Community Assessment

DIDEMALIZ



Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. in association with Jordan, Jones & Goulding and Market+Main



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Purpose of Analysis

The following data and analyses profile the current demographic and economic conditions in the Town of Braselton. This socioeconomic profile presents a statistical description of the Town's historical performance and recent trends, and provides a brief explanation of the factors influencing these changes.

This document provides community leaders with a reliable baseline of information on Braselton. Understanding the Town's dynamics will help frame the issues and opportunities to be addressed in future planning efforts.

Key economic and demographic indicators have been analyzed for Braselton through the following sections in this document.

TOWN OF BRASELTON PROFILE: Braselton is profiled, with information on the Atlanta MSA, the state of Georgia, and the United States also presented to benchmark the relative performance of the town.

MAJOR FINDINGS: Summary of key findings for the Town of Braselton in relation to demographic and economic indicators to highlight competitive strengths and weaknesses.



Town of Braselton Profile

Information for the Town of Braselton is presented, with comparisons to the Atlanta MSA,¹ the state of Georgia, and the United States to benchmark the relative performance of the town. Braselton is also in the unique situation of being located in four counties: Barrow, Gwinnett, Hall, and Jackson. These four counties are also profiled in many of the demographic comparisons.

POPULATION

Total Population

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Between 1990 and 2008, the Town of Braselton grew at a phenomenally faster rate than the four surrounding counties, the Atlanta MSA, the state of Georgia, and the nation. A trend of rapid growth is also projected through 2013. Although the Town's growth rate has been very strong, it is important to note that these very large percentages are based on a small beginning base population.

	Town of Braselton	Barrow County	Gwinnett County	Hall County	Jackson County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
1990	535	29,721	352,910	95,428	30,005	3,069,411		
2000	1,206	46,144	588,448	139,277	41,589	4,247,981		
2008								
(Estimate)	6,040	68,448	797,504	181,704	59,780	5,357,017		
2013								
(Projected)	8,395	83,156	930,554	208,928	71,915	6,065,700		
Population								
Change								
1990-2000	125.4%	55.3%	66.7%	45.9%	38.6%	38.4%	26.4%	13.2%
2000-2008	400.8%	48.3%	35.5%	30.5%	43.7%	26.1%	18.0%	8.1%
2008-2013	38.9%	21.5%	16.7%	15.0%	20.3%	13.2%	9.8%	4.9%

Source: Town of Braselton, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

The 2008 estimate information was compiled by Market + Main, Inc., with input from the Town of Braselton. Customized estimates were necessary because of data collection issues due to: the significant annexation over the last several years; the remarkable number of building permits issued; and the locational, and thus, data challenges of being divided by four counties. Since very recent voter registration data was available, it was determined to utilize this data to

¹ The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.



formulate a current estimate. The population estimate was calculated by first examining the ratio of registered voters to the total population from the 2000 Census and voter registration (November 2001 election) to establish a basis. This ratio was then used with the up-to-date voter registration (November 2008 election) information to produce the 2008 total population estimate. While there are some variables that could have changed in terms of the ratio of registered voters to total population in the intervening years, this was determined to be the best approach available for data sourcing at this time.

Population Change

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town's population grew by 125%, but the actual increase was only 671 people. The period between 2000 and 2008 is when Braselton made the shift from rural to really becoming more of a suburban/exurban community. Obviously, it is unlikely that this kind of growth would continue at the same pace into the future. However, it is projected that Braselton's population will grow by 39% over the next five years, which is still a much larger increase than any of the other areas being considered.



Population Change Comparison, 1990-2013

Source: Town of Braselton, US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.



Thematic Maps: Population²

The map below shows the population of the census tracts that cross into and surround the boundaries of the Town of Braselton. These tracts follow the county lines of the four counties included in Braselton's town limits. These four counties are Barrow, Gwinnett, Hall, and Jackson. In 2008, the largest population is found in the Gwinnett County census tract, with the Jackson County portion also with notable population.



² Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Between 2000 and 2008, the Gwinnett County census tract had the strongest growth rate at over 100%. The Jackson County census tract had the second highest growth rate close to 80%.





It is projected that growth rates over the next five years will be more even across the four census tracts. The Hall County census tract will grow by approximately 22%. The other three tracts are projected to have growth rates between 26% and 30%.



Long-Term Population Change

As is detailed in the previous sections, the next five years is really the timeline that can most accurately be predicted based on current policies and programs. However, for long-term planning purposes, it is worthwhile to consider the potential future growth that might take place. It is important to keep in mind when reviewing these projections that decisions made as part of this comprehensive planning process could greatly impact the future of Braselton, and thus, the direction these numbers will actually take over the next 20 years.

It is expected that population growth will continue relatively strongly in Braselton. The characteristics of the Town that have attracted residential growth in the past, and particularly over the last decade, will continue to be assets for the Town in the future. It is projected that total population will increase by approximately 80% over the next 10 years and will more than



double over the next 20 years.³ The small size of the Town must be kept in mind when looking at percentage growth rates; thus, average annual change is also provided. These growth rates do assume some level of continued annexation, selected development in currently undeveloped portions of the community, and some increase in densities for future long-term residential development.

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028
Total Population	6,040	8,395	10,980	13,380	15,780
	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	
Average Annual Change	7.8%	6.2%	4.4%	3.6%	

Source: Town of Braselton, Claritas, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Market + Main, Inc.



Population Growth Projections, Town of Braselton, 2008-2028

Source: Town of Brselton, Claritas, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Market + Main, Inc.

It is clear that Braselton's population has been growing quickly and is expected to continue to grow at a rapid pace.

³ Long-term projections based on data from Claritas and the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center and analysis from Market + Main, Inc.



AGE DISTRIBUTION

Average Age

The average age of Braselton residents (38.3) is higher than the average of the four surrounding counties, the Atlanta MSA (35.1), the state (35.7), and the nation (37.5). This likely means more families than singles.

Current Age Distribution

The chart below gives a graphic depiction of the Town's age breakdown. Approximately 25% of Braselton's population is between 25 and 45 years of age. This represents a vital component of a growing community, as this is the primary workforce population. Those over 65 make up approximately 12% of the Town's population; this is worth noting as those over 65 are generally considered to have left the labor force.



Age Distribution, Town of Braselton, 2008



Age Distribution Change

The chart below depicts the age distribution changes in Braselton between 2000 and 2013. Between 2000 and 2008 growth was strongest in percentage terms in the 15 to 17 and the over 85 years of age categories. It is important to note, however, that the over 85 years of age grouping represents a very small proportion of the overall population. Growth was relatively weak in the categories between 25 and 55 years of age.





Source: US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.



The chart below gives a clearer depiction of the projected changes over the next five years. With the exception of the 18 to 24 years of age category, growth is increasing fastest for the population over 55 years of age. The strongest growth is expected in the 65 to 74 years of age category. It is projected that the weakest growth between 2008 and 2013 will be in the 35 to 44 years of age category, with all of the groupings between 25 and 55 years of age showing slower growth. This is a cause for possible concern as the population of those in retirement age grows faster than those in the prime of their earning potential. One positive counterbalance is the relatively strong projected growth in the 18 to 24 years of age category, which represents those entering the workforce.



Age Distribution Changes, Town of Braselton, 2008-2013

Braselton is a somewhat older community now, and future growth is not expected to be as strong in the key age ranges that help to build and sustain a quality workforce.



RACIAL COMPOSITION

Current Racial Composition

Braselton is predominately Caucasian at about 84% of the population. Asians are the second largest population group in the Town at approximately nine percent of the total. Hispanics make up a small, but notable, portion of the population at about five percent. African-Americans make up only one percent of the population.



Racial Composition, Town of Braselton, 2008

Source: Claritas

Racial Composition Change

Nationally, minority population growth has exceeded the growth rate for Caucasians, and this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The Town of Braselton has largely followed this trend as well. Between 2000 and 2008, the growth rates for Asian (193%) and Hispanic (178%) populations grew at a much faster rate than the growth rate for Caucasians (81%). Unlike the nation as a whole, the African-American population in Braselton grew at a slower pace than the Caucasian population with a growth rate of 56%. These trends are expected to continue over the five years. Between 2008 and 2013, the Caucasian population is projected to grow by 18%, while the Asian population will grow by 58% and the Hispanic population by 62%. The African-American population will grow by a slower rate during the same timeframe, as seen in chart on the next page.





