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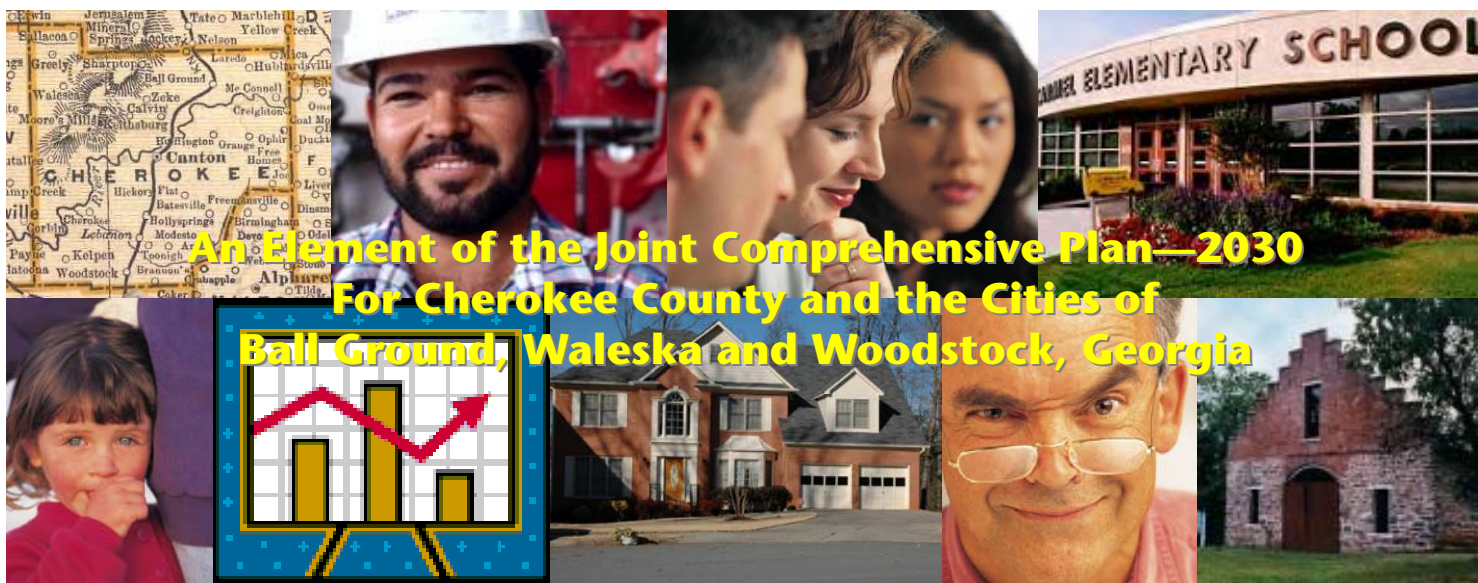
Cherokee County

Community

Assessment

Vol. 1: Issues and Opportunities

January, 2007



**Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update
Cherokee County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock**

**Community Assessment
Vol. 1: Issues and Opportunities**

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Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update Cherokee County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock

Community Assessment Vol. 1: Issues and Opportunities

Introduction

■ Comprehensive Planning Requirements

Three of the four jurisdictions participating in this Plan—Cherokee County and the Cities of Ball Ground and Waleska—participated jointly in the adoption of their current Comprehensive Plans, while Woodstock adopted their current Plan independently. In order to maintain their Qualified Local Government status (that is, to remain eligible for a wide range of State grants, assistance and permitting programs), the plans must be updated regularly—in the case of Cherokee County and its cities, by the end of October 2007. This current update is characterized by the State as the ‘tenth-year update,’ which, because of the significant changes that have occurred in Cherokee County over the past decade, coupled with the adoption of new planning standards by the State, requires a complete reevaluation, reorganization and rewrite of the Plan elements.

Planning requirements for the preparation and adoption of Comprehensive Plans are adopted by the State’s Board of Community Affairs pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act, and administered and supplemented by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The most recently applicable planning standards took effect May 1, 2005, and establish the minimum standards that must be met for DCA approval.

■ Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this Community Assessment report is to present a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the comprehensive plan is built. In the view of the Department of Community Affairs, preparation of the Community Assessment is largely a staff or professional function of collecting and analyzing data and information about the community and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda (i.e., the “Plan”). The preparation of this Community Assessment, however, has greatly benefited from input and active participation by the Citizens’ Roundtable and from the general public through Plan Forum exercises and surveys.

This Community Assessment is comprised of two volumes:

- This Volume 1 is focused on issues and opportunities facing the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants now and anticipated in the future that result from growth and development.
- Volume 2 is an ‘addendum’ to the Community Assessment, containing detailed data and analyses that relate to the issues and opportunities discussed in Volume 1.

■ Components of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan meeting the planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs must include the following three components:

Community Participation

The first part of the comprehensive plan is the Public Participation Plan that was adopted by all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update in order to take advantage of ongoing citizen participation activities through the Citizens Roundtable. The Public Participation Program describes the strategy for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Community Assessment

This part of the comprehensive plan is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about Cherokee County and its cities (with an emphasis on those cities participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan). This following are included in the Community Assessment's two volumes:

- a list of potential issues and opportunities the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants may wish to take action to address;
- analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development;
- evaluation of current community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with DCA's Quality Community Objectives; and
- analysis of data and information to check the validity of the above evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities.

Community Agenda

The third part of the comprehensive plan is the most important, for it includes the community's vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda will include three major components:

- a vision for the future physical development of the jurisdictions participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan, expressed in map form indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns;
- a list of issues and opportunities identified by the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants for further action; and
- an implementation program for each of the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants to achieve the vision for the future and to address the identified issues and opportunities.

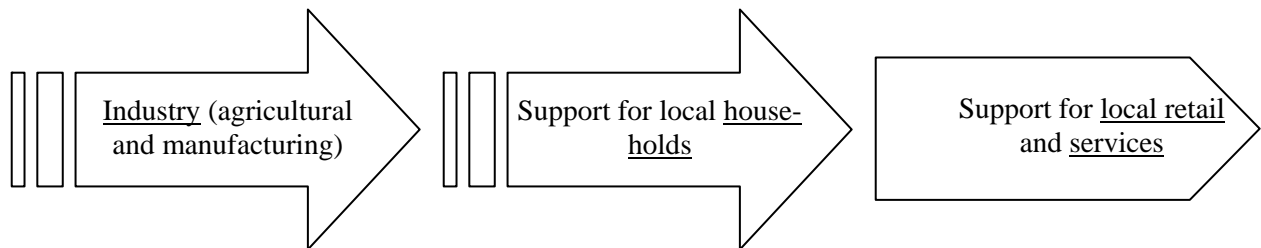
In addition to the three components above, and in concert with preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the County and its cities must review and possibly amend and recertify their previously adopted **Services Delivery Strategy**, and update the State-mandated **Solid Waste Management Plan**.

■ County Overview

Prior to the 1980's, the County was largely rural and agriculturally based. As the County's roadway networks began to improve and expand, bedroom communities began to appear to serve commuters into metro Atlanta. Population growth has been most significant along the southern boundaries near the Cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock. The eastern portions of the County and Canton are beginning to experience notable growth as transportation networks and infrastructure systems are improved and expanded. The northern portions of the County are anticipated to retain their rural character, although Waleska and particularly Ball Ground are poised for growth in the near future.

Historically (pre-1990), growth in Cherokee County was very moderate and was driven by growth within the county. Fueled by agricultural and manufacturing industries, jobs were available for local households who, in turn, supported local retail and services:

Primary Market Driver of Growth – Pre 1990



Due to the desirability of the region, Cherokee County faces increasing development pressures as both a bedroom community to the metropolitan area and as a potential employment center. Over the last two decades, Cherokee County has, and continues to experience a remarkable growth rate. By 2030, the population is anticipated to more than double from 183,449 to 417,654; for every 5 people in the county today, there will be 11 by 2030.

This assessment promotes a mix and balance of residential development options available to existing and future residents of the County, in the spirit of maintaining the small town low-density character as desired by county residents, while at the same time encouraging economic opportunities to promote a well balanced tax base. Clearly, however, density is building in the cities where services exist and a more "urban" character is developing.

- The nature of growth has changed over the past fifteen years and will continue to mature and evolve.
- The demographic characteristics of those who already live in the county are changing as they have children, age in place, etc.;
- The number and types of households that are attracted to the county will likely continue to change based on the types of development and potentially types of jobs; and
- The living environments these households will need (whether it be lower maintenance housing for aging baby boomers or more affordable housing to support industry) and seek (perhaps more walkable and mixed-use environments) will help drive the nature of future development.

A well thought-out comprehensive plan is responsive to current market trends and anticipatory of likely future market trends. The following represents a snapshot of the history and past economies of the county and its cities.

■ A Brief History of Cherokee County

The county, established by the Georgia Legislature on December 26, 1831, theoretically still belonged to the Cherokee Indians, but they would soon relinquish their ownership as a result of their removal to the West. Although preceded in the first millennium by a culture often referred to as “Moundbuilders,” the Cherokee and Creek Indians in the early 1700s were the first people in recorded history to call the area “home.” Many remnants of their culture remain throughout the county whose very name honors these proud people. Although migration of whites into the area began in the early 1800s, by 1825 there were still only 220 whites, including men, women and children, living amidst 13,000 Indians and 1,277 slaves belonging to the Indians. The discovery of gold in Dahlonega and the election of Andrew Jackson in 1829 spelled the end of the fledgling Cherokee Nation in northwest Georgia. Pressure from the Georgia state government and the Jackson administration led to the official end of the Cherokee Nation and the integration of its territory into Georgia in December of 1831. The newly formed Cherokee County consisted of some 6,900 square miles, covering most of northwest Georgia. A year later, the Georgia legislature voted to subdivide this giant county and create what is now modern Cherokee County. What follows is a brief introduction to the history of that region.

Created primarily as an emergency measure, the original county served the temporary purpose of holding the territory together under Georgia's laws while the survey was being made and while a more permanent arrangement could be worked out for its disposition into Counties of normal size. In an act of the Georgia state legislature approved December 3, 1832, the original Cherokee County was divided into ten counties: Cherokee, Cass (now Bartow), Cobb, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Lumpkin, Murray, Paulding and Union. Later divisions of these eleven counties have increased the total number of counties made from the original Cherokee to twenty-two.

“Captain’s Districts” or militia districts in Cherokee County were not totally legalized until after 1833. Each county was divided, by statute, into “Georgia militia districts,” and the able-bodied men resident in each district were organized into a military company by a captain, who was duly elected by the district. The militia system lasted until the Civil War period, although militia districts retain the civil functions allowed to them by the original statute.

The modern county of Cherokee, now 429 square miles, was first surveyed in 1832. Surveyors marked out a few large agricultural lots in the northwest corner of the county. The rest was subdivided into forty acre “gold lots.” Few of these lots actually contained gold, and as a result were sparsely settled by farmers. In the 1830s, newly arrived settlers introduced Cherokee’s first industry, silk production. The largest city, Etowah, was renamed Canton to honor China's silk capital. This venture quickly proved a failure, as the regions climate was ill suited for silk production.

Tobacco cultivation arrived in the northwest corner of the county in the 1850s. Several families emigrated from Virginia to the area known as the hill region around Salacoa. These families established a considerable tobacco industry that dominated that corner of the county until relatively recently.

Perhaps the greatest economic boon to the people of Cherokee was the extension of the railroad to Canton in 1879. This allowed cotton, the dominant crop in the county by the 1880s, and the small but thriving marble industry to ship their goods south to Atlanta and Marietta.

In 1899, R. T. Jones, a local merchant, transformed Canton and much of the county when he established the Canton Cotton Mill. The mill quickly dominated the economic and social life of Canton. As the largest employer in the county, Jones took an almost paternalistic responsibility for the region. Among other things, the

mill built two villages to house its employees, established schools, sponsored festivals, operated stores and built a church. In 1924, Jones expanded this operation with the construction of Mill No. 2. This made Canton a major center for the manufacture of denim cloth. However, although cotton was king, the marble finishing business in the north end of the county would prove to be the county's largest revenue producer for a number of years.

