 4 most popular
- Choice 1 – downtown very heavily chosen by unincorporated county, good aesthetics
- Choice 3 – family friendly
- Choice 4 – scale unappealing to people, land conservation through density, others don't want because too many people
- Choice 2 – like affordability

Retail – Group 1



Retail Group 1 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Retail – Group 1	1	1	3.0%
	2	18	54.5%
	3	0	0.0%
	4	14	42.4%
	Total	33	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Retail – Group 2



9

Retail Group 2 Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Retail – Group 2	1	13	36.1%
	2	1	2.8%
	3	16	44.4%
	4	6	16.7%
	Total	36	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Attendees

- Choices 1 and 3 most popular
- Choice 3 – (like) trees are good, architecture gives small town feel
- Choice 3 (don't like) – large strip malls, takes up lots of land, too large scale
- Choice 4 – poor use of land, too few businesses for as much land taken up
- Choice 2 – barren looking – too much parking, not enough trees

Comments from Meeting

Office



10

Office Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Office	1	7	21.2%
	2	8	24.2%
	3	1	3.0%
	4	17	51.5%
	Total	33	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Mixed-Use



11

Mixed-Use Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Mixed-Use	1	9	28.1%
	2	11	34.4%
	3	4	12.5%
	4	8	25.0%
	Total	32	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Industrial



12

Industrial Voting Results

Topic	Choice	August 30, 2007	
		Count	Percent of Total
Industrial	1	1	3.1%
	2	1	3.1%
	3	7	21.9%
	4	23	71.9%
	Total	32	100.0%

Source: Visioning Workshop. August 2007

Appendix D

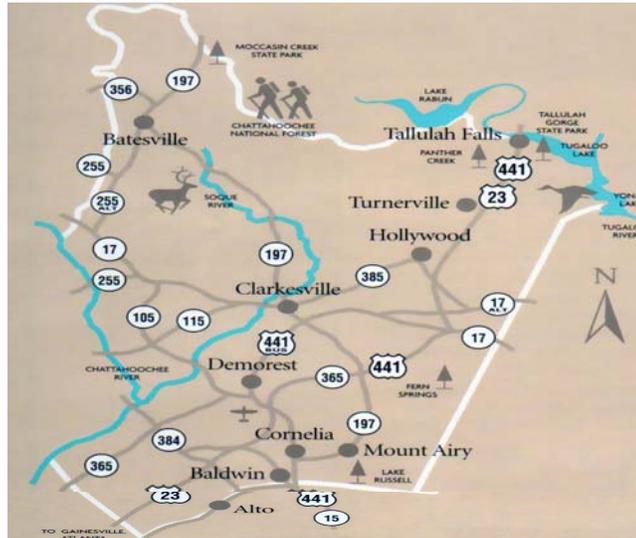
Community Visioning Questionnaire Summary

Habersham County

Overall Community Visioning Questionnaire Summary

Habersham County & Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan Update

October 2007



Community Questionnaire

A community questionnaire was produced and distributed in conjunction with the Habersham County & Cities 2029 Joint Comprehensive efforts, to help ascertain issues the citizens feel need to be addressed in the future. Issues encompassed a number of categories, including;

- population growth
- economic development
- housing
- natural and cultural resources
- transportation
- quality of life/sense of place
- intergovernmental coordination
- community facilities and services
- land use

The information gathered is important in determining community priorities that will eventually help establish short and long-term planning goals. This report provides a summary of the responses provided by residents of Habersham County to a detailed questionnaire. Highlights of the questionnaire responses are included below; please refer to the Appendix for full details.