Change in Racial Composition, Town of Braselton, 2008-2013

The changes in minority populations seen in Braselton largely reflect the demographic shifts seen across the nation.



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

As shown in the chart below, approximately 39% of Braselton residents have a high school diploma or less education, with six percent having less than a 9th grade education. Those with some college, but no degree account for 25% of the population. Those with some type of college degree make up approximately 35% of the population.



Educational Attainment, Town of Braselton, 2008

Overall, Braselton compares relatively well in terms of educational attainment. Those with less than a high school diploma make up about 15% of the Town's population. This is a smaller percentage than the Atlanta MSA, the state, the nation, and all of the surrounding counties with the exception of Gwinnett. The Town's percentage of college graduates is higher than that of the nation, the state, and three of the surrounding four counties. It is, however, lower than the rate for the Atlanta MSA and Gwinnett County as seen in the following table.

	Town of Braselton	Barrow County	Gwinnett County	Hall County	Jackson County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
Less Than High School	14.5%	26.7%	12.5%	29.4%	31.4%	16.6%	21.0%	19.4%
High School Graduates	25.4%	35.9%	22.4%	29.6%	35.6%	25.3%	28.6%	28.4%



			Gwinnett County				Georgia	United States
College Graduates	27.8%	10.9%	33.6%	18.7%	12.0%	30.6%	24.5%	24.6%

Source: Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

Overall, Braselton fares well in educational attainment, but the proportion of college graduates does trail the metro area as a whole.

INCOME

Per Capita Income

As a measure of wealth generation, per capita income is one of the most informative economic indicators about the relative economic position of communities. The per capita income in Braselton (\$45,018) is significantly higher than all of the surrounding counties, the Atlanta MSA,⁴ the state, and the nation.

	Town of Braselton	Barrow County	Gwinnett County	Hall County	Jackson County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
Per Capita Income	\$45,018	\$21,177	\$26,708	\$20,608	\$22,231	\$27,903	\$24,632	\$25,933
% of National Average	173.6%	81.7%	103.0%	79.5%	85.7%	107.6%	95.0%	100.0%
Change in PCI since 2000	28.7%	15.4%	6.8%	4.7%	24.8%	12.6%	16.4%	20.1%

Source: Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

Of the surrounding counties, only Gwinnett had a per capita income higher than the nation's. Even so, Gwinnett's per capita income at approximately 103% of the nation's is still significantly lower than Braselton's 174%. Additionally, the growth in per capita income since 2000 was also higher for the Town of Braselton than for any of the other areas considered, a very notable statistic.

⁴ The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.



In 2008, Braselton's per capita income was a very strong \$45,018. This is compared to a national figure of \$25,933, making Braselton's per capita income 74% higher than the national average. However, Braselton's per capita income relative to the nation is expected to decline slightly in the next five years.







Source: US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

Thematic Map: Per Capita Income⁵

When looking at per capita income, the Gwinnett census tract the highest. The Barrow and Jackson tracts follow, while the Hall County tract has the lowest per capita income.



⁵ Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Average Household Income

As might be expected, Braselton's average household income is also very strong. In 2008, Braselton's household income is \$119,316. This figure is significantly higher than the average household income of the Atlanta MSA (\$76,301), the state (\$66,192), and the nation (\$67,918). Between 2008 and 2013, Braselton's average household income is projected to grow to \$128,601, an increase of eight percent. The Town will, however, lose some ground when compared to the nation. In 2008, Braselton's household income is 176% of the nation's. By 2013, this figure is expected to drop slightly to 170%.



Average Household Income Trends, 2000-2013

Source: US Census Bureau, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.



Thematic Map: Average Household Income⁶

Looking again at the four census tracts that cross into Braselton's borders, the Gwinnett County census tract clearly has the highest average household income. The Barrow and Hall county tracts follow, while the Jackson County tract has the lowest average household income.



⁶ Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Household Incomes

Currently, the largest proportion of Braselton households earn between \$50,000 and \$75,000 annually. It is important to note that an incredibly large percentage (35%) of Braselton households fall into the income categories above \$100,000. This is much higher than the rates for the Atlanta MSA (22%), state (18%), and the nation (19%). Also noteworthy is the relatively small percentage of households with income less than \$25,000. In Braselton, this group accounts for only 12% of the total households. For the MSA, the figure is 18%, and for the nation the percentage is 24% which is almost twice as high as Braselton's rate. However, these numbers are not surprising considering the Town's strong average household income.



Household Income, Town of Braselton, 2008

Source: Claritas



Thematic Maps: Household Incomes⁷

The greatest percentage of households with income less than \$25,000 is found in the Jackson County census tract. This is not surprising considering that this tract also has the lowest average household income. Barrow County is only a few percentage points lower, and then a more notable drop for the census tracts in Gwinnett and Hall counties.



⁷ Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



The Gwinnett County census tract has the highest percentage of households with incomes averaging over \$100,000, at about 33%. The proportions for the other three tracts fall between 20% and 25%.





Household Income Change

Between 2008 and 2013, it is projected that the number of households in the income categories below \$75,000 will decrease. During the same time period, all of the income categories above \$75,000 are expected to increase. This change is significant, because households earning over \$75,000 already account for approximately 48% of total households in Braselton. It also important to note the strong growth in the over \$250,000 income category, which is projected to increase by 14% during this timeframe.





Braselton performs extraordinarily well in terms of income and wealth for individuals and households.



HOUSEHOLDS

Total Households & Households Change

As would be expected, the household change trends are similar to the findings for the population change trends, highlighted in the table below. Braselton's growth rate between 1990 and 2000 was 132%, which was substantially higher than the growth rates of the Atlanta MSA⁸ (36%), the state (27%), and the nation (15%). While this figure is impressive and represents strong growth, it is important to note that this percentage is based on a relatively small base of households in 1990.

Between 2000 and 2008 the household growth rate increased phenomenally as the community made the transition from rural to exurban/suburban. Over the next five years, Braselton is projected to grow at an incredibly strong 42%, which is more than triple the rate of the Atlanta MSA and eight times the national rate.

	Town of Braselton	Barrow County	Gwinnett County	Hall County	Jackson County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
1990	198	10,676	126,971	34,721	10,721	1,140,838		
2000	459	16,354	202,317	47,381	15,057	1,554,154		
2008								
(Estimate)	2,280	24,208	270,107	59,469	21,824	1,942,047		
2013								
(Projected)	3,240	29,276	312,069	67,184	26,312	2,187,415		
Population Change								
1990-2000	131.8%	53.2%	59.3%	36.5%	40.4%	36.2%	27.0%	14.7%
2000-2008	396.7%	48.0%	33.5%	25.5%	44.9%	25.0%	18.0%	8.7%
2008-2013	42.1%	20.9%	15.5%	13.0%	20.6%	12.6%	9.8%	5.3%

Source: Town of Braselton, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

The 2008 estimate information was compiled by Market + Main, Inc., with input from the Town of Braselton, as described in the *Total Population* section. Once the 2008 total population estimate was formulated, the average household size sourced via Claritas was used to determine total households.

⁸ The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.



Thematic Maps: Households⁹

On a census tract basis, the Gwinnett tract has the highest number of households. The Barrow tract has the least.



⁹ Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Between 2000 and 2008, the Gwinnett County census tract showed by far the strongest growth in households at well over 100%. Growth rates for the Barrow and Jackson tracts fell into the 60% to 80% range, while the Hall census tract saw an increase between 45% and 50%.





Between 2008 and 2013, it is projected that the Gwinnett and Jackson census tracts will have the fastest growth in households. The Hall County tract is projected to have the slowest growth rate.



Long-Term Household Change

As is detailed in the previous sections, the next five years is really the timeline that can most accurately be predicted based on current policies and programs. However, for long-term planning purposes, it is worthwhile to consider the potential future growth that might take place. It is important to keep in mind when reviewing these projections that decisions made as part of this comprehensive planning process could greatly impact the future of Braselton, and thus, the direction these numbers will actually take over the next 20 years.

It is expected that household growth will continue relatively strongly in Braselton. The characteristics of the Town that have attracted residential growth in the past, and particularly over the last decade, will continue to be assets for the Town in the future. It is projected that total population will increase by approximately 80% over the next 10 years and will more than



double over the next 20 years.¹⁰ The small size of the Town must be kept in mind when looking at percentage growth rates; thus, average annual change is also provided. These growth rates do assume some level of continued annexation, selected development in currently undeveloped portions of the community, and some increase in densities for future long-term residential development.