As time progressed into a new century, Cherokee's five municipalities would emerge as centers of commerce and trade. Each town had its own identity. Canton, as the county seat, evolved to become the center of government. The cotton mill and other ventures gave newcomers and natives the livelihood needed. Ball Ground, named for an actual ball game between two Indian tribes, became known for its gems and minerals. Reinhardt College gave prominence to Waleska. Woodstock remained a quiet farming community for many years, as did Holly Springs, but that too would change. The county survived a world war and a depression, and it should be noted that during the 1930s when 2/3 of the banks in Georgia failed, none of the four Cherokee County banks did so.

In the 1930s, a new industry joined the textile mills of Canton. Cherokee County's long tradition of temperance led to a thriving moonshine trade. According to Frances Owen in "Glimpses of Cherokee County," (p. 53) Cherokee was the number one producer of corn whisky during the 1930s. The 1930s also brought a transition in agriculture; soil exhaustion, the boll weevil and decline in demand transformed Cherokee from one of the state's largest producers of cotton to one of the country's number one producers of chickens. During and after World War II, the county would experience explosions in growth and all the accompanying changes. Cotton farming gave way to poultry production, and the county became known as the Broiler Capital of the World. Poultry production continues to dominate the agricultural economy of the county today. Bell Bomber, the forerunner of Lockheed in Marietta, gave many residents unexpected opportunities for gainful employment. Hundreds of workers would now call Cherokee County "home," and in the decades to follow, the allure of the suburbs would draw newcomers to the area in record numbers.

In 1963, the Canton Cotton Mill began a slow and rather painful decline. In that year, mill workers voted in a labor union for the first time. This started many years of conflict between the mill owners (still the Jones family) and the employees. This conflict quickly destroyed the familial tradition of the mill community. In 1981, the Canton Cotton Mill closed, marking the end of an era in Cherokee County.

Five areas were incorporated within the county:

Ball Ground

Ball Ground became known for its gems and minerals. Located in northern Cherokee County, the original ball field used by rival Indian tribes, is not the exact site of the town, however, Indian ball grounds were usually located on a level area of 100 yards long and often along a running stream. Ball Ground did not come into existence as a town until the railroad passed through it in 1882. Until that point, the community was almost entirely agricultural. When the railroad line was surveyed to run through Ball Ground, officials decided to put up a depot and develop a town to go along with it. Within two years, Ball Ground had a population of 250 and a large number of new buildings, including three churches and a high school. Ball Ground was considered one of the best business points on the railroad. In addition to providing a market for nearby farms, it had several industries such as saw milling and woodworking. However, its best-known industry for many years was marble working.

Canton

The county seat of Cherokee County was established in 1833 and re-named Canton in 1834. Once famous for its "Canton Denim," known worldwide for the high-quality denim produced by Canton Cotton Mills, the City of Canton is now enjoying the greatest economic boom in its history.

Holly Springs

The City of Holly Springs is a seven square mile oasis of friendly neighborhoods, thriving businesses, and wonderful early-twentieth century homes and commercial buildings. The City was incorporated in 1906, and quickly began building up around a busy train depot established by the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad. That depot, now the Holly Springs Community Center, was painstakingly restored by the City in the late 1990's and is a source of immense civic pride for its 5,000 residents.

Waleska

Waleska takes its name from Warluskee, daughter of an Indian chieftain who lived approximately 150 years ago. When this maiden was removed to the west with her people, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis W. Reinhardt named their settlement in her honor. Waleska was chartered by the legislature in 1889. Agriculture and lumbering were two of the industries carried on in Waleska; however, the chief industry since the mid-1880s has been the education of students at Reinhardt College. Waleska has grown along with Reinhardt College in the past decades. Recently, Reinhardt College began offering a Bachelor's Degree program in the McCamish School of Business. Waleska is also home to nearby Lake Arrowhead. A private community, Lake Arrowhead not only offers golf and tennis facilities but also boasts the largest private man-made lake in the south—over 500 acres—and provides boating and fishing fun. The small town of Waleska is only 1.5 square miles in area.

Woodstock

Woodstock is located in the southernmost part of Cherokee County, approximately 30 miles north of Atlanta and 12 miles south of Canton, the county seat. The southern part of Cherokee was settled first due to its flatter topography and easier access. Woodstock is over one hundred years old and one of the county's oldest towns. There are many different stories of how Woodstock got its name. The most logical is that it derived from a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott. Other less plausible explanations included the theory that the train stopped here to “stock wood,” but the railroad came to the area some fifty years after the town had a post office and a name. There is also one tale that a man named Mr. Woodstock settled in the area and started a school, thus giving the community its name. The railroad came to Woodstock in November 1879. Presumably, this is when the first train depot was built, although the first written account was recorded when the City of Woodstock limits were measured from the Depot in 1897. The City had a population of 300 and comprised a total of 960 acres.

Woodstock had industries of various kinds. The first gristmills in the county were located nearby. Woodcarving, yarn spinning and other related activities were also done. The abundance of waterpower around Woodstock, such as Little River, Noonday Creek, and other streams, facilitated these industries. Woodstock had a considerable activity in mineral development. The old Kellogg Gold Mine and several others are within a few miles of Woodstock. Mica and kaolin were also found in nearby areas.

In addition to industry, Woodstock had a strong agricultural base. By the 1890s, Woodstock was said to be shipping 2,000 bales of cotton annually. A number of Woodstock developers were influential in introducing innovative farming methods to the county. In the present, the City boasts a historic downtown with brick paved sidewalks and buildings dating back to 1879.

Executive Summary: Community Assessment

The following summary focuses on those jurisdictions participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update—Ball Ground, Waleska, Woodstock and Cherokee County (for the unincorporated area) Where appropriate, countywide data and data or estimates for the nonparticipating jurisdictions is also included for comparison and a complete, countywide perspective. More detail can be found in Vol. 2 of this Assessment Report, the Technical Data and Analyses addendum.

■ Land Use Summary

- The majority of multi-family units will be targeted for location in the vicinity of major transportation corridors and at high activity nodes within the County, such as the Bells Ferry Corridor, Highway 92, Highway 5, and I-575; within the downtown redevelopment areas of the cities; and within mixed-use planned communities.
- With the dramatic household growth has come support for a significant amount of new retail and local-serving office.
- Newer, local serving retail is moderate to high quality.
- Regional-serving centers are rare in the county but are proposed along I-575; most centers are clustered in Woodstock and Canton on I-575.
- Several new, local-serving office projects have been developed near the large residential bases.
- Like many other suburban counties, but perhaps ahead of the curve, we are seeing some of the new retail and office projects come in “village center” formats either as a part of Cherokee’s many master-planned communities (MPCs) or as a complement to one of the existing downtowns, such as Woodstock.

■ Demographic and Socioeconomic Summary

Trend analysis and baseline population data provide a measure of current and projected population and employment growth within the County. Several factors can be attributed to this:

- The County has, and continues to experience a remarkable growth rate. By 2030, the population is anticipated to experience a growth rate which more than doubles the present population, which has already grown by more than 41,500 people since the 2000 census (a 30% increase). Prior to the 1980’s, the community was largely rural and agriculturally based. As the County’s roadway networks began to improve and expand, bedroom communities began to appear to serve commuters, principally into Cobb and Fulton Counties. Population growth has been most significant in the southern part of the county, directed toward the communities of Holly Springs and Woodstock. The eastern portions of the County and Canton are beginning to experience notable growth as transportation networks and infrastructure systems are improved and expanded. The northern portions of the County are generally anticipated to retain their rural character while accommodating significant growth.
- The majority of residential development in the County has been, and is anticipated to be single-family residential units at a variety of prices and sizes. Since 2000, 90.1 percent of new residential development in the County was comprised of single-family detached units. This is attracting a mix of younger family households with children, first time homebuyers, and opportunities for move-up and, to a much lesser extent, executive housing in a suburban setting. Higher-density housing has been increasing in the

cities, particularly Woodstock. Additional economic development support in terms of employment opportunities, commercial, retail and support services, and public services will need to keep pace with the residential development if the County is to become more self-supporting and less of a commuter community.

The County and its cities will need to address a number of specific concerns that are critical in meeting future housing needs. In addition to fulfilling a market niche for move-up and executive housing, future housing needs may be increasingly translated into greater demand for more reasonably priced workforce and point-in-life (such as adult communities or senior housing) housing types like multiple-family and creative mixed-use products. While the need is clear to provide for a full range of housing types and densities, future decisions of the County and its cities regarding public improvements, zoning and development standards will determine the extent to which multiple-family housing and other higher density and creative housing products will be utilized in meeting anticipated population growth and associated housing needs without disturbing the ultimate goal of maintaining a rural/suburban quality of life, punctuated with more “urban” city centers.

- The majority of growth in the County is anticipated to come from in-migration as opposed to natural increase, with in-migrants generally moving from elsewhere in the Atlanta metropolitan region, and an almost equal number moving in from outside the region. With a trend toward smaller families indicated, the availability of new residential opportunities at relatively affordable prices as compared to the overall metro Atlanta area will remain the primary draw for increases in the population and households in the County. However, as a variety of market pressures increase the price of starter single-family housing, a small but growing share of new housing product is expected to be townhomes.
- The increase in both the proportion and absolute number of older persons in the County (55+) indicates a growing need for housing products that will accommodate active adults and seniors on fixed incomes. New residential development, which has been primarily comprised of single-family detached housing throughout the county’s history, will need to adapt to these growing market segments. These products could include varied single-family and multi-family units within planned communities, active adult communities featuring small lot single-family and attached products with amenities at attractive costs.
- The persons-per-household sizes have been decreasing slowly over the past years, and are anticipated to continue to decrease moderately. This trend is consistent with national trends as the overall birth rate in the United States is expected to decrease over this planning period, but will be less felt in Cherokee County. Many suburban counties in Atlanta have seen rapid growth in Hispanic households over the past five years, which has contributed to areas of larger household sizes as many Hispanic households maintain multi-generational families in one home. Several metro counties were qualified as experiencing “hypergrowth” (a small base but dramatic growth) in Hispanic households. In Cherokee there is a steadily growing, yet still small Hispanic population, with over 95 percent of the population reported as White in 2000. Although the Hispanic population remains low at 5.6 percent of the population, it has increased twenty-two fold since 1980 and we would expect continued growth over the next 25 years. Currently, the larger household sizes often associated with Hispanic households is not a factor in household size projections. The decreasing household size may be attributed to the attraction of first time homebuyers with no children (either as families or single), empty nesters, and single persons entering the local job market, and is relative to the national trend of smaller household sizes/fewer children often associated with higher income and/or two-income families in areas with burgeoning economies.

Critical to understanding development opportunities in Cherokee County, and its cities, is a clear understanding of the market audience for new and revitalized land uses in the area. The following are details on the key demographic findings and conclusions relative to the demographics that shape development and revitalization opportunities.

A summary of Year 2000 demographic characteristics for the county is shown in Table 1. The 10-County ARC region and Georgia are included for comparison purposes. In 2000, Cherokee County comprised 4.1 percent of the ARC region’s population. Overall, the county had proportionally fewer persons in traditional

transit demographic groups (young persons, elderly, non-white persons, low-income persons, and households without vehicles) than either the region or the state. However, the concentration of population groups within Cherokee County varies by city.