The questionnaire was available at the three visioning workshops, held in mid to late August 2007. It was also available at all participating municipalities and the County's courthouse as well as interactively on the Habersham County website from August 15 – September 15, 2007. The results of the questionnaire will be used in the development of the Community Agenda portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Demographics of Participants

A total of 312 questionnaires were returned from participants living in various parts of the County and its municipalities. The majority of questionnaires were received from participants that resided in Unincorporated Habersham County (46 percent) and the City of Clarksville (31 percent). Other cities/towns that participated were Cornelia (10 percent), Demorest (6 percent), Mt. Airy (5 percent), and Alto (3 percent). The bulk of the participants have lived in the community for 10 or more years (50 percent) and 27 percent had lived in the area 5 to 10 years. Many of the participants have seen their community change and grow over the years and are concerned with what will happen in the future. A large number of the participants are over 55 (54 percent), 41 percent are 30 to 55, and only 5 percent are under the age of 30. Participants' household incomes were primarily distributed from middle to upper income:

- less than \$50,000: 18 percent
- \$50,000 to \$70,000: 27 percent
- \$70,000 to \$100,000: 26 percent
- More than \$100,000: 30 percent

Summary of Responses

Policy Options

A list of possible growth and development policy options were compiled; and respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each option. Respondents replied most negatively to 3 options; questions 10, 14, and 23. Two of the options dealt with suburbanization of the county. These objections were also expressed in the free response question; one participant said, *“I lived in north DeKalb for 50 years. I saw what happens when clear cutting is allowed, when roads are widened, trees cut down, too many big box stores, traffic. I moved away from all that. I do not want it to follow me and ruin what I moved for!!”* and another stated, *“We should have smart planned growth and retain rural character.”* Figure 1 shows the results of participants' responses to policy options.

Figure 1: Results from Policy Statements 10-25 Community Questionnaire

Policy Options	Strongly Agree	Generally Agree	Undecided	Generally Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Question 10: Habersham County should foster a suburban character	6%	17%	10%	39%	30%	301
Question 11: Habersham County should retain a rural character	46%	38%	4%	9%	3%	290
Question 12: Local cities and towns should foster/retain a small town character	52%	39%	3%	4%	2%	295
Question 13: I would prefer to have opportunity to walk or bike to neighborhood shops, restaurants, and parks	36%	26%	20%	13%	5%	301
Question 14: I would prefer to drive everywhere	5%	26%	18%	35%	16%	302
Question 15: A system of greenways should be developed that protect the County's environmentally sensitive areas and provide natural trails	61%	29%	6%	3%	1%	309

Policy Options	Strongly Agree	Generally Agree	Undecided	Generally Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Question 16: Local cities and towns should work to improve street connectivity	22%	35%	26%	12%	4%	290
Question 17: Local downtowns should be pedestrian oriented with access to parks and shops, restaurants and small offices.	57%	37%	3%	2%	1%	307
Question 18: New development in local cities and towns should be designed to look old, including live-work units (where a small business owner lives above their store) and condominiums located above shops and restaurants.	31%	34%	23%	10%	3%	306
Question 19: Public facilities such as police department, post offices, libraries, and schools are best kept within the local cities and towns vs. located in the unincorporated county.	33%	39%	14%	10%	4%	309
Question 20: Hwy 441 bypass, SR 17 and SR 365 should be developed as commercial and retail corridors.	20%	31%	17%	18%	14%	305
Question 21: Outside of local cities and towns the sides of Hwy 441 bypass, SR 17 and SR 365 should be preserved with wide natural or landscaped buffers.	42%	35%	10%	11%	2%	295
Question 22: Local industrial parks should be expanded to help create more jobs and improve the tax base.	44%	36%	13%	5%	2%	302
Question 23: Sewer service should be extended to undeveloped areas of the unincorporated County to encourage development.	20%	20%	22%	23%	14%	309
Question 24: Sewer service should be extended/increased in local cities and towns to foster development.	30%	37%	15%	12%	6%	304
Question 25: Sewer service should be extended to already developed areas with demonstrated septic tank problems.	34%	37%	17%	8%	4%	302

Source: Habersham County/Municipalities Joint Comprehensive Plan. JIG. 2007.