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028
Total Households	2,280	3,240	4,140	5,050	5,950
	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	
Average Annual Change	8.4%	5.6%	4.4%	3.6%	

Source: Town of Braselton, Claritas, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Market + Main, Inc.



Household Growth Projections, Town of Braselton, 2008-2028

Source: Town of Brselton, Claritas, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Market + Main, Inc.

The household growth in Braselton over the last two decades has been significant, and rapid growth is projected for the future.

¹⁰ Long-term projections based on data from Claritas and the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center and analysis from Market + Main, Inc.



Housing

Housing Tenure

Braselton's averages for tenure characteristics (owner versus renter) stand in stark contrast to typical percentages. Braselton's housing supply is overwhelmingly occupied by owners (89%), with renters making up a much smaller proportion (12%). The national average is 67% and 33%, respectively.

Thematic Map: Housing Tenure¹¹

All Braselton census tracts have owner-occupancy rates above 80%. The Gwinnett and Hall tracts are even higher, with rates above 90%.



¹¹ Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Household Size

Average household size in Braselton (2.65) is slightly below that of the MSA (2.71), slightly higher than the nation (2.58), and only negligibly higher than the state's (2.64).

Thematic Map: Household Size¹²

Looking once again at the census tracts including and surrounding Braselton, one can see differences in average household size across the area. The Hall County census tract has the highest average household size. The Gwinnett tract ranks second and the averages for the Barrow and Jackson tracts are the lowest.



¹² Thematic maps consist of Census Track Block Groups with Town of Braselton boundaries, as well as county lines, overlaid for illustrative purposes.



Single-Person Households

There are fewer single-person households in Braselton (18.1%) than the MSA (22.7%), the state (23.7%), and the nation (26.2%). This is important to note, as many times it can be an indicator that an area is more attractive to families than to singles, such as young professionals.

Housing Structure Age

As would be expected in any fast growing area, Braselton's housing stock is largely recently constructed. The median year of construction for housing in the town is 2000, which stands in stark contrast to the MSA (1988), the state (1985), and the nation (1975). The chart below provides a graphic depiction of the high percentage of homes built in recent years. Almost 60% of housing units were constructed between 1999 and 2007.



Housing Units by Year Structure Built, Town of Braselton, 2008

Source: Claritas

Braselton's housing stock is largely newer and targeted to the affluent homeowner.



Major Findings: Trends & Issues

A community's demographic characteristics and qualities play a critical role in understanding the types of businesses -- and thus, economic viability -- an area can attract, support and sustain. To create successful development strategies, all the "players" must acknowledge and truly understand what realities exist in their area. The following issues are highlighted as the critical ones that must be understood and addressed in order to implement successful economic and community development programs and projects in the Town of Braselton.

RAPID GROWTH

- Between 1990 and 2008, the Town of Braselton grew at a much faster rate than the four surrounding counties, the Atlanta MSA, ¹³ the state of Georgia, and the nation.
- It is projected that Braselton's population will grow by approximately 39% over the next five years, which is a much larger increase than any of the other areas considered.
- Almost 60% of the Town's housing units were constructed between 1999 and 2007, indicating recent construction for new residences.

Next Steps:

There is no doubt that growth has been coming to Braselton, and that this growth will continue in the near future. The key to this growth is attempting to strategically guide and structure it. Ensuring that there are adequate housing and employment options for people is an important component in competing in today's fast-changing economy.

INCREASING RACIAL DIVERSITY

- Braselton is predominately Caucasian at about 84% of the population. Asians are the second largest population group in the Town at approximately 9% of the total. Hispanics make up a small, but notable portion of the population at about 5%. African-Americans make up only 1% of the population, and those classified as Other account for about 2%.
- Between 2000 and 2008, the growth rates for Asian (193%) and Hispanic (178%) populations grew at a much faster rate than the growth rate for Caucasians (81%). Unlike the nation as a whole, the African-American population in Braselton grew at a slower pace than the Caucasian population with a growth rate of 56%.
- Between 2008 and 2013, the Caucasian population is projected to grow by 18%, while the Asian population expected to grow by 58% and the Hispanic population by 62%. The African-American population is projected to grow by a slower rate (12%).

¹³ The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.



Next Steps:

Although Braselton is largely Caucasian and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future, it is important to note that the Asian and Hispanic populations are growing at a faster rate than the Caucasian population. This will ultimately result in a more diverse population in the Town. These changes are not unique to Braselton. Across the nation, the growth rates for racial minorities are higher than those of the Caucasian population. Braselton's increasing diversity could have a positive influence on economic development activities. Many companies value diversity when choosing a location for their facilities. Concentrating on embracing the increased diversity is a must for long-term sustainability.

AGE STRUCTURE

- The average age of Braselton residents (38.3) is higher than the average of the four surrounding counties, the MSA (35.1), the state (35.7), and the nation (37.5).
- Between 2008 and 2013, the strongest growth will be in the 65 to 74 years of age category.
- All age groups over 55 years are projected to increase by 46% over the next five years.
- Although all age groups in the Town will show growth over the next five years, it is
 projected that the weakest growth between 2008 and 2013 will be in the 35 to 44 years
 of age category, with all of the groupings aged between 25 and 55 showing slow
 growth.

Next Steps:

When looking at the age of residents, Braselton is a somewhat older community. This imbalance in age groups is projected to increase over the next five years. For long term stability, a community must have a healthy balance of those entering the workforce, those in the prime of their earning potential, and those in their retirement years. When one of those groups is overrepresented, it typically shows a lack of employment and/or housing opportunities for the other groups. For Braselton, attracting people in the critical age group of 25 to 54 year olds is crucial.

HIGH WEALTH LEVELS

- In 2008, Braselton's per capita income is a very strong \$45,018. This is 74% higher than the national figure of \$25,933.
- In 2008, Braselton's average household income was \$119,316. This figure is significantly higher than the household income of the Atlanta MSA (\$76,301), the state (\$66,192), and the nation (\$67,918).
- It is worth noting that a very large percentage (35%) of Braselton households fall into the income categories above \$100,000. This is much higher than the rates for the Atlanta MSA (22%), state (18%), and the nation (19%).



 Braselton's housing supply is overwhelmingly occupied by owners (89%), with renters making up a much smaller proportion (12%). The national average is 67% and 33%, respectively.

Next Steps:

The Town of Braselton is fortunate to have very high levels of wealth. While this is evidence of a healthy economy and a desirable community, it could also point to a future imbalance. A healthy community provides appropriate housing opportunities for all of its residents at all stages of life. The high housing costs and lack of rental options could make it difficult for many of the Town's workers to also live there as well. This could also impact the Town's ability to attract younger people who will soon enter their prime years of earning potential.


Detailed Economic Development Report

Purpose of Analysis

This study has been prepared to briefly evaluate the Town of Braselton's economic base. A diverse group of indicators were collected and analyzed in order to gain an accurate picture of the health of the local economic base and business climate.

While understanding the components of the Town's economy and what strengths and weaknesses its foundation has, it is also important to note that the business climate and the actions of the local government are inextricably linked. While reviewing the quantitative data is critical to this process, it is crucial not to forget that qualitative issues do translate into hard dollar cost items for businesses as well.

Key economic indicators have been reviewed for the Town of Braselton and the four surrounding counties (Barrow, Gwinnett, Hall, and Jackson) through four sections in this document.

WORKERS: Information on labor force characteristics, unemployment, commuting patterns, and educational attainment is provided.

JOBS: Characteristics on employment trends, employers, industry sectors, occupations, and business size are profiled.

MONEY: Data on sources of income, wages, and sector and sub-sector wages is reviewed.

UNIQUE ECONOMIC ASSETS: Information on unique businesses or developments located in the Town of Braselton that could provide a competitive advantage.

MAJOR FINDINGS: Summary of trends and issues for the Town of Braselton. Impacts of statistics from the four surrounding counties on the Town are highlighted.