For young persons age 15 to 19, Waleska had a greater proportion of persons in this age category (29.9 percent) than countywide (6.4 percent), region-wide (6.8 percent) or statewide (7.3 percent) due primarily to the student population at Reinhardt College. Canton had the largest proportion of persons age 65 and older (12.7 percent) followed by Ball Ground (11.5 percent) and Woodstock (8 percent). The proportion of non-white persons countywide (10.1 percent) was lower than either statewide (37.4 percent) or region-wide (44.6 percent). Canton had the county's largest proportion of non-white persons (31.2 percent), followed by Woodstock (13.3 percent) and Waleska (12.2 percent). There were proportionally fewer low-income persons living below the poverty level in Cherokee County (5.3 percent) than statewide (13.0 percent) or region-wide (9.5 percent). Ball Ground had the greatest proportion of persons below poverty (12.2 percent) followed by Canton (11.2 percent). Cherokee County residents had a higher proportion of households owning vehicles (97.1 percent) than region-wide (92.3 percent) or statewide (91.7 percent). Ball Ground was the only area with an auto ownership level below the statewide average (90.7 percent).

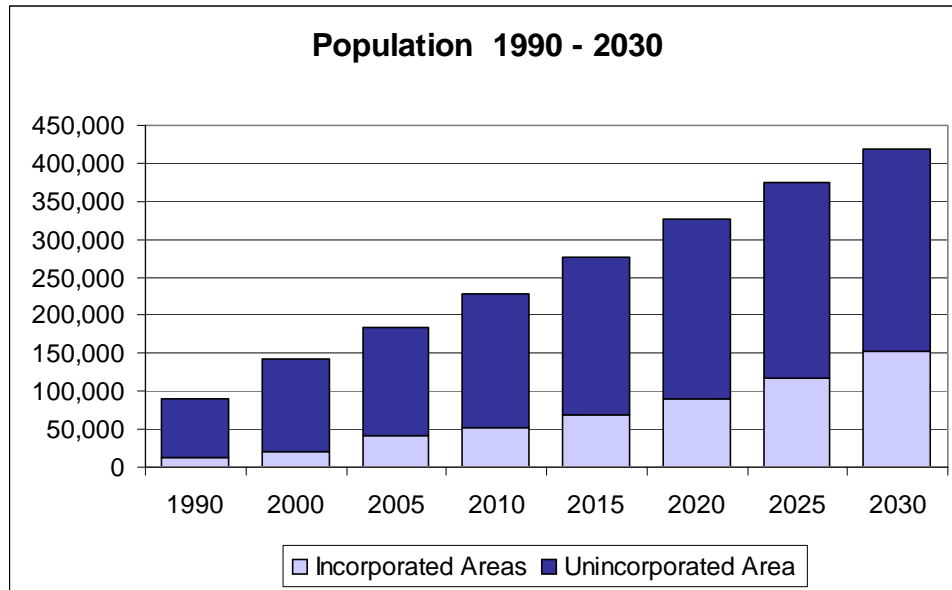
Table 1: Cherokee County Demographic Characteristics—2000

Geography	Total Population	Total Households	Percent of Population or Households				
			Persons Age 15 to 19 years	Persons Age 65 years and over	Non-White Persons	Persons Below Poverty Level	Households with No Vehicles
Georgia	8,186,453	3,006,369	7.3%	9.6%	37.4%	13.0%	8.3%
ARC 10-County Region	3,429,379	1,261,894	6.8%	7.3%	44.6%	9.5%	7.7%
Cherokee County	141,903	49,495	6.4%	6.6%	10.1%	5.3%	2.9%
Ball Ground	730	247	7.1%	11.5%	1.0%	12.2%	9.3%
Canton	7,709	2,713	6.4%	12.7%	31.2%	11.2%	5.3%
Holly Springs	3,195	1,109	6.2%	5.0%	8.1%	1.3%	1.7%
Waleska	616	112	29.9%	5.0%	12.2%	5.1%	0.9%
Woodstock	10,050	3,845	5.7%	8.0%	13.3%	4.2%	2.5%

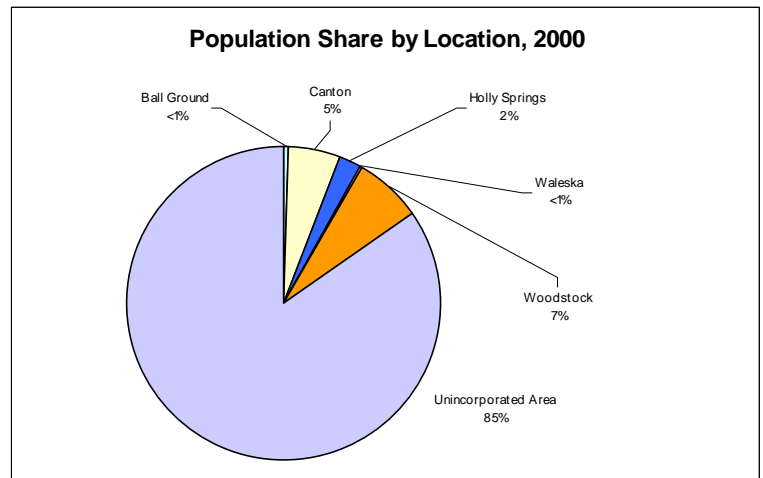
Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Population

- Cherokee represents a small but growing portion of the Atlanta metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), at 3.7 percent of metropolitan population in 2005, compared to 2.9 percent in 1990.
- Even with rapid growth projected for the metro area, Cherokee is expected to grow even faster and account for over 4 percent of all the metro population through 2030.
- Population growth in Cherokee County has quadrupled in the past 20 years, increasing 75 percent between 1980 and 1990, and again by 57 percent between 1990 and 2000, for an annual average growth over the decade of 5.7 percent.
- In 1990, there were approximately 90,204 people in the County compared to 141,903 in 2000 and an estimated 169,300 persons in 2004.



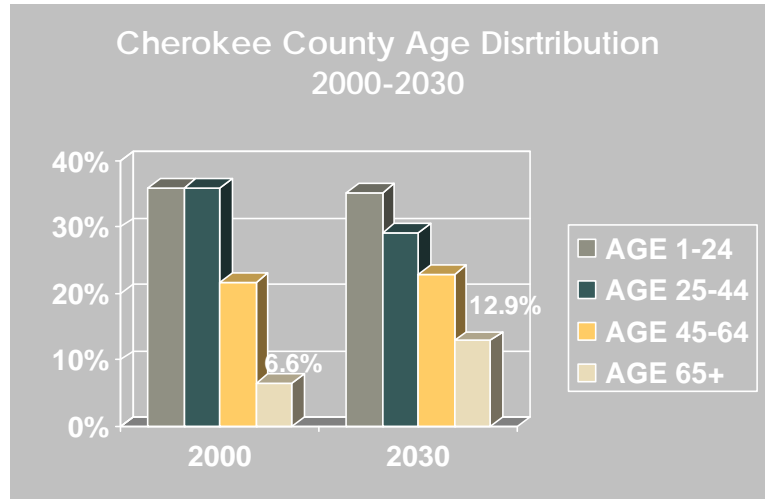
- The cities comprise a relatively small but growing proportion of the county population. Since 2000, the proportion has grown from approximately 15.3 percent to 22.3 percent of the county’s population that resides in the incorporated cities of Canton, Ball Ground, Holly Springs, Woodstock and Waleska. By 2030, as a result of continued annexations, redevelopment and attraction of new development, the proportion will have grown to 36.5 percent.



- The City of Woodstock is the largest incorporated area in the county, constituting 9.9 percent of the total county population today, followed by Canton and Holly Springs at 6.8 and 2.1 percent of the County respectively. By 2030, these cities will have increased to: Canton and Woodstock 14.8 percent of the county each, followed by Holly Springs at 4.4 percent.
- The majority of growth in the County is anticipated to come from in-migration as opposed to natural increase (births minus deaths). For 1995 to 2000, a slight majority of in-migration appears to have been driven from within the metropolitan region, with 52% of new residents having moved from elsewhere in the metro area, and the remaining 48% moving to the county from outside the Atlanta MSA.
- Population forecasts for the year 2030 are 417,600.
- Currently, about one-half of the population in Cherokee County (47.2 percent) ranges from age 25 to 54, which is the primary workforce cohort.

Age

- In 2005, slightly over 41 percent of the households in the County indicate the presence of children under the age of 18, an increase since 2000.



- Much has been said about the “aging of America,” and while the county will not increase its share of retiree-age persons in nearly the degree of the nation as a whole (where 19 percent of the population will be aged 65+ by 2030), there will be a shift in persons in the older age cohorts within the county. People aged 65 and above will account for

nearly 13% of the population (only 7 percent of county residents are in this age group currently), and there will be a correlating drop in younger adults (ages 18 through 44), from 42% of the population to 36%. Children under 18 and adults 44-54 are projected to be present at proportions similar to those seen today.

- Whereas the highest concentrations of projected growth of the age of householders in the MSA and in Cobb County are in the 55+ range, Cherokee’s growth is much more spread out. The highest concentration is in 45-54 range.
- Driven by the aging of the baby boomers, 55 percent of household growth in Cherokee is expected to be in households aged 55+. This is very significant but perhaps less so when compared to neighboring Cobb (69 percent of household growth is 55+) or the MSA overall (64 percent).

Household Composition

- Currently, approximately 80 percent of the households in the County are family households, with the remaining 20 percent being non-family households (an individual living alone or 2 or more unrelated persons living together). Approximately 52 percent of family households in 2005 have one or more children.
- Household characteristics vary between the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county. Within the unincorporated county, 81.8 percent of the households are family households.
- Within the incorporated areas, 67.6 percent are families, and 24.5 percent of the households are non-family.

Income

- The percentage of households with income \$50,000+ is higher in Cherokee than in Cobb or the MSA—61.5% for Cherokee County, compared to 58.9% for Cobb and 52.5% for the MSA.
- Presently Cherokee County maintains a relatively high level of household income with 68% of households earning more than \$50,000 per year, and a county household median income of \$69,597—higher than Cobb County (57.7% of households making more than \$50,000/year, and a household median income of \$65,649), and the MSA (57.7% making \$50,000/year or more, and a household median income of \$59,127).

- This level of high income is expected to grow, with a vast majority of county households (73%) making more than \$50,000 per year by 2010 (adjusted for inflation).
- However, the level of executive/very high income (over \$150,000/year), as well as those below the poverty line, is lower than in other counties such as Cobb and Forsyth, suggesting a narrower band of incomes in Cherokee County, which are generally within the moderate to moderate-upper ranges.

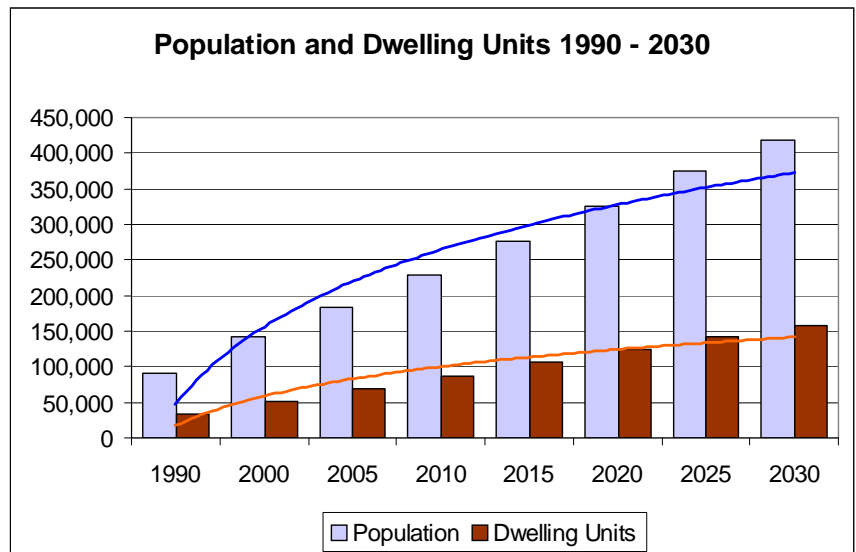
■ Housing Summary

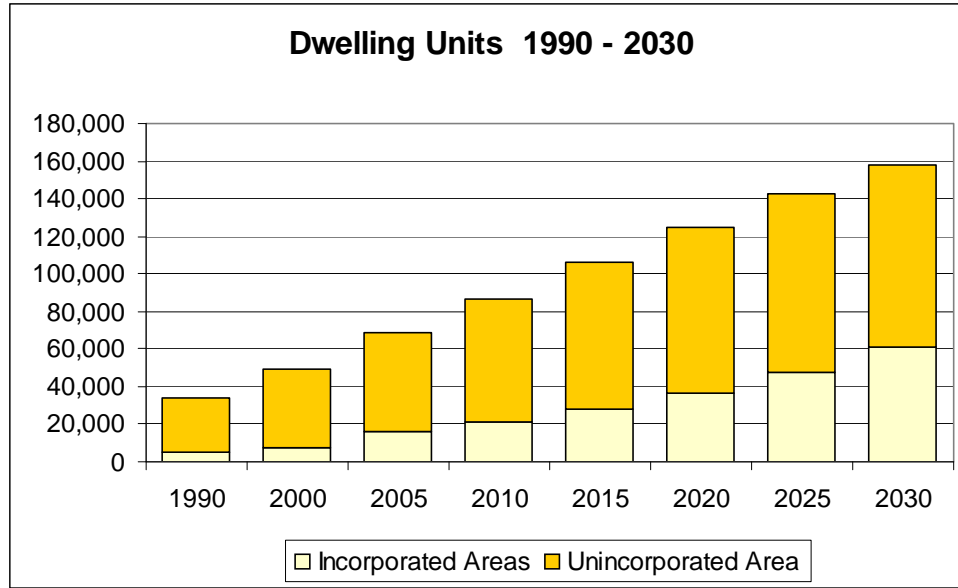
The characteristics and trends within a community are important indicators of future housing needs and policies.