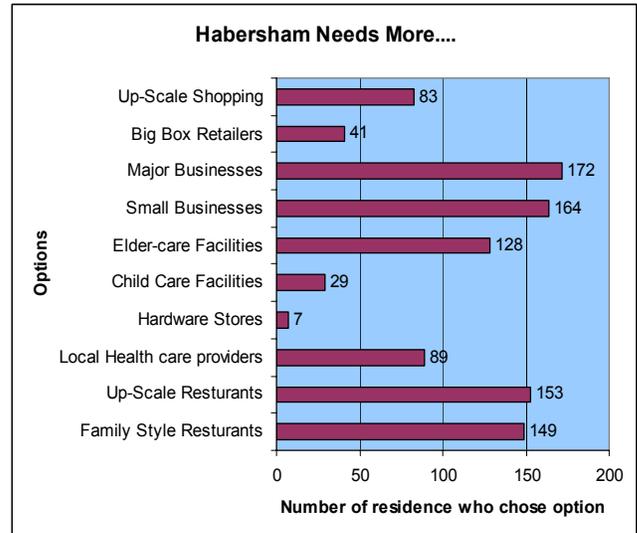
Growth

When the participants were asked their opinion about the current growth and its effects in their communities, the majority indicated that it is happening too fast and has been mismanaged (43 percent) about a third feel it is negatively impacting their quality of life (32 percent); interestingly though, 29 percent of the total participants feel that the growth was improving their quality of life or will in the future. Therefore, the citizens are somewhat split on the issue. Some citizens say, *“We like Habersham that way it was 10 years ago. More growth may cause us to move away.”* And others say, *“Let the County grow”* and *“Quality development has value and impacts the human spirit.”*

What Type of Services are Needed

The recommendations included in the comprehensive plan will be largely guided by the participants' identification of what they feel is needed in the community. Most participants indicated a need for different types of restaurants as well as businesses. The need for businesses was a reoccurring request; a number of participants expressed the need in the free response questions, they stated things such as, ***“Bring in business and industry tax base to adequately support new schools and other needs,”*** also that ***“There are no decent employers in the area.”*** Figure 2 illustrates the results of the question.

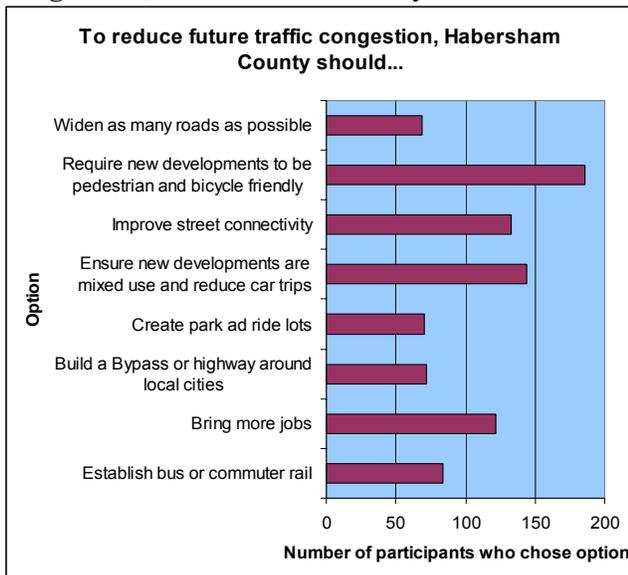
Figure 2: Habersham Needs More...



Recreation

When participants were asked about their desire for additional recreation options, 82 percent of expressed a want for passive recreational areas. Participants were also given a chance to write in their recreational wants, the majority of them said, ***“sidewalks, walking trails, bike trails.”***

Figure 3: To reduce future traffic congestion, Habersham County should...