Workers

LABOR FORCE¹

The Town of Braselton's labor force totals approximately 4,110, equaling about 68% of the Town's total population. For the Atlanta MSA, the labor force accounted for 68% of its population and the state of Georgia's labor force constituted 67% of its population. By comparison, the nation's labor force accounted for 66% of its total population.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is the proportion of the total working age population (16 to 65) that is employed or unemployed *and* seeking employment. Timely unemployment data is collected consistently at the county level, thus the four counties surrounding Braselton are used in this assessment. The LFPR for Barrow County is 73.2%. The LFPR for Gwinnett County is 78.4%. Hall County's LFPR is 78.2%, and for Jackson County it is 69.1%. The national average Labor Force Participation Rate is 66.1%. The fact that the surrounding counties have higher rates than the nation shows greater potential for wealth generation in the area.

Obviously, there are people that choose not to participate in the workforce. These people include students, retirees, stay-at-home parents, disabled individuals, those too discouraged about their employment opportunities to actively seek work, or people that have other sources of income and do not need to work. But, the economic impact of LFPR is demonstrated very simply in that those that do not participate in the labor force make a contribution of zero dollars earned annually to the local economy.

UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the unemployment rate for Barrow County was 7.9% and Jackson County was at 7.4% in November 2008. For Gwinnett and Hall counties, the figures were 6.4% and 6.5%, respectively. For the same time period, the unemployment rate for the Atlanta MSA was 7.0% and the state of Georgia was at 7.2%. Both the MSA and state were higher than the national rate of 6.5%.

As has been seen across the nation, the unemployment rate in the four counties Braselton is located in have been steadily on the rise since last year. The current unemployment rates are nearly twice the rates they were a year ago. The unemployment rate in the Atlanta MSA has been rising as well. The unemployment rate was 4.1% back in November 2007.

¹ Labor force is defined here as all persons between 16 and 65 years of age. This effectively excludes the elderly and children. However, these parameters should be considered cautiously, as many retirees are remaining active in the workforce.



COMMUTING PATTERNS

The most up-to-date information on commuting patterns is only available in census-taking years; the last census was taken in 2000. It is likely that these proportions haven't changed significantly since the Census. Because the Braselton town limits cross into four counties, commuting patterns are somewhat more complicated. Overall, 69.5% of Braselton residents commuted outside their county of residence for employment. For Braselton residents in Barrow and Jackson counties, the commuting rates were 74.3% and 82.4% respectively. In 2000, the census shows no Braselton labor force residing in Hall County. Of Braselton residents living in Gwinnett County, only 31.9% worked outside Gwinnett County with the majority living and working in Gwinnett. This is not surprising considering that Gwinnett is by far the largest and most developed of the three counties that Braselton straddles.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A presentation of the educational attainment details was initially provided in the *Braselton Comprehensive Plan: Demographic Analysis* document. In summary, approximately 39% of Braselton residents have a high school diploma or less education, with six percent having less than a ninth grade education. Those with some college, but no degree account for 25% of the population. Those with some type of college degree make up approximately 35% of the population.



Jobs

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

The total daytime population, or employees, for Braselton is approximately 3,500. This represents only a tiny fraction of the employment base in the Atlanta MSA. However, Braselton has had incredible employment growth since 2000 with an increase of approximately 550%. This is such a phenomenal level of growth, that it is not even comparable to the growth rates for the MSA and nation, as shown in the table below. This clearly demonstrates the transition Braselton has made from a rural area in 2000 to being a participant in the incredible growth and development along the Interstate 85 corridor. There are approximately 200 businesses in Braselton, which is a sizeable number for a town with a small population; but as with total employment, it represents little significance in the overall metro Atlanta's economy.

	Town of Braselton	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
Daytime Population	3,500	2,740,122	4,626,226	143,632,849
Change in Employment Since 2000	548.2%	27.3%	20.5%	10.7%

Source: Town of Braselton, Claritas, Market + Main, Inc.

Historical data on employment is available at the county level. In taking a look at employment in the four surrounding counties, total jobs increased between 2003 and 2007. With the exception of a decrease in jobs in Barrow County in 2005 and Jackson County in 2007, employment has increased in each county every year between 2003 and 2007.

In the five year period between 2003 and 2007, Barrow County had the strongest job growth on a percentage basis at 32.2%. Jackson County's employment growth was also very strong at 20.5%. Hall and Gwinnett counties' job growth rates were 12.3% and 11.6% respectively. Although Gwinnett County had the slowest rate of growth on a percentage basis, it is important to note that its actual increase in jobs was much larger than the other three counties.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Barrow County	12,646	15,098	14,117	15,441	16,721
Gwinnett County	292,149	305,211	315,355	324,398	325,984
Hall County	65,839	66,398	67,291	70,695	73,940
Jackson County	15,414	16,885	18,518	19,568	18,573

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics



LONG-TERM EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

As is detailed in the previous sections, the next five years is really the timeline that can most accurately be predicted based on current policies and programs. However, for long-term planning purposes, it is worthwhile to consider the potential future growth that might take place. It is important to keep in mind when reviewing these projections that decisions made as part of this comprehensive planning process could greatly impact the future of Braselton, and thus, the direction these numbers will actually take over the next 20 years.

It is expected that employment growth will continue in Braselton at a pretty steady rate. The characteristics of the Town that have attracted residential growth in the past, and particularly over the last decade, will continue to be assets for the Town in the future. In turn, the number of jobs will continue to grow, based on the increases in the residential population and continued industrial development that is an employment draw for the surrounding area. It is projected that total employment will increase by approximately 61% over the next 10 years and more than double over the next 20 years.²

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028
Total Employment	3,500	4,500	5,630	6,760	8,110
	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	
Average Annual Change	6.0%	5.0%	4.0%	4.0%	

Source: Town of Braselton, Claritas, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Market + Main, Inc.

The long-term employment projections shown here differ from the ones developed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center. The level of employment today, according to the Town of Braselton's business license information, is higher than the RDC's projection for 2015. The rate of expansion for distribution facilities in particular, based on Braselton's location on the Interstate 85 corridor, has been much faster than many could have expected. However, with the national recession, surplus of industrial space across metro Atlanta, and many companies putting expansion plans on hold, the rates of growth projected here for employment reflect these current realities and their expected impact over the next several years.

² Long-term projections based on data from Claritas and the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center and analysis from Market + Main, Inc.





Employment Growth Projections, Town of Braselton, 2008-2028



SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Local Sector Employment

While overall employment numbers are an important economic and social indicator, the types and nature of jobs vary greatly between different regions and also within regional economies. The following chart gives a breakdown of employment by category within the Town of Braselton.



Sector Employment, Town of Braselton, 2008

Source: Claritas



Sector Employment Comparison

As depicted in the chart below, employment by sector for Braselton varies greatly from the Atlanta MSA's³ sector employment. The largest percentage of jobs in Braselton are in the Wholesale Trade sector, at 24.4%. This is much greater than the MSA percentage of 5.2%. The second largest sector in Braselton is Manufacturing, at 20.2%. This compares to a MSA average of 9.5%. Braselton's strength in Wholesale Trade and Manufacturing are most likely the result of its location along the heavily industrialized I-85 corridor. These are also important sectors to note as they are usually high-paying. Another major difference in employment between Braselton and the Atlanta MSA is the Services sector. Services make up the largest sector in the MSA at 37.2%, but account for only 17.4% of Braselton's total employment.



Sector Employment Comparison, Town of Braselton and Atlanta MSA, 2008

Source: Claritas

³ The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.



Sector Employment Trends

The chart below illustrates the sector employment trends in the Town of Braselton between 1990 and 2008. The incredible increase in the Wholesale Trade sector is readily apparent, as is the decrease in the Manufacturing sector during the same time period. Another change worth noting is that Services increased significantly between 1990 and 2000, but decreased between 2000 and 2008. This is different than the structural shifts being seen across the metro Atlanta area and the nation as a whole, as most economies are seeing significant and consistent increases in the Services and Retail Trade sectors.



Sector Employment Trends, Town of Braselton, 1990-2008



The Town of Braselton has location quotients⁴ above 1.0 in three sectors: Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, and Construction. The concentration in Wholesale Trade within the region is notable since it is over five times the national average. The Construction and Manufacturing location quotients are also notably above the national average. The strength of these three sectors is not surprising considering Braselton's location along a major industrial corridor and its strong growth rate. These three sectors with location quotients above 1.0 are traditionally higher-paying fields, which is a positive sign for the local economy. The Public Administration and the Transportation, Communications, and Utilities sectors are considerably underrepresented when compared to the nation.