The purpose of assessing Cherokee County's housing stock is to:

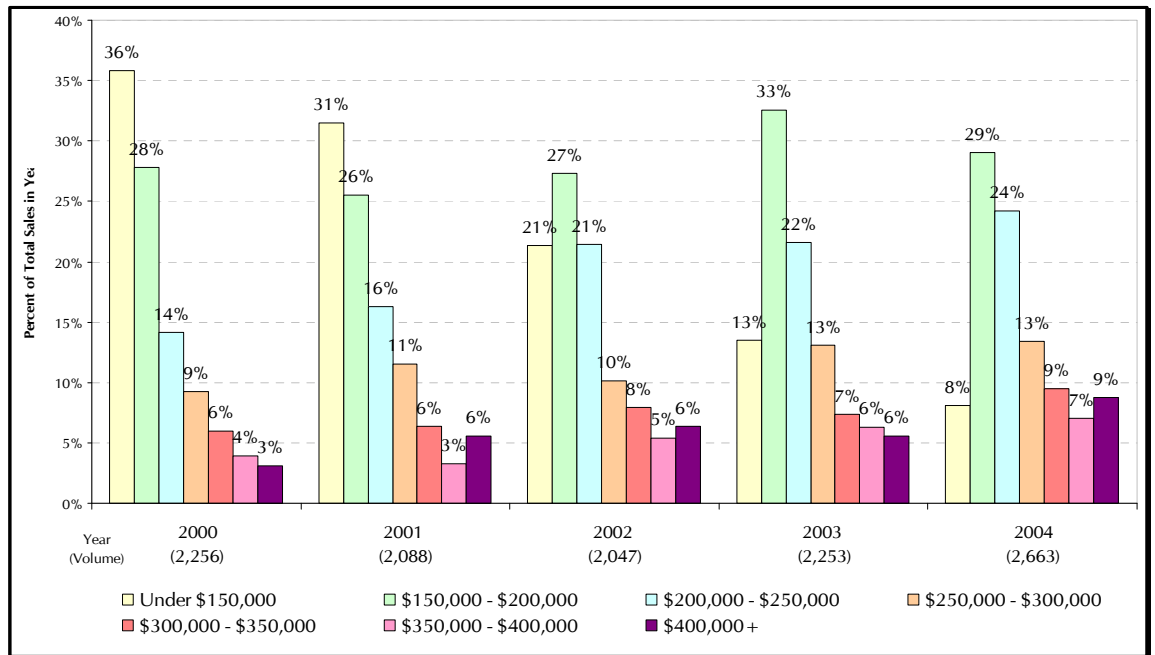
- Assess the current housing stock in terms of overall population demographics, special needs populations, economic development and affordability characteristics.
- Determine the County's future housing needs in conjunction with population projections, economic development and community goals and policies.
- Discover and investigate any local housing problems such as substandard housing, over-building, infrastructure and land use suitability.
- Assess whether an adequate, appropriate, affordable and varied supply of housing is being offered in Cherokee County to meet the future needs of its citizens.
- Develop an implementation plan to promote the County's vision and to provide the adequate provision of housing for all sectors of the population in the future.

Due to the desirability of the region, Cherokee County faces increasing development pressures as both a bedroom community to the metropolitan area and as a potential employment center. The Housing assessment promotes a mix and balance of residential development options available to existing and future residents of the County.





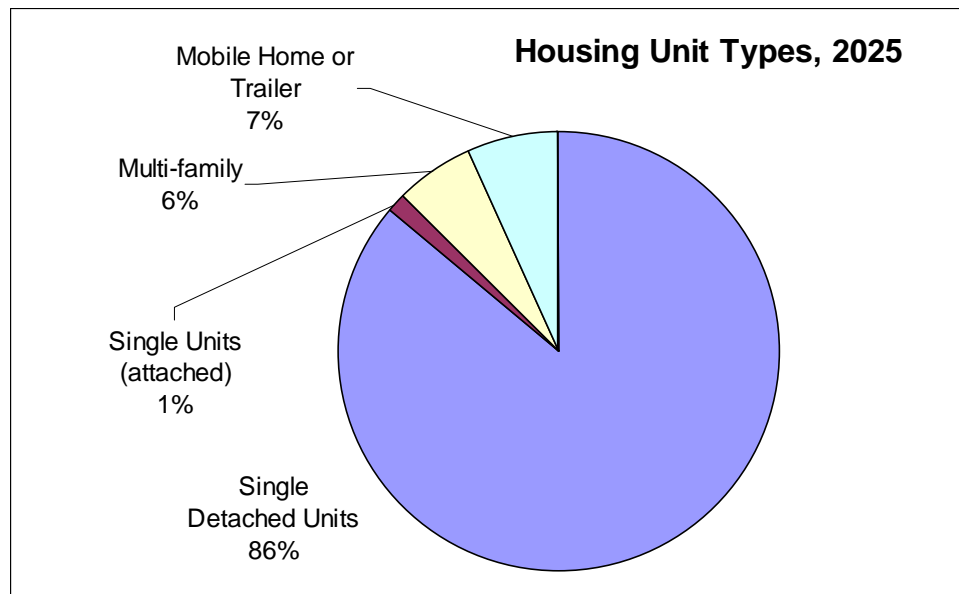
- In 2000, there were 51,937 housing units in Cherokee County, a 53.5 percent increase during the preceding 10-year period, which had grown to an estimated 68,426 by 2005. The County is forecasted to contain 157,634 housing units by the year 2030 (an increase of almost 90,000 units).
- The predominant housing type within Cherokee County, both in the 1990 census and the 2000 census was overwhelmingly single-family houses, comprising 86.9 percent of all units in 2000. Of all owner-occupied housing, single-family homes represented 94.3 percent of the total. However, between 2000 and 2004 the number of new single-family homes sold in the county as a percentage of all home sales decreased by about 10 percent. In 2000, 97 percent of all new homes were single-family homes. By 2003, this percentage dropped to 85, and then rose to 88 percent in 2004. The numbers reflect demo-



graphic shifts, including smaller household sizes and aging of the population, as well as market shifts, such as increases in land costs. Much of the new attached housing is either townhomes located proximate to North Fulton employment cores or homes targeting households 55 plus in age.

- In the single-family market, Cherokee County has recently experienced a decrease in the availability of new, lower priced detached homes. Home prices appear to be geared toward buyers looking at moderately priced homes, with most buyers (consistently about half) buying within the \$150,000 and \$250,000 range.
- There has been a significant increase in executive and move-up housing opportunities, particularly conservation subdivision developments, and subdivision communities with golf courses or other amenities.

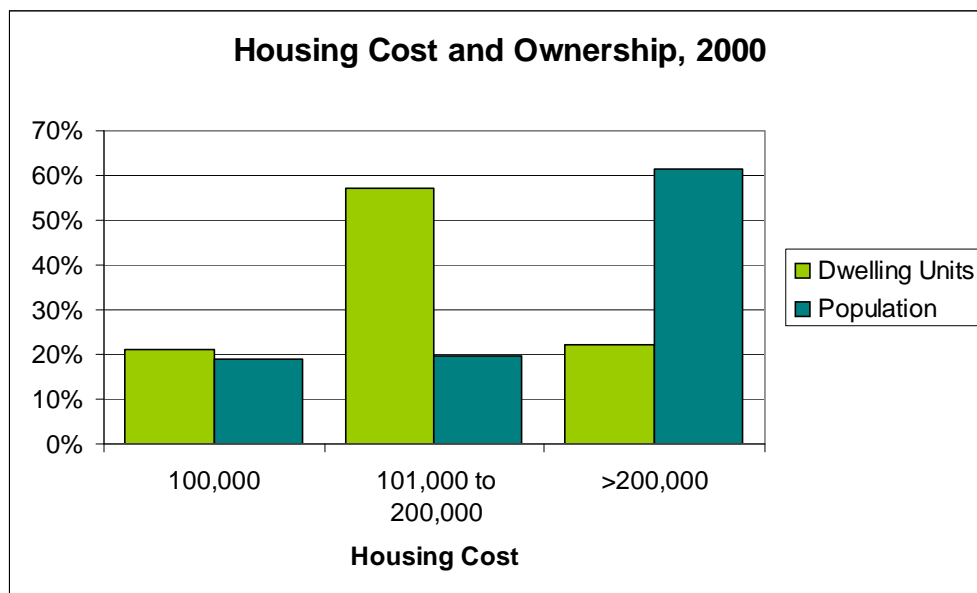
In 1990, multi-family housing units totaled 8 percent of all the county’s dwellings and 5.3 percent in 2000. Although the percentage remains small in the overall housing market context, this has been one of the fastest growing housing sectors since 2000, as the percentage of multifamily new home sales has risen by about 2 percent annually during the current decade.