Future Traffic Options

The questionnaire provided a number of options for reducing traffic congestion. The majority of the participants responded that new developments should concentrate on being pedestrian and bicycle friendly (60 percent). The other option that was most chosen was to ensure that new developments have a mix of uses as to reduce or shorten car trips (46 percent). The results in Figure 3 illustrate the responses concerning the ability to walk to amenities and the disbelief that widening roads and building highways will prevent or alleviate traffic. One citizen said, ***“Obviously, Atlanta did not solve their traffic issues by widening all of the roads.”***

Future Development

The questionnaire asked what type of residences the participants would like to reside in once retired; most chose a single-family home on a large lot (57 percent), 19 percent would like to live in a single-family home on a small lot, and 18 percent have a preference for condominiums or townhouses that provide the ability to walk to various destinations.

Habersham County is regionally known for its' natural beauty, a quality that is highly valued by residents and visitors. One respondent wrote what they like best about the county was the ***"Unspoiled natural beauty."*** For this reason, it is important to consider what will happen to the natural surroundings as development takes place. 50 percent of the respondents feel that developers should preserve trees to the greatest extent feasible, 49 percent feel developers should be required to either preserve a specific amount of trees or replace them after construction, and only 1 percent believe clear cutting should be permitted. Many of the answers to the free response questions dealt with issues of the environment, participants expressed that what they enjoy most about Habersham County was, ***"lots of vegetation and trees. It makes this a beautiful state"*** and ***"Beautiful setting with lakes/ponds, trees and well kept grounds."***

The questionnaire also asked participants to indicate their preference for policies to guide future growth and development; 50 percent of the respondents believe the community should focus on the character and quality of new residential development, rather than focusing on density, 39 percent feel the community should allow clustering of residential development to permanently protect greenspace and scenic views as long as development has an average of no more than one unit per buildable acre, and 11 percent feel the community should ensure every residential unit has a minimum of a one buildable acre lot.

What the respondents like most about Habersham County

One of the main reasons for this questionnaire is to understand what the residents of Habersham County value. The questionnaire asked "what do you like most about where you live?" the question was formatted as an open ended question. Many of the responses were similar; indicating a value for the small town atmosphere of the county's cities and the rural quality and natural beauty of the county. Below are some representative comments:

- Small town atmosphere
 - ***"People in community"***
 - ***"Slow pace"***
 - ***"Quietness of area"***
- Environment
 - ***"Mountain views"***
 - ***"Climate"***
 - ***"The area's beauty, view, and cleanliness"***
- Large Amounts of Land
 - ***"Big yard"***
 - ***"Acreage around home"***

What the respondents would like to change about their communities

The respondents clearly are concerned about the future. The most frequently cited concerns relate to issues of zoning and development regulations, the consolidation of government services, bringing more businesses and jobs to the area, and safety issues dealing with local roadways and traffic. Below are some representative comments:

- Zoning and development regulations
 - ***"Builders must abide by laws"***
 - ***"Better planning of subdivisions"***
 - ***"Uniform ordinances that effect signs and building business"***
- Consolidation of government services
 - ***"More cooperation between County and City government"***
 - ***"One water system for whole County"***

- *“County wide water and law enforcement”*
- More businesses and jobs
 - *“More jobs for next generation”*
 - *“Provide atmosphere conducive to small businesses”*
 - *“More retail, restaurants, and large businesses”*
- Safety Issues
 - *“Adequate police presence”*
 - *“Road Maintenance”*

Top issues facing Habersham County and its municipalities

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate what they believed to be the top issues facing Habersham County. The major issues included growth, water and sewer infrastructure, education, and jobs. Common comments are listed below.