Sector Employment Location Quotients, Town of Braselton, 2008

Source: Claritas, Market + Main

⁴ Location quotients compare the local employment contribution of any given sector to its contribution nationally. A location quotient of 1.0 indicates that sector is providing the same percentage of employment locally and nationally. Above or below 1.0 means the industry is larger or smaller than the national average.



OCCUPATIONS

The largest occupational categories for workers in the Town of Braselton are sales and office occupations and management, business, and financial operations occupations; taken together, these two categories account for over half of all occupations. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations and professional and related occupations also make up sizable proportions of the occupations in Braselton, as seen in the table on the next page.

	Town of Braselton	Atlanta MSA	Georgia	United States
Management, Business, and Financial Operations Occupations	20.5%	17.1%	14.4%	13.7%
Professional and Related Occupations	13.9%	19.9%	18.7%	20.3%
Service Occupations	8.6%	11.9%	13.0%	14.6%
Sales and Office Occupations	35.0%	28.6%	27.0%	26.7%
Construction, Extraction and Maintenance Occupations	7.7%	10.3%	10.9%	9.5%
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	14.1%	12.0%	15.3%	14.4%

Source: Claritas

Braselton's rankings are different than the Atlanta MSA, as its largest proportion of occupations is in the sales and office segment, then professional and related, then management, business, and financial. The biggest difference is that Braselton is about six percent greater in sales and office occupations and the Atlanta MSA is about six percent larger in professional and related occupations.

LAYOFFS AND CLOSURES

The Georgia Department of Labor publishes a Business Layoff and Closure Listing containing information reported to the agency through WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification). WARN requires employers to provide notice sixty days in advance of covered plant closings or covered mass layoffs. The list may not represent all layoffs occurring in the state. For the period from January 2000 through November 2008, the Department of Labor reported no major layoffs or closures in the Braselton area.

LARGEST EMPLOYERS

The following table lists the largest employers in Braselton, all with over 100 employees. The data is primarily sourced from business license application information from the Town of Braselton. According to the Gwinnett and Hall County Chambers of Commerce, none of what they consider their largest employers are located in the Town of Braselton.



BRASELTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Company	Jobs
The Home Depot	367
Haverty's Furniture Co. Inc.	276
Mayfield Dairy Farms Inc.	236
Chateau Elan Resorts, LLC	229
KD Acquisition I LLC	213
Genco I, INC	200
Tractor Supply Company	175
Year One Inc.	140
Kroger	122
Whole Foods Market Group Inc	121
Cracker Barrel Old County Store	113
Progressive Lighting Inc.	107
Publix Super Markets Inc.	100

Source: Town of Braselton, Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, Barrow County Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS SIZE⁵

Not surprisingly, the bulk of the Town of Braselton's employers are small businesses and the number of small businesses has grown faster than the number of larger ones. As employee size increases, the total number of businesses decreases, as shown in the chart on the following page. Unfortunately, the most recent data on business size at the city-level is from 2006. In 2002, 59 % of Braselton's 127 businesses had 1 to 4 employees. By 2006, the total number of businesses had grown to 243, and the proportion of those with 1 to 4 employees had increased to 64%. As employee size increases, the total number of businesses decreases. Approximately 11% of the businesses are sized between five and nine employees. Businesses with 10 to 19 employees and those with 20 to 49 employees each account for roughly nine percent of the total. Roughly three percent of the businesses with 100 to 249 employees and there were also four businesses with 250 to 499 employees. In 2006, there were no businesses with over 500 employees, although in the years 2002 and 2003 there was one business with between 500 and 999 employees.

⁵ The US Census Bureau's County Business Patterns collects business size date for zip codes, counties, MSAs and states. The 30517 zip code was used to comprise the Town of Braselton.





Business Size Trends, Zip Code 30517, 2002-2006

Source: US Census Bureau



Money

Sources of Income

There are three primary sources of income: earnings, investments, and transfer payments. Earnings are wages and salary received from employment. Investments include unearned income from sources such as stocks, bonds, rents, and royalties. Transfer payments include governmental financial assistance, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Unfortunately, the most recent data on sources of income at the town-level is from the 2000 Census. Braselton's average proportions of income sources in 2000 were: earnings (80.2%); investments (13.0%); and transfer payments (6.8%). There is not a known significant reason to assume substantial changes in the proportions of sources of income in the Town in the intervening years.

More recent data (2006) is available for county-level geography and larger, as shown in the table below. Braselton is well above the MSA, state, and nation, in terms of earnings. The Town's proportion of income from earnings is also higher than all of the surrounding counties, with the exception of Gwinnett. Braselton's percentage of income from investments is higher than all of the surrounding counties except Hall, but is lower than the MSA, the state, and the nation. The proportion of transfer payments for Braselton is below the surrounding counties, MSA, state, and nation.

	Earnings	Investments	Transfer Payments
Barrow County	74.6%	10.1%	15.3%
Gwinnett County	80.9%	11.4%	7.7%
Hall County	67.3%	18.6%	14.1%
Jackson County	70.9%	12.7%	16.4%
Atlanta MSA	75.7%	14.5%	9.8%
Georgia	71.6%	14.8%	13.6%
United States	68.4%	16.9%	14.7%

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

WAGES⁶

Data on average annual wages is collected at the county level. Average annual wages vary a great deal across the four counties surrounding Braselton. In 2007, both Jackson and Barrow

⁶ Earnings covers all employees, whether they receive unemployment insurance or not, while wages are income from employment that is covered by unemployment insurance.



counties had average wages slightly above \$31,000 per year, which equaled only about 65% of the MSA average and 70% of the national average. Hall County fared somewhat better with an average annual wage of almost \$37,000. Average annual wages were a great deal higher in Gwinnett County at slightly over \$45,000. The Gwinnett figure is just below the MSA average but is higher than the national average.

On the whole, wages in the region have not been making progress in catching up to the MSA and the nation. Both Barrow and Gwinnett counties lost ground between 2003 and 2007 when compared to the MSA and national averages. Hall County gained slightly when compared to the MSA and held steady when compared to the nation. Jackson County's wages remained approximately 65% of the MSA's, but the percentage comparison to national wages dropped a little over one percent. When the intervening years between 2003 and 2007 are considered, one does see more up and down movement in wages as compared to the MSA and nation, but overall there has not been much consistent improvement.

Wages that are below average are a mixed circumstance. For instance, some recruitment efforts might highlight to companies that labor force costs are cheaper in that locale. But, in the long-term underpaid workers do not make as strong an economic contribution, and low wages can also be an indicator about workforce quality.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Barrow County	\$27,836	\$28,372	\$30,057	\$31,207	\$31,288
% of MSA	66.3%	65.6%	67.4%	68.0%	65.0%
% of US	73.7%	72.1%	73.9%	73.4%	70.4%
Gwinnett County	\$40,874	\$41,294	\$42,676	\$44,754	\$45,211
% of MSA	97.4%	95.5%	95.7%	97.5%	94.0%
% of US	108.2%	104.9%	104.9%	105.2%	101.7%
Hall County	\$31,589	\$32,849	\$33,828	\$34,765	\$36,994
% of MSA	75.3%	76.0%	75.9%	75.8%	76.9%
% of US	83.6%	83.5%	83.2%	81.7%	83.2%
Jackson County	\$27,166	\$28,773	\$29,218	\$30,334	\$31,371
% of MSA	64.7%	66.5%	65.5%	66.1%	65.2%
% of US	71.9%	73.1%	71.8%	71.3%	70.6%
Atlanta MSA	\$41,959	\$43,25 0	\$44,595	\$45,889	\$48,111
United States	\$37,765	\$39,354	\$40,677	\$42,535	\$44,45 0

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics



SECTOR WAGES

Again, data on wages is collected at the county level. All four counties surrounding Braselton were reviewed for this analysis. In order to make more effective comparisons, there is a greater level of sector breakdown shown in this section; particularly in Services, which is a very diverse industry sector.

The largest sectors of wages for Barrow County in 2006 were: Manufacturing (21.9%); Retail Trade (16.5%); and Construction (12.7%). The largest sectors for employment were the same three categories, but Retail Trade represents a slightly larger percentage of employment than Manufacturing.