- The percentage of manufactured or other housing types dropped between 1990 and 2000, from 12.7 percent to 7.8 percent, signifying a decrease in this housing choice for county residents.
- Stick-built single-family housing dominated the housing market in both 1990 and 2000, capturing 81.9 percent of the market in 1990 and 85.4 percent in 2000.
- Proportionately, the representation of stick built single-family attached units (duplexes and townhomes) remains fairly constant between 1980 and 1990, but increased significantly between 1990 and 2000.
- Owner-occupied units made up 83.9 percent of all occupied housing in the County in 2000, whereas renter-occupied units made up 16.1 percent of occupied units. Year 2005 estimates show that numbers have not changed significantly in the past five years. During this time, homeownership rates have increased nationally but new, rental apartment communities have also been developed to result in little change in the ratio of owner to renter housing units.
- In comparison to the regional 10-county ARC median figure of \$143,000 (2000), Cherokee County housing costs are slightly lower at \$138,000. However, Cherokee’s median housing value rose 60 per-

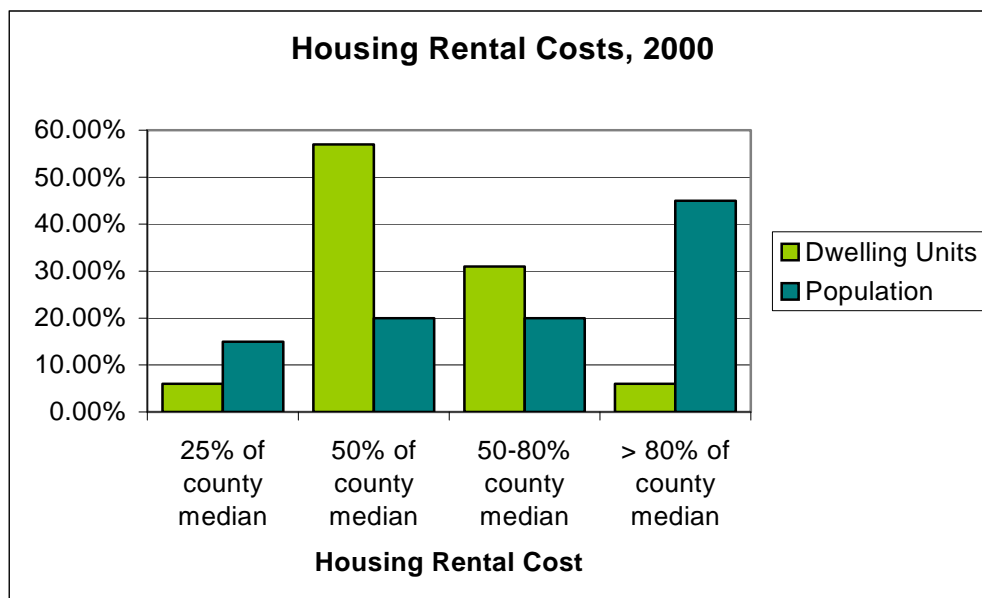
cent from 1990-2000, compared to the region's 54 percent growth. Current estimates put Cherokee's median owner-occupied housing value at \$176,000.

- Cherokee County has seen its median home value appreciate at a greater rate (almost 160 percent) than the MSA (149 percent) and nation (142 percent).
- The larger population centers of Cherokee County, which are closer to Atlanta metropolitan activity centers and transportation corridors, have seen an even greater rise in median home value, with Woodstock appreciating at 161 percent and Canton at 181 percent from 1990 to 2000.
- 18.7 percent of the total county population reported a housing problem of some kind (71 percent of whom were homeowners and 29 percent renters). Housing problems include substandard housing, overcrowding, and lack of affordability. Of those reporting a housing problem, 17.7 percent reported a cost burden (overpayment for housing): homeowners—15.2 percent and renters—30.6 percent. 6.9 percent of the population reported as severely cost burdened (paying over 50 percent of their income for housing).
- The majority of person reporting problems (87.1 percent) resided in the unincorporated portions of the county.
- The table below shows that many more people in 2000 could afford higher priced housing than the units available, while a close match existed between lower cost housing and those with lower incomes.



- Among owners reporting housing needs, a greater proportion are seniors, at 15.3 percent of owners reporting problems, as compared to renters at 7.6 percent
- In 2000, 21 percent of the County housing stock was valued below \$100,000 and 40.4 percent valued at less than \$125,000. Current year estimates, however, show that the values of homes have risen dramatically in the past five years. Homes valued below \$100,000 now comprise only about nine percent of all owner-occupied homes. There appears to be an adequate stock of existing homes to accommodate the 18.8 percent of the county households with incomes less than 50 percent of the County median. Over time, as home prices continue to escalate, the ability to serve households requiring homes less than \$100,000 will be diminished.

- Fifty-seven percent were valued between \$101,000 and \$200,000 in 2000. This percentage dropped to 54 percent by 2005, according to Claritas, Inc. estimates. This indicates that there is adequate stock available to house the 19.8 percent of the total county households that are considered lower income (50 percent to 80 percent of the County median).
- At the high range, homes valued over \$200,000 were equivalent to 22 percent of the county housing stock in 2000. This number has jumped to 37 percent in the past five years.
- Within the unincorporated area, only 5.6 percent of the total rental units were affordable to very low-income households; 15 percent of the 2000 rental households earn 25 percent of the county median income.
- The largest portion of rental units (56.3 percent) are affordable to the upper ranges of the very low-income category (50 percent of the County median income), which constitutes 20 percent of the rental households in the unincorporated county.
- 30.3 percent of units were affordable to the lower income category (50-80 percent of the County median income) which constitutes 20 percent of the renter households.
- Only 4 percent of all rental units rented for over \$1,500 per month, which is generally affordable to households earning over 80 percent of the median income, which constitutes almost 14 percent of rental households in 2000.
- Like ownership housing, in 2000 many more people could afford higher cost rental housing than the units available. At the lower end, however, units are clearly in short supply.



■ Economic Summary

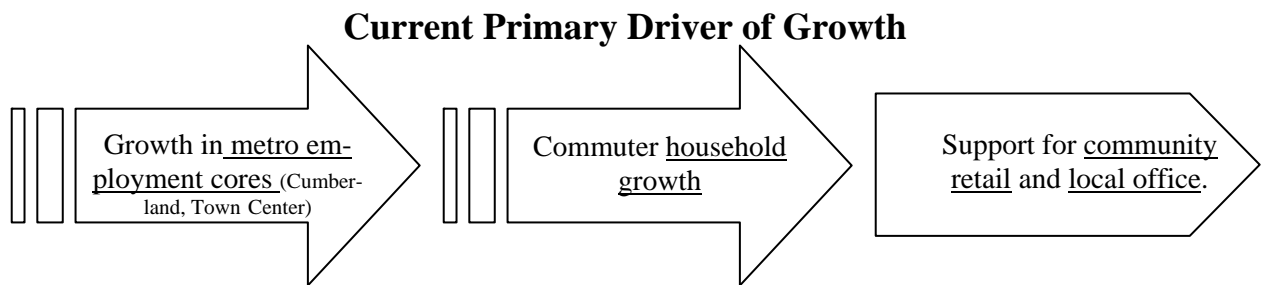
As the nation’s economy pulls itself out of the recent downturn, communities are trying to identify and capitalize on their strongest economic attributes to assure quick recovery and sustainable economic success in the future. Even prior to the weakening of the economy, local communities have been trying to align their economies appropriately around the national shift from manufacturing to a more service-oriented economy,

as well as well as an increased dependence on technology sectors. Cherokee County has historically been dependent on manufacturing, which accounted for more than 25 percent of the employed population in the County in 1980, in addition to Retail Trade, Construction, Transportation and Utilities, and Education. Shifts in the employment base of the County's labor force toward Professional and Administrative Services, Technology and Education, Health and Social Services have been occurring over the past two decades, and are anticipated to continue. Analysis of the County's statistics, economic trends and business environment surveys indicates that there are three main issues surrounding the County's future of economic development:

- Workforce – training needs and concern about quality;
- Infrastructure – transportation and ability to support growth; and
- Business environment – desire for better support for small businesses.

A strong and diverse economy is important because it creates jobs, increases income and provides a more stable tax base, and thereby provides a better quality of life. Although the County continues to grow economically, it continues to remain primarily a bedroom community for the Atlanta Metro area, based on analysis of commuting patterns.

As employment has decentralized away from Atlanta's urban core and metropolitan Atlanta has continued to move out the interstates, the primary drivers of growth in Cherokee have changed from that which is generated within Cherokee County to that which is going on to the south:



- From 1990 to 2000, the total employment in the County has risen by 121 percent from 21,607 to 47,655.
- Forecasts of employment growth were prepared by job sector in a ratio with the forecasted population growth: 63,160 jobs in 2005 and 144,970 jobs in 2030, which translates into an Increase of 81,800 jobs over 25 years.
- Cherokee County has a high labor participation rate of 84.3 percent.
- An overwhelming 64.6 percent of Cherokee County's employed residents worked outside of the County in 2000. The number of persons living and working within Cherokee County has increased from 31.5 percent in 1990 to 35.4 percent in 2000. However, nearly 2/3 of Cherokee residents still commute to employment outside of the County. This level of jobs/housing balance stands out even more when compared to the percentage of individuals working in their county of residence in the Atlanta MSA (50.8 percent), Georgia (58.5 percent) and the United States (73.3 percent).
- The unemployment rate, while relatively low, has increased steadily since 1999, and has begun to descend. The May 2003 rate for the County was 3.6 percent (much lower than the region or the state).
- The 2001 real per capita income in Cherokee County was \$29,150, lower than that of the Atlanta MSA's at \$33,769 and the United State's at \$30,413, but higher than the State's at \$28,523. This reflects the county's higher proportion of families with children and two wage-earner households.

- Almost 80 percent of the population relies primarily on net earnings for income, and the percentage of the population accepting Social Security and public assistance transfer payments decreased from 1990 to 2000.
- The Education and Health Services, Retail Trade and Manufacturing sectors employ the most people in Cherokee County. These sectors represent nearly half (48.5 percent) of the County's total employment.
- The Construction sector has the highest employment and earnings location quotient in the County representing 18.7 percent of the County's total employment.
- The three sectors with the highest average annual payroll are Wholesale Trade at \$42,539, Financial Activities at \$40,534 and Construction at \$34,314.
- At 20 percent, the Professional and Business Services sector has the largest portion of the total number of establishments in the County (897 firms).
- Only 3.3 percent of all business establishments employ more than 50 people.
- Non-farm sole proprietors represent 25 percent of the total employment, with annual average earnings of \$24,887.
- The county currently lacks any large-scale job providers. Those employers that do exist are generally small and provide lower-paying jobs.
 - Three of the five largest employers (excluding government and public schools) are retailers, which typically pay lower wages;
 - The County included only 21 industries with 50+ employees; and
 - There are only three industries with 200+ employees.
- The ability to attract major employers may be negatively influenced by the lack of rental housing for employees. Firms, regardless of their field, generally employ a workforce that occupy all levels of the income spectrum, and those workers at the lower or entry-levels of the spectrum often seek housing commensurate with their pay. Market-rate rental housing commonly addresses these income bands.

Earnings statistics indicate that Cherokee County has an untraditional income distribution, but is, overall, a middle-income community. The poverty and crime rates are also relatively low, indicating that poverty is not a serious problem for the County. In addition, the number of individuals receiving government financial assistance, (Social Security and non-retirement related transfers) has declined from 1990 to 2000, indicating an increase in the community's overall wealth. In particular, the wealth of retired individuals has apparently increased as more are relying on their personal retirement income.

Evidence of the relatively low paying employment opportunities is clear in the employment sector analysis of Cherokee County: the average annual earnings in each of the employment sectors are less than that of the State. Statistics indicate that the county overall is a middle-income place, with the higher income individuals generally being those that work outside the County.

Employment and earnings data suggest that Cherokee County's economy is overly dependent on services for current residents, and not those sectors that can bring in revenue from outside the County. Manufacturing is a revenue generator and is currently one of the largest sectors in the County, but is declining nationally and is projected to continue to do so. This trend is expected to be mirrored in Cherokee County. In addition, the low annual payrolls for the Manufacturing subsectors do not suggest it is a promising sector for the community. Wholesale Trade and Financial Activities are some of the highest paying sectors in the County, but represent less than 10 percent of the total employment combined. While other sectors which predominantly serve the needs of the residents are growing, and are anticipated to continue to grow (Retail Trade; Education and Health Services; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Construction), indicating that the County is growing at a rapid pace and suggestive of a healthy economy. The lack of large sector employment generators that

can attract substantial revenue from outside the County is a problem that may affect the outlook for strong, sustainable economic success in the future.

■ **Natural Resource Summary**

An important element of land use planning is the assessment of how natural resources are responsibly utilized, managed, developed and preserved within a community. This chapter in Volume 2 provides an inventory and assessment of locally significant and unique natural and cultural resources and presents a determination of vulnerability to the impact of growth and development. The assessment also identifies opportunities and constraints on the way land is developed.

Cherokee County has taken a proactive stance on the protection of its natural and sensitive resources. As Cherokee County continues to develop, more and more effort is being put into finding a balance between environmental needs of clean air and water, the availability of drinking water, retaining areas of natural significance for animal and plant habitats, and those of development and growing population. As part of the implementation of this plan, the County may need to revise further its Codes and Regulations to guide development away from sensitive areas. Increased education of the general public and developers with regard to environmental issues will bring about increased awareness of the importance of maintaining a proper balance between people and their environment.