- Growth
 - *“Expanding to fast”*
 - *“Growth, growth, growth”*
 - *“Low maintenance, attractive quality houses for seniors”*
- Water and Sewer
 - *“Water supply”*
 - *“Water and lack of”*
- Education
 - *“Student and schools not ready for growth”*
 - *“Inflexible education system”*
- Jobs
 - *““Clean” Industry. Creation of favorable business environment will result in the quality of growth we desire. We need businesses so our children will not have to leave town to work.”*
 - *“Bring in business/industry tax base to adequately support new schools and other needs”*

Conclusion

This questionnaire exemplifies and the desire of Habersham County’s residents for maintaining rural character and preserving environmental areas. The majority of residents feel future growth should promote walkability and pedestrian friendly areas, including new recreational trails. These results will be used to help identify short and long- term goals for the future growth of Habersham County.



HABERSHAM COUNTY

Office of County Commissioners

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October 30, 2008

Adam Hazell, AICP
Planning Director, GMRDC
P. O. Box 1720
Gainesville, GA 30503

Dear Mr. Hazell:

Attached you will find the Resolutions from Habersham County, the Towns of Alto and Mt. Airy, and the Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest adopting the 2009-2029 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

Please let me know if there is additional information you need.

Cordially,


Janeann Allison
County Manager

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2009-2029 JOINT HABERSHAM COUNTY/TOWN OF ALTO, CITIES OF CLARKESVILLE, CORNELIA AND DEMOREST AND TOWN OF MT AIRY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Demorest, Georgia, is required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Demorest Comprehensive Plan was adopted in _____ pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, City of Demorest, Georgia is required to update its Comprehensive Plan by October 31, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County, Town of Alto, the cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy engaged in a planning process to prepare a Joint Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan is comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for City of Demorest, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy undertook an intensive public participation process including leaders representing the interests of residents, civic groups, business leaders, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the minimum public hearing requirements were met during the planning process; and

WHEREAS, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to remain responsive and relevant to changing conditions, it is amended from time to time; and

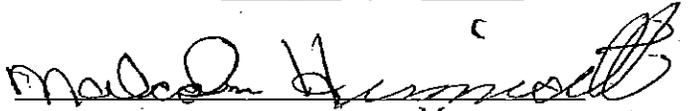
WHEREAS, the Demorest City Commissioners has completed and submitted each of the three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have reviewed each plan component and found them to meet the minimum standards for the preparation of local plan established by the state, and comments from the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have been taken into consideration prior to adoption of this plan by the Demorest City Commissioners.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Demorest, Georgia, having met the public participation and review requirements of the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan Comprehensive Plan dated _____, 2008, be hereby adopted.

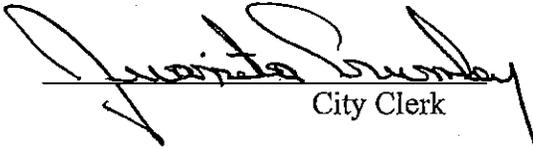
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan, shall be utilized by Demorest City Council and City of Demorest departments, agencies and officials as the official guide in making decision concerning the growth and development of the City of Demorest.

APPROVED by Demorest City Council of Demorest, this 7 day of Oct, 2008.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2009-2029 JOINT HABERSHAM COUNTY/
TOWN OF ALTO, CITIES OF CLAKRESVILLE, CORNELIA AND DEMOREST AND
TOWN OF MT. AIRY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City Of Cornelia, Georgia, is required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992 pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, City Of Cornelia, Georgia, is required to update its Comprehensive Plan by October 31, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County, the Town of Alto, the cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy engaged in a planning process to prepare a Joint Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan is comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for the City Of Cornelia, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy undertook an intensive public participation process including leaders representing the interests of residents, civic groups, business leaders, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the minimum public hearing requirements were met during the planning process; and

WHEREAS, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to remain responsive and relevant to changing conditions, it is amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commissioners of the City Of Cornelia has completed and submitted each of the three components the, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have reviewed each plan component and found them to meet the minimum standards for the preparation of local plan established by the state, and comments from the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have been taken into considered prior to adoption of this plan by the Mayor and Commissioner of the City Of Cornelia;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Commissioners of the City Of Cornelia, Georgia, having met the public participation and review requirements of the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan dated October, 2008, be hereby adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan Comprehensive Plan, shall be utilized by the Mayor and Commissioners, and all City Of Cornelia departments, agencies and officials as the official guide in making decision concerning the growth and development of the City Of Cornelia.