Employment vs. Wages, Barrow County, 2006

Source: US Census Bureau

When the proportion of wages a sector contributes is higher per job than the proportion of employment, it means that these are high-paying jobs. Conversely, if there is a higher concentration of employment versus wages, it usually indicates a low-paying job.

For Barrow County, the sectors that pay well over the total jobs they represent include: Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade; and Health Care and Social Assistance. The sectors that have more jobs than wages include: Retail Trade; and Accommodation and Food Services.



The largest sectors of wages for Gwinnett County in 2006 were: Wholesale Trade (16.9%); Professional and Technical (9.5%); and Administration and Support and Waste Management Services (9.3%). The largest sectors for employment were Retail Trade (14.8%); Wholesale Trade (11.9%); and Administration and Support and Waste Management Services (10.9%).



Employment vs. Wages, Gwinnett County, 2006

Source: US Census Bureau

When the proportion of wages a sector contributes is higher per job than the proportion of employment, it means that these are high-paying jobs. Conversely, if there is a higher concentration of employment versus wages, it usually indicates a low-paying job.

For Gwinnett County, the sectors that pay well over the total jobs they represent include: Wholesale Trade; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Management of Companies and Enterprises. The sectors that have more jobs than wages include: Retail Trade; and Accommodations and Food Services.



The largest sectors of wages for Hall County in 2006 were: Manufacturing (28.2%); Health Care and Social Assistance (15.0%); and Retail Trade (8.7%). The largest sectors for employment were Manufacturing (27.2%); Health Care and Social Assistance (12.6%); and Retail Trade (12.1%).



Employment vs. Wages, Hall County, 2006

Source: US Census Bureau

When the proportion of wages a sector contributes is higher per job than the proportion of employment, it means that these are high-paying jobs. Conversely, if there is a higher concentration of employment versus wages, it usually indicates a low-paying job.

In Hall County, the sectors that pay well over the total jobs they represent include: Wholesale Trade; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. The sectors that have more jobs than wages include: Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; and Administration, Support and Waste Management Services.



The largest sectors of wages for Jackson County in 2006 were: Manufacturing (31.9%); Retail Trade (15.8%); and Wholesale Trade (8.1%). The largest sectors for employment were Manufacturing (26.6%); Retail Trade (20.6%); and Accommodations and Food Service (10.9%).



Employment vs. Wages, Jackson County, 2006

Source: US Census Bureau

When the proportion of wages a sector contributes is higher per job than the proportion of employment, it means that these are high-paying jobs. Conversely, if there is a higher concentration of employment versus wages, it usually indicates a low-paying job.

Jackson County sectors that pay well over the total jobs they represent include: Construction; Manufacturing; and Finance and Insurance. The sectors that have more jobs than wages include: Retail Trade; and Accommodations and Food Services.

Although all four counties have very different economies, there are some clear trends that can be seen when looking at sector wages. Across the four counties, jobs in the Retail Trade and Accommodations/Food Services tend to be low paying when compared to other employment in the area. The opposite is true for Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade. These jobs tend to pay higher wages than others in the area.

In an attempt to better understand the performance of various sectors in terms of wages, it is important to drill down into the sub-sectors further. The following tables highlight sub-sectors



that pay over \$45,000 annually for both Barrow and Jackson counties. This means these subsectors' performance is well above the average annual wages for both counties. Because Gwinnett and Hall counties both contain large, heavily urbanized areas that are not representative of the Braselton area, only Jackson and Barrow counties were examined for this statistic.







The sub-sectors included in the preceding table represent high-paying jobs within both Jackson and Barrow counties. These sub-sectors make positive contributions to the local economy. These are the types of jobs that the Town of Braselton should be focused upon in economic diversification and expansion efforts in the future.

Unique Economic Assets

When considering unique economic activities, it is difficult to identify many specifics in any given community that can not also be found in another community somewhere else. For instance, the Town of Braselton has a small historic downtown that is certainly a potential asset, but many other communities across the metropolitan area, state, and even Southeast can boast a similar asset. However, there are two developments in Braselton that are definitely unique and can not be found elsewhere. These are described in more detail below.

CHATEAU ELAN

Chateau Elan is a four-star resort and considered a "top-tier destination in the Southeast." It is situated on 3,500 acres and includes a hotel, winery, and conference center. It also includes a European-style spa and several restaurants. There is an equestrian center, a tennis center, rock climbing and ropes courses, and four golf courses. A cooking school opened in 2007. Chateau Elan is the largest producer of wines in Georgia. The wines of Chateau Elan have won many national and international awards. Chateau Elan also includes a luxury residential community, with approximately 2,000 homes. It is estimated that there are well over half a million visitors each year to all of the facilities included in the Chateau Elan resort.

ROAD ATLANTA

Road Atlanta is considered "the South's premier motor sports facility" and one of the "world's best road courses." It is a multi-purpose motor sports facility spanning 750 acres. It is home to 14 professional and amateur sports car, motorcycle, and vintage racing events each year. Road Atlanta also provides racing and driving schools, including the Skip Barber Racing School, Kevin Schwantz Suzuki School, and Saab Aero Academy. The facility is also used for corporate programs and events and testing for auto manufacturers and motor sports teams. The Petit Le Mans is the biggest racing event at Road Atlanta, and is the largest annual international sporting event held in Georgia. There are approximately 320,000 visitors annually to Road Atlanta each year, with people coming from 35 states and 18 countries.

Both of these unique assets for the Town of Braselton represent underutilized economic assets. Their economic development potential for the entire Town of Braselton is largely untapped. While each of these developments has hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, the Town has not yet been able to effectively harness all of these visitors into a revenue stream for the community. There is still much potential for Braselton to become more of a tourist destination and utilize these two unique assets to their fullest in order to benefit the entire Town.



Major Findings: Trends & Issues

The results and conclusions of this *Economic Development Analysis* are mixed for the Town of Braselton and the four surrounding counties. Since community capacity and business climate are really the accumulated sum of numerous individual factors, any individual shortcomings can result in a negative perception of the community. Conversely, strengths and assets can be leveraged to project a more positive image of the community.

Positive	Negative
Labor Force Participation Rates in all four counties are above the national average.	There is a great imbalance across the four-county region when looking at wages and job opportunities.
The concentrations of the Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade industries in Braselton are assets since these are usually high-paying sectors.	On the whole, wages in the four-county region have not been making progress in catching up to the MSA and the nation.
The bulk of the Town's businesses are small. This can be helpful during economic transitions and diversifications.	Almost 70% of Braselton residents commuted outside their county of residence for employment.
Braselton has a relatively low reliance on transfer payments which indicates strong local wealth generation.	Jackson and Barrow counties have an unemployment rate (6.6%) that is higher than the national rate (6.1%).

Overall, the Town of Braselton and the surrounding area are fortunate to have many positive economic attributes. Growth in the area is strong, and many of the existing jobs are concentrated in sectors that tend to be higher paying. Strong growth, however, could also lead to a deterioration of economic conditions if there is not sufficient planning.

Three of the four counties surrounding Braselton struggle with lower wages. Without adequate planning, Braselton could also fall into this trap. The Town will need to seek out and provide an environment conducive to companies that will provide high quality employment opportunities with higher wages. The current differences between local wages and the Town's average household income seem to indicate that it may be difficult for some who work in Braselton to also live there. It is important to make sure that future development of housing includes options that are in a price range accessible to those who work in the community.

To succeed and compete in this global environment, economic and community development efforts in Braselton will need to be redefined so as to continuously steward and improve the Town's future and long-term economic sustainability.



Detailed Natural Resources Report

Natural Resources

The Town of Braselton has been proactive in preserving its natural resources. With a full-time environmental specialist in the Town's Planning Department, Braselton continues to update and stay abreast of environmental protection practices and criteria established by the state.

Continued growth and development within the Atlanta Region alongside accelerated growth in greater Braselton, creates growing threats to the natural resources of Braselton and neighboring unincorporated areas. Associated concerns include soil erosion, water pollution, stormwater runoff, habitat loss, and gradual loss of the town's tree canopy.

Several federal, state, and local regulations designed to protect these resources have been adopted by Braselton. These efforts have helped ensure that much of the town's natural resources needed for sustained plant and animal habitat, safe drinking water, and preservation of scenic and natural landscapes are preserved. Other development practices pose a threat to these resources and should be addressed in the planning period.