In order to balance development pressures with the need to preserve both the rural character and sensitive environmental resources, the County has taken pro-active measures within this plan and on the current Future Land Use Plan. The use of the Watershed Protection Ordinance, Floodplain Regulation Ordinance, the Greenspace Conservation program, the Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, the County's Tree Preservation and Replanting Ordinance, the Soil Sedimentation and Control Ordinance, and adoption of the minimum DNR standards where specific ordinances have not been adopted will ensure the protection of these important features within the County. The Future Land Use Map utilizes a designation for Parks and Recreation/Open Space/Conservation. This designation includes active and passive parkland, dedicated greenspace, forests, WMAs, lakes, the Little River and the Etowah River. An Agricultural designation represents all pastures, cropland and areas incidental to farming operations and livestock production and aquaculture, as well as all land used for timber production or pulpwood harvesting.

On an independent course, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock have adopted regulations that mirror the County's ordinances for environmental protection.

■ **Historic and Cultural Resources Summary**

Historic resources include landmark buildings, historic structures and sites, commercial and residential districts, historic rural resources, archaeological and cultural sites and the historic environment in which they exist. Historic Resources serve as visual reminders of a community's past, providing a link to its cultural heritage and a better understanding of the people and events that shaped the patterns of its development. Preservation of these important resources makes it possible for them to continue to play an integral, vital role in the community. Currently the County has seven properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the Woodstock Train Depot; the Alfred W. Roberts House in Ball Ground; the Canton Commercial Historical District; the Crescent Farm/Edgewater Hall and the Rock Barn in Canton; the Canton Wholesale Company; and the Canton Cotton Mill #2.

As in many Georgia counties, distinct periods of building activity are apparent. An important building period in the County was between 1880 and 1919, better known as the period of the New South. For Cherokee County, this was a period of growth and expansion brought on by the construction of the railroad. Other major historical periods represented include antebellum, Reconstruction, Roaring Twenties, Great Depression and World War II/pre-Cold War. Varying styles of architecture include examples of Victorian, Queen Anne,

Craftsman, Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival, Romanesque, Italianate, Beaux Arts Classicism, and Tudor Revival. Craftsman and Minimal Traditional are the most common architectural styles found in the County.

The Cherokee County Historical Society is very active throughout the county, having recently completed additional studies identifying 44 more properties eligible for nomination to the National Register.

■ **Transportation**

Roadways were the focus of the transportation needs assessment. In 2000, congestion occurred primarily in the southern edge of the county. By 2030, it is anticipated that congestion will be a daily occurrence through to the core of the county. In 2000, the roadways experiencing the greatest congestion included I-75, the southern portion of I-575 from Woodstock to the Cobb County line, and portions of SR 92, west of I-575. By 2010, congestion is anticipated to increase on I-575, with congested conditions experienced from SR 20 in Canton to the Cobb County line. SR 20, heading east and west out of Canton and Victory Road from the Cobb County line to north of Towne Lake Parkway are forecasted to experience above average congestion.

By 2020, major roads connecting Cherokee to Cobb and Fulton Counties are expected to be congested near the county lines. By 2030, much of the major roadway network on the southern edge of the county is anticipated to experience capacity deficiencies. Roadways in the northwest corner of the county, including Wale-ska, are not expected to be deficient. The northeast corner, including Ball Ground, is also unlikely to face severe congestion; however, the Canton Highway and SR 372 near Ball Ground are expected to experienced low to moderate congestion levels.

In order to meet future transportation needs, Cherokee County must respond to the following issues through the 2030 horizon year.

- Accessibility and connectivity to Cobb, Fulton, DeKalb and, increasingly, Forsyth Counties.
- Corridor preservation (Cobb County) – I-575, I-75, Bells Ferry Road, Wade Green Road, and Trickum Road.
- Corridor preservation (Fulton County) – SR 92, SR 140/Arnold Mill Road, and SR 372/Birmingham Highway.
- Slightly decreasing percentage of commuters living and working in Cherokee.
- Preservation of employment centers – Woodstock, Towne Lake, and Canton.
- Congestion on roadways in the southern portion of the county – I-75, I-575 between SR 20 and Cobb County line, SR 92, SR 20, and SR 140.
- Alternative transportation – Ongoing transit study, airport expansion, sidewalk needs, and bicycle suitability and connectivity.

Potential Issues and Opportunities

The following issues have been identified from previously adopted plans, from data analysis (contained in Volume 2 of this Assessment Report) and through discussions with the Cherokee County Roundtable stakeholders group. These issues are preliminary in nature, and will be refined and addressed in the Community Agenda of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update.

■ Overview

Issues facing Cherokee County and its cities can be summarized generally under the following four topics:

● **Community Diversity**

- Economic self sufficiency vs. bedroom community
- Implications in terms of balance of residential, employment, retail
- How do we accommodate the unmet economic development demands for higher paying jobs and loss of retail sales dollars?
- Is the community ready to embrace what it would take to accomplish this?
 - Work force / affordable housing
 - Diversity of housing choices – young, old, worker, middle class, executive
 - Implications of the diversity of products and densities
 - Rental housing demands
- Jobs follow executive housing, and there is currently a shortage of this housing type.
- The image of the County needs to be upgraded so business moves here.
- **Woodstock**—Many structures in downtown are ill maintained and in disrepair. Devise ways of approaching absentee landlords, and the development of assistance programs and tools.
- **Woodstock**—there is not an active group to guide and promote downtown revitalization.
- The county currently lacks any large-scale job providers. Those employers that do exist are generally small and provide lower-paying jobs.
- Regional serving retail center needs are currently unmet.
- Currently housing is relatively affordable, but the county is a relatively expensive place for renters. Only 5.6% of the rental units were affordable to very low-income households (15%).
- Only 4% of all rental units rented for over \$1,500 per month, which is generally affordable to households earning over 80% of the median income, which constitutes almost 14% of the rental households in 2000.
- 18.7% of the total county population reported a housing problem of some sort: substandard housing, overcrowding and affordability.
 - The majority of person reporting problems resided in the unincorporated portions of the county.
 - Among owners reporting housing needs, a greater proportion are seniors.

- **Pattern and Form of Development**

- Sprawl vs. density issue
- Current land use patterns and policies promote sprawl.
- Rural character preservation – recognizing that it is more than just density
- How do we protect “horse country”?
- The county cannot pave enough to solve congestion issues.
- Town and country distinction – is it important? Is it too late?
- Annexation implications – can’t say both that growth should be concentrated in and around cities and not recognize that will mean more annexation
- Density is required to maintain affordability
- In order to support economic development there needs to be a greater diversity of housing densities
- Expectations associated with property ownership
- **Waleska**—how do we best emphasize our biggest asset, Reinhart College?
- **Waleska**—Water and Sewer infrastructure are necessary to achieve our vision as an intimate college town that will embrace families, seniors and students.
- **Woodstock**-- there is a lack of connectivity within the downtown area.
- **Woodstock**--Pedestrian safety needs to be increased. All new development should plan for pedestrian connectivity and activity.
- What will Cherokee County be like in 20 years?
 - Will Cherokee County become a more mature bedroom community with additional quantities and wider varieties of housing, retail and local office?
Or
 - Will Cherokee develop a more dynamic economy by attracting a major employer or employment sector?

- **Quality and Character of Development**

- How far are the communities willing to raise the bar?
- Design quality and natural resource protection
- Quality will not happen by accident. Are the communities willing to invest the resources and take the heat for higher regulatory standards?
- Open space – is the county ready to take on open space preservation beyond what it can get out of the development review process, such as creating a dedicating funding source to acquire open space
- Recognize other aspects of community character – vibrant older neighborhoods, downtowns
- The county has no local historic resource protective ordinances
- Historic resources should be mapped for added protection.
- Develop more historic districts.

- **Traffic and Transportation**

- Related to the economic diversity issue – i.e. commuting patterns
- Is the community ready to recognize:
 - It can not pave its way out of the problem
 - It must look at a range of solutions:
 - Alternative land use patterns such as mixed uses
 - Multi modal options
 - More walkable neighborhoods
 - Transportation management tools, such as managed access, better connectivity, intelligent transportation technology

■ Recurring Themes

Growth Management

Generally, there is an agreement that managing growth is important for the county. The county and each city should have a vision for where and how growth would occur and that roadways and other public infrastructure, schools and public services should be adequate to accommodate the additional growth in conjunction with the development. A common theme was that the county should control growth and not allow growth to control the county.

Slow Growth/No Growth vs. Quality Growth

On the topic of how and where future growth should occur, there were two schools of thought. On the one hand, there were participants who voiced the opinion that the county should try to slow down growth and not allow development at a greater intensity than 3-5 acres per home in the county and the cities should no longer annex additional land to accommodate higher density development. These participants also voiced the opinion that taxation and other efforts should be implemented by the county to perpetuate the use of land for agriculture rather than residential development. They stated that the county was rural and should remain as such.

On the other hand, many participants indicated that because they believe growth is inevitable, and many desire a self-sustaining community, the county should focus efforts on ensuring that it happens at the highest quality possible and in a responsible manner, that coordinates the provision of adequate public facilities and services with high quality development.

There was general agreement that infrastructure is a key factor, but from a service delivery standpoint—whether the cost of providing infrastructure to support new growth would be too great a tax burden to bear, whether expansions would be timely to growth demands, or whether improvements could maintain the current quality of life at all.

Single-family development, particularly larger lot development, tends to consume farmland and natural environment areas at much greater pace than conservation-designed development and higher density residential products. Therefore, as conservation of the natural areas and rural character is one of the county's underlying concepts, growth management techniques and careful planning of land uses at appropriate densities must be considered.

Rural Character Preservation

The rural character of the county is one of the key strengths of Cherokee County. This rural character should be preserved through some means. There has been mention of rural estates (large lots of 2+ acres) and an area dedicated to horse farms and that way of life as desirable land uses, especially in the eastern portions of the County. In other areas, as agriculture diminishes, pressures to realize the development value of family farms must be recognized. How do we accommodate growth while saving the overall rural feel of the community?

Community Character

“Rural communities,” “small town” and “horse country” are defining characteristics within the county. While this character is difficult to define, this discussion was often accompanied by frequent mentions of encouraging high quality development and the use of architectural standards for non-residential developments. Existing neighborhood character should be identified, protected, and enhanced.

In general, the cities are preserving and enhancing the heritage nature of their cores, while building “in-town” densities. A recurring theme encircling and outside the cities is a desire to retain all of the quality of life benefits of “suburban living,” while fostering significant nonresidential development in appropriate locations.

Balanced Land Use Mix

On the topic of the mix of land uses in the county/community there were again differing opinions. There were some participants that expressed the desire to see more development that is nonresidential which would generate local jobs and increase the nonresidential tax base to provide funds for services, schools and infrastructure improvements, while other participants felt that the county should remain a rural residential community and that nonresidential uses would not be appropriate in the county. The market study outlined in Volume 2 had identified both an employment and retail shortage within the county. The concerns of the Citizens’ Roundtable was to achieve the “best of both worlds” by retaining the benefits of a suburban lifestyle while strongly encouraging economic growth (both as a source for local employment and tax base advantages).

Economic Development Opportunities

There are major shifts in the economy and real estate market towards “knowledge-based”/service economy. Employment growth is lower in places where the housing supply is more constrained. If Cherokee County is to become an employment center, a much greater percentage of rental housing will be necessary to support these economic opportunities. The ability to attract major employers may be negatively influenced by the lack of rental housing for employees, and the provision for “executive” housing for management.

The historic downtowns and town centers within the County add to the county’s diverse and small town feel. The historic core downtowns need to be supported and secure in their focus and purpose in order to create lively centers. There is also a concern that competition from other non-residential areas will siphon the life out of these centers. Downtown and town centers should be active both during the day and in the evening to provide a cultural focal point and a greater diversity of commercial establishments that support a mix of retail, entertainment and dining options.