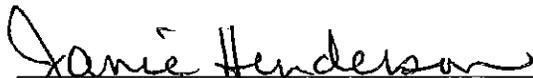
APPROVED by the Mayor and Commissioners of the City Of Cornelia, Georgia, this 7th day of October 2008.



Margaret Ballard, Mayor

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



Jamie Henderson, Secretary to the Commission

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2009-2029 JOINT HABERSHAM
COUNTY/ TOWN OF ALTO, CITIES OF CLARKESVILLE, CORNELIA
AND DEMOREST AND TOWN OF MT. AIRY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City of Clarkesville, Georgia, is required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Clarkesville Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992 pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, the City of Clarkesville, Georgia, is required to update its Comprehensive Plan by October 31, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County, the Town of Alto, the cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy engaged in a planning process to prepare a Joint Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan is comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for the City of Clarkesville, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy undertook an intensive public participation process including leaders representing the interests of residents, civic groups, business leaders, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the minimum public hearing requirements were met during the planning process; and

WHEREAS, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to remain responsive and relevant to changing conditions, it is amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Clarkesville has completed and submitted each of the three components the, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

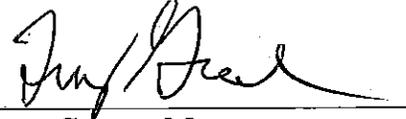
WHEREAS, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have reviewed each plan component and found them to meet the minimum standards for the preparation of local plan established by the state, and comments from the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have been taken into consideration prior to adoption of this plan by the City Council of Clarkesville;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Clarkesville, Georgia, having met the public participation and review requirements of the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan Comprehensive Plan, dated May 30, 2008, be hereby adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan Comprehensive Plan, shall be utilized by the City Council, and all City of Clarkesville departments, agencies and officials as the official guide in making decision concerning the growth and development of the City of Clarkesville.

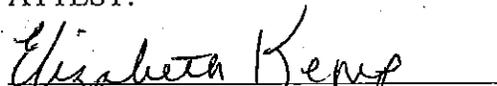
APPROVED by the City Council, Georgia, this 6th day of October, 2008.

CLARKESVILLE, GEORGIA



Terry Greene, Mayor

ATTEST:


Elizabeth Kemp, City Clerk

**RESOLUTION
TOWN OF MOUNT AIRY
SEPTEMBER 25th, 2008**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MOUNT AIRY, GEORGIA FINAL OF
THE JOINT COUNTY/CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE YEAR
ENDING 2029.**

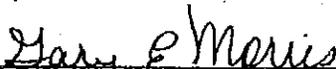
BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mount Airy Town Council, the governing body and authority of the Town of Mount Airy, Georgia, does hereby approve the *County/City Comprehensive Plan* in cooperation with Habersham County and the municipalities of Alto, Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest, and to incorporate as a general guide for future growth, change, and development in the Town.

In its approval and adoption, the Town Council recognizes the value of having a coordinated overview of the problems, concerns, needs, and opportunities growth and change will create. The Town Council further recognizes that the updated Comprehensive Plan is not a final and absolute answer to all of the many matter of policies, programs, and facilities contained therein. Constant planning, limitation of resources and other changing conditions undoubtedly will require periodic review of the Plan's objectives and accomplishments. Therefore, it is essential that the Plan be systematically re-evaluated and updated at regular intervals to reflect major changes that have a bearing on the Town's development objectives and goals.

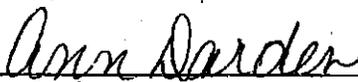
WHEREAS, the Town of Mount Airy certifies that the public review and hearing requirements were met; and

WHEREAS, in response to the minimum, planning standards and procedures of the 1989 planning Act, the Town of Mount Airy is herein approving and adopting this final of the joint *County/City Comprehensive Plan*.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 25th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2008.