Compliance with Environmental Planning Criteria

The state's planning requirements provide localities with specific criteria that they must meet for protecting several environmental resources, including water supply watersheds, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, protected rivers, and protected mountains. Braselton has addressed all of these planning requirements through local ordinances.

Water Supply Watershed

A water supply watershed is defined as the area of land upstream from a government owned public drinking water intake. The state has established Water Supply Watershed criteria to ensure that as development occurs in these areas, the drinking water is preserved.

Braselton is located in the Mulberry River watershed, which is classified as a large water supply watershed. Within a large water supply watershed, only those streams within a 7 mile radius of public water intake location are required to meet specific criteria. Braselton is more than 7 miles upstream from the closest intake, in Winder, and therefore is exempt from mandatory requirements. Despite this, the Town has adopted a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance that includes mandatory setbacks and prohibits certain uses within the seven mile radius of an intake, thereby addressing any potential conflicts that might arise if annexation occurs in that direction.

The Town has also adopted stricter buffer requirements than required by the state for the Mulberry River as well as a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance to address erosion and sedimentation issues near streams.

Groundwater Recharge Area

As defined by the state, a groundwater recharge area is any portion of the earth's surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has mapped significant recharge areas in the state, and because none fall within the town's limits, Braselton is not responsible for related criteria. Despite this, the Town has adopted a Groundwater Recharge Protection Ordinance as a part of its Development Code. The

ordinance provides general requirements for significant recharge areas as well as additional requirements for those areas within significant recharge areas classified as Lower Pollution Susceptibility Areas, Average Pollution Susceptibility Areas, and Higher Pollution Susceptibility Areas.

There are two groundwater recharge areas in close proximity to the town's boundaries. One of those is located slightly southwest of the town along I-85 and another is located slightly northwest of the town near the City of Buford.

Wetlands

Fresh water wetlands are defined in by Georgia's Comprehensive Planning Act of 1989 (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas." All alterations or degradation of protected wetlands require prior approval by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as required by Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act.

The Town of Braselton has adopted a Wetlands Protection Ordinance as a part of its Development Regulations that states this and defines other restrictive uses. Within these areas, the following activities/uses are prohibited: hazardous or toxic waste receiving, sanitary landfill. The ordinance limits the following land uses unless permitted by the applicable zoning district and by the Section 404 permit:

- Timber production and harvesting;
- Wildlife and fisheries management;
- Camping, hiking, hunting and fishing recreation activities;
- Public wastewater treatment and natural water quality treatment or purification facilities.

The state Environmental Planning Criteria also provide a list of considerations that should be taken into account when reviewing land use plans that overlay on wetlands areas.

Protected Rivers

The state of Georgia has established criteria to make sure that rivers remain suitable for wildlife habit, recreation purposes, and a source for clean drinking water. The protection criteria require the maintenance of a vegetative buffer.

Braselton adopted a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance that meets and, in many cases, exceeds these requirements. The ordinance requires a natural vegetative buffer for 50 feet on both banks of all streams. More stringent buffer requirements have



been required for the Mulberry River – with 150 foot buffers required on both banks of the Mulberry River. The ordinance also sets limitations on impervious surface, septic tanks, and septic tank drain fields within a buffer zone and provides variance procedures for unique situations.

Protected Mountains

The state also sets criteria for Georgia's mountains. The criteria apply to all protected mountains - all land area 2,200 feet or more above mean sea level that has a percentage slope of 25 percent or greater for at least 500 feet horizontally. No land in Braselton meets these criteria.

Water Supply and Water Quality

Clean water is a fundamental requirement for a healthy and vibrant community. Clean water is not only important for providing a safe source of drinking water but also for ensuring healthy animal and plant habitats. Safe and healthy water is also a fundamental requirement for attracting and sustaining desirable growth.

Braselton is a member of the Metropolitan North Georgia Planning District, created in 2001 "to establish policy, create plans and promote intergovernmental coordination of all water issues in the District from a regional perspective." This effort along with the inaugural Georgia Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan, adopted in 2008, requires and encourages greater collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions and regional organizations on issues of water supply and water quality over upcoming years.

Public Water Supply Sources

Braselton receives its water from four underground wells, two connections to the Gwinnett County Water System, one connection to the Jackson County Water System, and one connection to the Barrow County Water System. Gwinnett County obtains its water from Lake Lanier, part of the Chattahoochee River Basin. Barrow County receives the majority of its water from the Bear Creek Reservoir. The Town is in the process of considering surface level water sources. The Town has adopted a Wellhead Protection Plan as a part of its Development Code, which ensures the safety and protection of theses water sources. Well water is treated with chlorine before entering the system.

Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance

The state passed the Erosion and Sedimentation Act in 1975 to help protect water resources in Georgia. The Act was amended in 2003. The Town of Braselton has adopted an ordinance which requires all non-exempt land disturbing activities to include provisions for soil erosion and sedimentation control measures and practices within all development plans. The ordinance also requires the pursuit of best management practices within all ordinances. The Town's ordinance is current with the amended 2003 law.

Rivers and Streams

The most significant body of water in Braselton is the Mulberry River. The Mulberry River expands from the Mulberry Creek, just north of Thompson Mill, and extends in a southeasterly direction through Jackson County. The Little Mulberry River joins with the Mulberry River just

south of SR 124. The Town purchased land for conservation along the river, near Thompson Mill Road, part of which is being used to create a river walk.

Other relevant bodies of water include Wheeler Creek and Duncan Creek which meet just north of I-85 in the Chateau Elan development. Indian Creek and Walnut Creek also cross into the town limits just east of SR 53.

Impaired Waterways

The Environmental Protection Division of DNR monitors Georgia's streams on a regular basis for water quality to meet the requirements of Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. Figure A below shows waterways within or immediately adjacent to Braselton that are not meeting the requirements of the Clean Water Act. As indicated by their 4a categorization, appropriate actions are underway to address the causes of these violations and to bring these waterways into compliance.

Reach Name	Jurisdiction	Reach Location	Evaluation	Use	Criterion Violated	Potential Causes	Miles	Category
Wheeler Creek	Gwinnett/ Barrow County	Headwaters to Duncan Creek	Not Supporting	Fishing	FC	NP	5	4a
Mulberry River	Hall/Jackson/ Barrow County	Mulberrry Creek to Little Mulberry River	Not Supporting	Fishing	FC, Bio M	UR	9	4a
Little Mulberry River	Gwinnett/ Barrow County	Headwaters to Mulberry River	Not Supporting	Fishing	FC	NP	11	4a

Figure A : Impaired Waterways Within or Adjacent to Braselton

Source: Georgia's 2008 Integrated 305(b)/303(d)

Notes: FC = Fecal coliform bacteria; Bio M = Modification of the biotic community for macroinvertebrate organisms; UR = Urban runoff; NP = Nonpoint sources.

Category 4a – Data indicate that at least one designated use is not being met, but TMDL(s) have been completed for the parameter(s) that are causing a water not to meet its use(s).

TMDL = total maximum daily load

Those waterways outside the town limits are shaded in tan.

Flora and Fauna

Protection of at risk plants and animals species, including their habitats, is a priority of the federal and state government. When applicable, these species should be protected by Braselton as it plans for the future. The Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division provides information on rare and endangered plants and animals by county. No city and town specific data is available. Braselton is primarily located in Jackson County and therefore is most concerned with protected plants and animal habitats within this jurisdiction.

Report

Jackson County is home to three federally protected and one state protected plant species. The three federally protected endangered plants all take habitat in granite outcrops, placing extra importance on the protection of these areas. These habitats do not exist within Braselton. Braselton should work with neighboring communities to protect at risk habitats. In particular, Braselton should inventory potential annexation areas for such resources to address any habitat concerns that should be considered as new development occurs. Please see Figure B for protected plant and animal species in Gwinnett, Barrow, and Hall counties.