Workforce Availability

The issue of providing workforce housing and other types of affordable housing options will require significant attention and potential revisions to the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Code to accommodate mixed-

use developments with residential components and areas of higher density residential. This may also involve the added application of density bonus and incentives in exchange for inclusion of residential units within the cost limitations of the workforce community.

Fiscal Responsibility

As a corollary to infrastructure financing and preferred land use patterns, there was a consensus that the Comprehensive Plan should be sustainable in its fiscal responsibility, assuring that the benefits and costs of future development must be balanced to maintain the quality of life now enjoyed throughout the county. Limited non-residential development has impacts both on quality of life issues (commuting time, environmental) and financial (a large proportion of the county's potential retail dollars are spent outside of the county). Identifying large areas of the county as rural, very low density also has financial implications on the fiscal health of the county.

Choice

It is an aim of the County to foster an environment that allows people to remain within the community from birth to death. As the county's demographics continue to diversify, special planning attention should be aimed towards policies to integrate appropriate community facility improvements, encourage "live, work, play" environments, create linkages and support housing to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and lifestyles.

Environmental and Historic Protection/Conservation

Growth needs to be balanced with the need to retain and protect significant natural resources, i.e., streams, wooded areas, wildlife habitats and open spaces throughout the county. It is also important to identify and protect historic sites, areas of steep slope and watersheds. The county's water supply is recognized as a critical resource.

Development should be steered away from these valuable resources including additional measures to further assess and protect the natural and historic resources of the County, particularly in the pre-development assessment phase. The county should identify targeted areas for conservation proactively, and not just react to their disposition when faced with a development request.

Annexation

A number of people shared their concern that annexation of land by municipalities is an issue. While there was some consensus that higher intensity development should occur only within the limits of the cities, there also was some concerns expressed that the cities should not continue to grow outwards through annexation. It is noted that few seemed aware that the County and the cities have established growth boundaries in the past in order to deal with this issue in a positive and cooperative way. At the very least, this cooperative arrangement between the cities and county should continue.

Rural Preservation vs. Property Rights

Another topic where there was a split between participants was on the topic of rural preservation vs. property rights. While some people expressed the desire to preserve large tracts of land for agricultural uses to preserve the rural appearance of portions of the county, others believed that regulations preventing the subdivision of larger tracts of land could deprive landowners of their property rights. "We don't want to be your scenic easement" summarizes the concerns that family farms would continue to dwindle, particularly as agriculture becomes increasingly unprofitable and the families move toward retirement. A balance between "ru-

ral” character and development was sought by some, possibly through a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and wider use of conservation subdivisions.

Community Facilities and Services

A high growth rate and scarcity of public funds has led to many infrastructure improvements to be “reactive” to development rather than being used to “guide” development. Sewer is extended on a development-by-development basis rather than being coordinated under a master plan for growth and comprehensive plan population and employment projections. New schools can be a strong catalyst for attracting growth to areas where growth is planned, desired and supported by other necessary infrastructure. Transportation issues associated with school location can also be coordinated with land use to encourage greater use of school buses, bicycles and walking.

Facilities catering to special needs populations such as shelters for victims of domestic violence, rehabilitation centers and transitional housing for homeless families are limited or non-existent in the County and the needs of this population must take advantage of the services offered through organizations outside of Cherokee County.

Schools

Construction of new schools and the capacity of existing schools will have difficulty-keeping pace with the forecasted growth. The attractiveness of the Cherokee County as a great “family” environment will continue, bringing proportionately more school-aged children into the school system than in many other counties.

Traffic/Road Network

The road network and its ability to handle existing traffic volumes is a major issue in the county. Traffic congestion on I-575 and the increasing traffic counts on SR 20 and other major roads are really a problem. There is a concern that the rural road network is having difficulty keeping up with growth, and that the currently planned roadway improvements will not even fix existing problems. Traffic congestion not only lowers the quality of life of a community, but it also impedes economic development opportunities. The County needs to change its mindset of how we view mobility, investigate connectivity, rail, transit and greater land use/transportation connections.

Other solutions will have to be sought to solve these problems, including:

- Create more walkable communities and increase the perception of safety increasing buffers and sidewalk widths along high-speed roads.
- Increase the land use and transportation coordination to improve future mobility, including the use of alternative modes and mixed uses to reduce trips.
- Get commuter rail in the community to cut down single person occupancy vehicles.

Political “Planning” Will over Time

There needs to be a mechanism or organization in place to assure that adopted plans remain on track without regard to changes at the political level. Some felt that the Planning Commissions play that role, while others thought a separate broad-based citizen’s group should be created to assure that we “stick to” the Comprehensive Plan after it is adopted. Land use plan consistency is one option that will be studied further.

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

■ Land Use Summary

Since Cherokee County's existing land use patterns have a direct influence on the community's future growth and infrastructure, the analysis of existing development patterns are important as the basis for the preparation of the Future Development Map.

Because of its proximity to jobs in the Atlanta area, and particularly Cobb and Fulton Counties, its abundance of vacant land, and the availability of affordable housing stock, Cherokee County has undergone a transformation over the last several decades from a primarily rural county to a bedroom community within the Atlanta metropolitan area. Over the last 30 years, the county has been urbanizing rapidly, with a large portion of growth over the last 15 years. Almost 51 percent of today's total dwelling units were constructed since 1990 (that is, the total has more than doubled); 24 percent of today's units have been constructed since 2000 alone.

With this dramatic household growth has come support for a significant amount of new local-serving retail and local-serving office development of moderate to high quality. Most commercial centers are clustered in Woodstock and Canton and along I-575, while several new, local-serving office projects have been developed near the large residential bases. Like many other suburban counties, some of the new retail/office growth has occurred either in "village center" formats, as a part of Cherokee County's many master-planned communities, or as a complement to one of the existing downtowns, such as Woodstock.

Estimates for 2005 indicate that Cherokee County as a whole contains 68,426 housing units, predominantly in single-family homes (85.7 percent), and 4.7 million square feet of nonresidential floor area supporting retail, office and industrial uses.

■ Current Land Use

The Existing Land Use Maps show the distribution of land uses by basic category within the jurisdictions participating in this joint Comprehensive plan: Ball ground, Waleska, Woodstock and the unincorporated areas of the county.

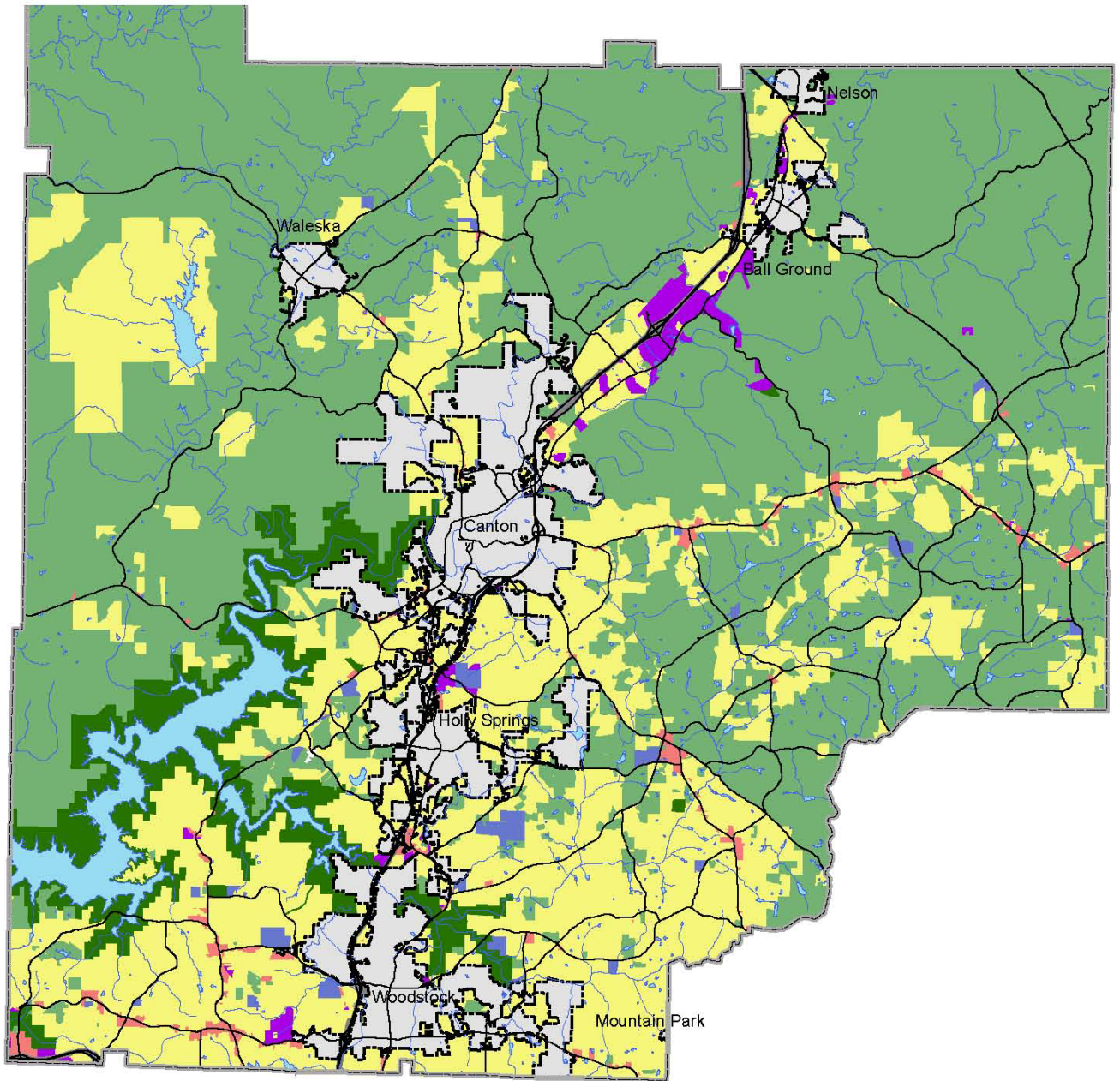
The land categories displayed on the map are:

- **Residential.** The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units.
- **Commercial.** This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
- **Industrial.** This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.
- **Public/Institutional.** This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. This category does not include facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities are included in the Park/Recreation/Conservation

category, and general office buildings containing government offices are included in the Commercial category.

- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities.** This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports and other similar uses.
- **Park/Recreation/Conservation.** This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.
- **Agriculture/Forestry.** This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.
- **Undeveloped/Vacant.** This category includes land that has not been developed for a specific use, or was developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.
- **Mixed Use.** This category covers mixed use projects that are predominantly residential in character, but which contain a range of housing types and densities and/or nonresidential elements for shopping or work, and usually a dedicated open space or recreational amenity (such as a club or golf course).

Cherokee Existing Land Use

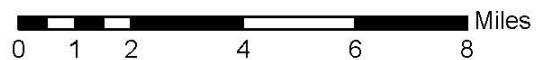


Legend

- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

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Drawing Prepared By:
CHEROKEE COUNTY
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.
CANTON, GA.
DATE: 08/24/06



■ Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources

Cherokee County is fortunate to have many conservation, recreation and natural areas. Prominent natural features in the county with steep slopes include Pine Log Mountain and Bear Mountain. The Cherokee County Parks and Recreation Authority holds 1,245 acres in passive open space, which may contain undisturbed land, land adjacent to the Etowah or Little Rivers, walking trails, off-road bike paths, open fields (not playing fields or play areas), and an additional 400 acres of improved open space/parkland.

Natural open space also includes three Wildlife Management Areas that are managed by the Georgia DNR on lease agreements. These large tracts of land principally serve public hunting interests during the regulated State hunting seasons but also serve as access points for fishing on the lake. The Allatoona Wildlife Management Area, owned by the Corps of Engineers, encompasses 4,433 acres at the Lake. The McGraw-Ford (2,400 acres) and Pine Log Mountain (14,900 acres) WMAs are privately owned and leased to DNR. Among the undeveloped and unused land within the WMAs, almost 97 percent is forested.