Gary E. Morris, Mayor

Attest: 

Ann Darden, Town Clerk

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2009-2029 JOINT HABERSHAM COUNTY/ TOWN OF ALTO, CITIES OF CLARKESVILLE, CORNELIA AND DEMOREST AND TOWN OF MT. AIRY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, Georgia, are required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Habersham County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in October, 2008 pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, Georgia, are required to update its Comprehensive Plan by October 31, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County, the Town of Alto, the cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy engaged in a planning process to prepare a Joint Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan is comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan; and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for Habersham County and the Town of Alto, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy undertook an intensive public participation process including leaders representing the interests of residents, civic groups, business leaders, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the minimum public hearing requirements were met during the planning process; and

WHEREAS, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to remain responsive and relevant to changing conditions, it is amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County and the Mayor and Council of the Town of Alto have completed and submitted each of the three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have reviewed each plan component and found them to meet the minimum standards for the preparation of local plan established by the state, and comments from the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have been taken into considered prior to adoption of this plan by the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County and the Mayor and Council of the Town of Alto;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County and the Mayor and Council of the Town of Alto, Georgia, having met the public participation and review requirements of the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan Comprehensive Plan dated October, 2008, be hereby adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan, shall be utilized by the Mayor and Town Council, and all departments, agencies and officials as the official guide in making decision concerning the growth and development of the Town of Alto.

APPROVED by the Mayor and Town Council of Alto, Georgia, this 14th day of October, 2008.

TOWN OF ALTO, GEORGIA


AUDREY TURNER, MAYOR

ATTEST:


PENNY ROGERS, TOWN CLERK

(SEAL)

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2009-2029 JOINT HABERSHAM
COUNTY/ TOWN OF ALTO, CITIES OF CLARKESVILLE, CORNELIA
AND DEMOREST AND TOWN OF MT. AIRY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Habersham County, Georgia, is required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Habersham County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1993 pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County, Georgia, is required to update its Comprehensive Plan by October 31, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County, the Town of Alto, the cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy engaged in a planning process to prepare a Joint Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan is comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for Habersham County, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, Habersham County and the Town of Alto, cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia, Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy undertook an intensive public participation process including leaders representing the interests of residents, civic groups, business leaders, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the minimum public hearing requirements were met during the planning process; and

WHEREAS, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to remain responsive and relevant to changing conditions, it is amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County has completed and submitted each of the three components; the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

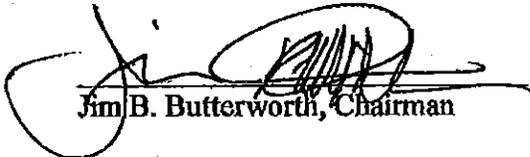
WHEREAS, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have reviewed each plan component and found them to meet the minimum standards for the preparation of local plan established by the state, and comments from the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have been taken into consideration prior to adoption of this plan by the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County, Georgia, having met the public participation and review requirements of the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan dated October 2008, be hereby adopted.

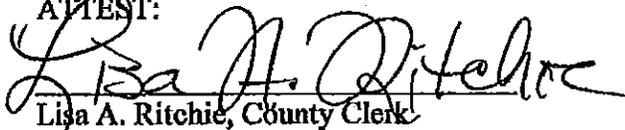
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Joint Habersham County, Town of Alto, Cities of Clarkesville, Cornelia and Demorest and the Town of Mt. Airy Comprehensive Plan, shall be utilized by the Board of Commissioners, and all Habersham County departments, agencies and officials as the official guide in making decision concerning the growth and development of Habersham County.

APPROVED by the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County, Georgia, this 6 day of Oct, 2008.

HABERSHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA


Jim B. Butterworth, Chairman

ATTEST:


Lisa A. Ritchie, County Clerk