Protected Plant and Animal Species - Jackson County

Federally Protected Plants

- Amphianthus pusillus, commonly named "Pool Sprite" is an aquatic annual with stems one to five centimeters long. This plant qualifies as G2 status, with 6 to 20 occurrences throughout the world. It is listed as a threatened species in the U.S. and Georgia. The plant is found on vernal pools on granite outcrops, and within the U.S., the plant is found only within the southeastern piedmont of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. The pool sprite is most threatened by quarrying, trash and debris dumping into outcrops, and off-road vehicle traffic.
- Isoetes melanospora, commonly named "Black-spored Quillwort" are find habitat in shallow, flat-bottomed, temporary pools that form depressions on granite outcrops and within the U.S. is only found in Georgia and South Carolina. These depressions are less than 3 dm deep and usually contain at least 2 cm of soil. The black-spored quillwort has GI status, with less than five occurrences in the world. It is listed as endangered by both the U.S. and Georgia. The plant is at greatest risk due to quarrying, trash dumping, and heavy recreational use. The populations in Jackson County are transplants.
- *Isoetes tegetiformans, commonly name* "Mat-forming Quillwort" is found in shallow, flatbottomed pools that form in depressions of granite outcrops. The depressions are less than 3 dm deep and usually contain at least 2 cm of soil. Georgia is the only state in the U.S. where the plant is known to still exist. The mat-forming quillwort has GI status, meaning it is critically impaired due to less than 5 occurrences in the world. It is listed as endangered by both the U.S. and Georgia. The plant is at greatest risk due to habitat encroachment, in large part as a result of quarrying.

Georgia Protected Plants

 Veratrum woodii or Melanthium woodii, commonly named "Ozark Bunchflower" is found is mesic hardwood forests over basic soils. The plant is rated as G5, thus considered secure globally; however, it is imperiled in the Georgia due to only 6 to 20 occurrences and is considered rare by the state and should be protected due to its scarcity.

Animals

Hemidactylium scutatum, commonly named "Four-toed Salamander" is found in swamps; boggy streams & ponds; hardwood forests. The animal is considered rare of uncommon in the state of Georgia, yet is rated as G5, and is thus considered secure globally. Adults live under objects or among mosses in swamps, boggy streams, and wet, wooded or open areas near ponds or quiet, mossy or grassy/sedgy pools (the larval habitat). It breeds in fall, lays eggs in winter (in south) or early spring.

Gwinnett County	Hall County	Barrow County
 Plants Aesculus glabra Ohio Buckeye Amphianthus pusillus Pool Sprite (US protected) Amsonia ludoviciana Louisiana Blue Star Aster avitus Alexander Rock Aster Cypripedium acaule Pink Ladyslipper (GA protected) Cypripedium parviflorum var. pubescens Large-flowered Yellow Ladyslipper Eriocaulon koernickianum Dwarf Hatpins (GA protected) Fimbristylis brevivaginata Flatrock Fimbry Hydrastis canadensis Goldenseal (GA protected) Isoetes melanospora Black-spored Quillwort (US protected) Schisandra glabra Bay Star-vine (GA protected) Sedum pusillum Granite Stonecrop (GA protected) Sedum pusillum Granite Stonecrop (GA protected) Veratrum woodii Ozark Bunchflower (GA protected) Waldsteinia lobata Barren Strawberry (GA protected) Waldsteinia lobata Barren Strawberry (GA protected) 	 Plants Hydrastis canadensis Goldenseal (GA protected) Monotropsis odorata Sweet Pinesap (GA protected) Nestronia umbellula Indian Olive (GA protected) Spiraea alba var. latifolia Broadleaf White Spirea Symphyotrichum georgianum Georgia Aster (US protected) Thermopsis fraxinifolia Ash-leaf Bush-pea Veratrum woodii Ozark Bunchflower (GA protected) Animals Cambarus howardi Chattahoochee Crayfish (GA protected) Cyprinella callitaenia Bluestripe Shiner (GA protected) 	 Plants Cypripedium acaule Pink Ladyslipper (GA protected) Pilularia americana American Pillwort Animals Cyprinella xaenura Altamaha Shiner (GA protected)

Figure B : Protected Plant and Animal Species in Gwinnett, Hall, and Barrow Counties

(Source: Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division)

Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Several other environmental factors should be taken into account when planning for a Braselton's future growth and development, including steep slopes, flood plains, soils, and agricultural land. These factors can help determine what areas are unsuitable for certain types of development and what areas require greater regulations to mitigate any undue environmental impacts as development occurs.

Steep Slopes

Development on steep slopes should be avoided when possible. As such, development on property with slopes between 15 and 25 percent and with slopes greater than 25 percent should generally take place on larger lots to avoid slope areas. The last comprehensive plan update found that there are few steep slopes in Braselton. Because of this, such development barriers are minimal.

Flood Plains

Development within floodplains is generally discouraged due to the high risks associated with these areas. Communities that choose to develop within floodplain areas are encouraged to join the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Association and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Communities participating in the program agree to manage flood hazard areas by adopting minimum regulatory standards established by NFIP.

Braselton has a limited amount of floodplains, most of which are located along the Mulberry River, Duncan Creek, and Wheeler Creek. Please see Figure 7-1 in the Assessment Report for the location of floodplains within the Town of Braselton. Undeveloped land exists along each of these waterways, and the floodplain should be taken into account as development occurs on adjacent parcels. Braselton has recently purchased land for conservation purposes along the Mulberry River, in part, to address this concern.

Braselton participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. The Town's current map was made effective in September 2006. By participating in the NFIP, property owners within the jurisdiction are able to purchase Federal flood insurance. Participation also makes the jurisdiction eligible for Federal grants, loans, and disaster assistance for construction or acquisition of structures within the designated floodplain areas. Braselton is currently working with Barrow County and state and federal partners to create an enhanced flood insurance rate map and flood insurance study.

Agricultural Land

Only 5.06 percent of Braselton's existing land use is currently used as agricultural land, with most of that land dedicated to vineyards for Chateau Elan. This is not a significantly high percentage. Braselton is highly urbanized, and because of this, farming is not anticipated within the town limits; however, as food costs continue to soar and more emphasis and prioritization is placed on locally grown produce, Braselton may wish to re-inventory vacant or abandoned lots for small scale production of local produce to be used as community gardens or other like

minded greenspace. Please see Figure 7-2 in the Assessment Report for the current location of agricultural land within the town's boundaries.

Soils

A soil survey of Barrow, Hall, and Jackson counties was completed in 1977. The last Comprehensive Plan update for Braselton reviewed this survey and found that soils in Braselton pose few limitations to development. Braselton also has a well connected water and sewer service (see Community Facilities and Services section), with limited septic system use, thereby minimizing soil associated risks to posed by such infrastructure.

Figure C shows a detailed mix of soil allocation within the town limits and surrounding areas.

Significant Natural Resources

Forest Land

Although Braselton is located in a growing and developing region, it has still maintained much of its natural resources. Braselton has a pastoral landscape and is not home to any state or national parks. Rapid growth threatens the town's tree canopy. Town ordinances do not provide sufficient criteria for tree protection and replacement. The Town needs to adopt a tree protection and replacement ordinance to reverse further decline of the Town's tree canopy.

Major Parks, Recreation and Conservation Areas

In 2000, Braselton joined with Jackson County and the municipalities of Arcade, Commerce, and Jefferson to complete a joint greenspace plan. This plan identified the need for new facilities throughout the county and within the town limits. Braselton has been actively working towards meeting the goals of the plan and in expanding greenspace in the community.

Scenic Vistas

As a part of the 2000 Greenspace Plan, the community identified the following scenic corridors in Jackson County: Highway 129, 441, Jefferson River Road, Brockton Loop, and I-85. Braselton also has several high elevation points prior to descending into the Mulberry River valley which can be considered scenic and should be considered in development decisions. The newly created Riverwalk along the Mulberry River also provides scenic vistas of the river.

Parks and Recreation

One of Braselton's priorities is increasing recreational and greenspace within the town. As identified in more detail in the Community Facilities and Services section, the Town has recently developed a multi-use trail along the Mulberry River, is working with Barrow County to develop a soccer complex along Highway 124, and is regularly looking for other opportunities to expand recreational offerings as the town grows.

Conservation Areas

As identified above, Braselton owns conservation land along the Mulberry River that will also home to a new riverwalk open to the public. Due to the developed nature of the town, it is unlikely that any major conservation areas will be created in the future. The Town has implemented a stream buffer protection ordinance to conserve environmental sensitive areas along the Mulberry River to minimize negative effects on the region's water quality.

Thompson Mill Forest

Community members have easy access to the Thompson Mill Forest, an arboretum managed by the Warnell School of Forest Resources of the University of Georgia. The Forest is on a 330 acre site just east of the Mulberry River in Jackson County. It contains a collection of living trees from around the world. The facility is located outside of the Braselton town limits but is an important resource for the community.