Under the previously funded Governor's Greenspace Program, the County acquired 675 acres, including 575 acres of greenspace with State funds and 100 acres with county funding. The greenspace is located in five tracts of land: the Wyngate Tract (20 ac) which protects water quality, riparian buffers and natural habitat; the Emerald Development tract (131.4 ac) which protects scenic quality, natural resources, passive recreation and connectivity; and the two Hudgens tracts—Tract 1 (423.4 ac) which promotes scenic attributes, passive recreation opportunities and connectivity, and Tract 2 (100 ac) which was purchased with County funds subsequent to termination of State funding. An additional 2 acres has been acquired by the City of Woodstock for the Rubes Creek Park, which protects water quality, riparian habitat, wetlands, natural habitat, connectivity and passive recreation opportunities.

Cherokee County contains three significant water resources—the Etowah River Corridor, the Little River Corridor, and Lake Allatoona. Georgia uses a river basin planning approach to watershed protection. River Basin Management Plans are prepared in accordance with legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly that calls for the Environmental Protection Division to prepare plans for each major river basin in Georgia. The Coosa River Basin Management Plan, which includes the Etowah River and its tributaries, was completed in 1998. The entire Etowah River Corridor qualifies as a protected river under State law (O.C.G.A. 2-12-8). The Etowah River is of regional importance because it is a source of water and electrical power for communities in the northwestern part of Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Because there are few roads accessing the river outside of Canton, much of it is in pristine condition, bordered by low-density residential and agricultural land uses. Although DNR Criteria only requires large watersheds with reservoirs and small watersheds (with or without reservoirs) to institute buffer and impervious surface restrictions, Cherokee County requires a measure of protection to all watersheds in the county. In July 2005, a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance was adopted, which establishes a 150-foot wide natural buffer along the Etowah and Little Rivers, and a 50-foot wide buffer along primary and secondary rivers. The County has begun to develop the Etowah River Greenway in accordance with the Department of Natural Resources regulations for river developments.

The U.S. Corps of Engineers is a principle land and water owner in the county. Lake Allatoona, approximately 12,010 acres at normal pool level with 270 miles of shoreline, is primarily operated for flood control, power production and water supply with recreation as a secondary, yet important benefit. The Etowah River is the source of Lake Allatoona's water. Allatoona Dam impounds run-off water from 1,110 square miles into the Lake. Within Cherokee County, the Corps owns a buffer around the lake comprising about 17,753 acres. Buffer widths vary around the lake. Corps owned reservoirs are specifically exempted from buffer re-

quirements placed on other public water supply reservoirs and watersheds by state law: however, under the Corps' lake management plan, Lake Allatoona is protected to a higher degree, for the most part, than specified by state law.

The Corps has developed and operates many public recreation sites around the lake and leases acreage to county and municipal governments and to private and non-profit organizations as park and recreation areas, including Woodstock's extension of Rope Mill Park. The Corps developed and manages several of its own recreation facilities, including boat ramps, hiking trails, campsites, picnic areas and a museum/nature interpretive center, located on the land owned by the Corps. Lake Allatoona also provides a specialized habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Yellow River Reservoir consists of 420 acres located primarily in Dawson County with arms of the reservoir coming into Cherokee County. The reservoir is owned and operated by the Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority as a public water supply and for low-water conditions. The facility falls under the DNR Part V Environmental Standards and requires a local government management plan. Portions of the reservoir within Cherokee County are also subject to the buffering, use restrictions and impervious surface requirements applicable to other watersheds in the county.

Cherokee County is participating with other jurisdictions in creating a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to protect the Etowah River and its threatened and endangered fish species. The HCP creates standards for stormwater runoff such that, in the highest priority areas (Priority 1) post-development runoff will not be allowed to exceed the pre-development, forested condition. In the Priority 2 areas, stormwater runoff measures must be taken so that the increase in post-development runoff from the site would be the equivalent to that generated by 5 percent of the site being impervious surface. Within the Priority 1 and 2 areas, "development nodes" can be identified where higher volumes of runoff are allowed, in order to accommodate commercial, industrial and high-density residential development where otherwise allowed by zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. Most of the northeast quadrant of the county, particularly north of SR 20 and east of I-575, as well as a significant area due west of Canton, falls into the Priority 1 category. Everything else in the county within the Etowah drainage basin—basically all of the county north of Lake Allatoona and Canton, and north of Canton Creek (which runs east-west south of SR 20)—falls into Priority 2.

The county's rich history is made evident by the numerous historic buildings dispersed throughout the area. A survey of historic and cultural resources was completed in 1989, and was updated in 2005. The current Cherokee survey covers the categories of landmark buildings and structures, commercial districts, and residential districts. Canton had 311 total properties surveyed, Ball Ground 49, Waleska 17, Woodstock 36, and Holly Springs 6. Per the 2005 Update, the county has 44 identified properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Areas Where Rapid Development or Change is Likely to Occur

Transitional land use pressures tend to be composed of older single-family homes that have come face-to-face with incompatible development or other changes to their residential environment. Higher traffic volumes and ensuing road improvements along several major corridors have made the properties undesirable for residential purposes, but excellent opportunities for adaptive reuse. Such areas include the homes located along Highway 5 and Highway 92, Bells Ferry Road, Highway 20 and Highway 140. Some of the homes already have been redeveloped as office and small retail type uses. Generally, these transitional corridors are expansions of existing or planned commercial areas as outlined on the current Future Land Use Plan rather than spot commercial zoning. As private development takes place, commercial uses are anticipated to expand and may affect additional single-family residences and nearby subdivisions. By keeping the uses low intensity in use, density and traffic impact, nearby residential areas can be protected while offering a reasonable reuse of the properties. Further adaptive reuse of the remaining residences is expected, and eventual assembly and redevelopment for new office or commercial construction that is compatible with the surrounding areas would be encouraged.

There are potential compatibility issues between the unincorporated sections of the county and the larger southern and central cities. These areas, primarily involving established single-family communities adjacent to the city boundaries and/or areas of influence, may become unstable areas. As the cities grow through annexation and densification, these areas may be exposed to development pressure to be rezoned commercial, or may require additional protection through buffering or design features to maintain their integrity. All of the participants in this Joint Plan should consider establishment of special buffer requirements in transitioning areas, particularly along the five major thoroughfares cited previously, or where established neighborhoods which are not likely to transition to another use may be impacted by non-residential development.

A new interchange with I-575 is planned with Ridgewalk Parkway (Old Rope Mill Road) in Woodstock, which will eventually connect (via Neese Road) to SR 92. This road improvement will spur intense development already planned along Ridgewalk Parkway but may create negative impacts in the Neese Road residential area. Extension of Woodstock Parkway south from Towne Lake Parkway to SR 92 will prove an important catalyst in opening the southwest quadrant of the LCI-Downtown area to new development as well as redevelopment of obsolete and abandoned commercial sites along its path.

Areas where Development Outpaces Infrastructure

As discussed earlier, 86 percent of all housing units countywide are single-family, 7 percent are mobile homes, and 7 percent of all units within the county are attached or multi-family units. In past years, the lack of sewer availability over many portions of the county has resulted in a low proportion of multi-family products and a preponderance of single-family units on large lots that are reliant on septic systems. As the county becomes more urbanized, and the infrastructure systems are extended along major transportation routes and capacity expanded, a more varied inventory of dwelling unit types is resulting. The county retains a great deal of vacant land for housing development and infill, although the county has begun to adopt planning practices that are designed to reduce sprawl and retain natural resources.

The recent development of higher density residential development and regional commercial developments has not resulted in the provision of pedestrian or alternative transportation connections. Both Bells Ferry and SR 92 are scheduled for roadway improvements. The roadway improvements in conjunction with development of new residential areas and the redevelopment of the older commercial areas present an opportunity to increase the efficiency of the public infrastructure in this corridor. Data from several sources indicates the need for improvements along several corridors. Increasing connectivity and accessibility will require improvements to better utilize the roadway as a safe, suitable bicycle route. The ARC Bicycle, Transportation & Pedestrian Pathways Plan recommends multi-use trails and sidewalks for several roadways. The Regional Transportation Plan indicates several corridors planned to have alternative bus transit available by the year 2025.

A number of major roads in the county have reached unacceptable levels of congestion, reflecting the extent to which growth has outpaced the needed road improvements. These are detailed in the Transportation Section of Volume 2 of this Assessment Report.

Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Significant improvements to Aesthetics

Elsewhere in this Report, areas that are deteriorating, in land use transition or potential redevelopment areas are identified and discussed. Because of these issues, a number of Character Areas have been tailored to the different strategies that would be useful in each type of area. These Character Areas, listed below and discussed in more detail in Volume 2, include Transitional Corridors, Development Corridors and Highway Business Corridors along impacted and deteriorating major thoroughfares. These areas are shown on the Character Areas maps, and particularly include the Bells Ferry Corridor, the SR 92 Parkway Village Corridor and SR 20 east of Canton.

Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

The Wal-Mart structure in Woodstock, located on the north side of SR 92 between I-575 and Main Street, has not been reoccupied since the company opened the nearby Super Wal-Mart. Adaptive reuse or redevelopment of the building has been explored by potential investors, but no plan has surfaced. The building lies in an area that would be greatly benefited by extension of Woodstock Parkway south to SR 92.

Areas with Significant Growth and Infill Development Opportunities

In 1990, the County as a whole had an estimated 33,840 housing units, up from 17,638 in 1980. By the year 2000, the United States Census identified 51,937 housing units in Cherokee County, a 53.5 percent increase during the 10-year period. The housing market continues to be strong for Cherokee County. Cherokee is predominantly comprised (over 60 percent) of moderately priced single-family subdivisions and opportunities for entry-level housing. There is also a greater range of housing opportunities at the lower end of the price spectrum than in other metro Atlanta communities, particularly comprised of the older housing stock located in or near the incorporated areas, manufactured homes and older condominiums. The majority of new town-home and patio home/zero lot line projects built since 2000 sell from between \$100,000 and \$250,000, but are not reflected in the Census data.

Unincorporated Area

Most of the land in Cherokee County that is developed for residential use is located in the unincorporated area. In 2000, the Census reported that 84.1 percent of all housing units in the county were located outside of any city. Over the 10-year period 1990-2000, the number of units in the unincorporated area increased from 29,795 to 43,701, a 46.7 percent increase. Much of this growth occurred in the southern portions of the unincorporated county, south of Canton. The development patterns in the south, however, “leapt over” many properties that had less development potential or were not otherwise available, leaving a great deal of land behind where infill development (compatible with surrounding neighborhoods) is expected to occur. Much of the county, however, remains rural and undeveloped, or has been devoted in large-lot and estate lot developments where sewer was not available, particularly north of Canton and in eastern Cherokee County. Many major road corridors present both challenges and opportunities where growing traffic and road improvements have changed the “rural residential” character and created pressures for reuse, redevelopment and potentially incompatible infill.

Bells Ferry Corridor

Cherokee County has recently completed a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study for the Bells Ferry/Highway 92 area, which will be the focal area for the majority of the proposed higher density residential and mixed-use projects in the unincorporated area. The existing residential land use in the corridor includes a variety of housing types with a particular concentration of mobile home parks. The existing housing stock has a variety of price ranges, and the quality and age of the housing ranges greatly within and along the corridor. While many Cherokee County residents tend to be skeptical of multiple-family products and mixed-use or other more creative configurations of housing products yielding higher densities, residential subdivisions employing smaller lot sizes than the underlying zoning while preserving open space (conservation subdivisions) appear to be highly supported.

Several residential projects have been completed in the past few years or are under construction. The area has experienced a noticeable transition as manufactured housing parks are being replaced with patio homes, townhomes and apartments. In the period from January 2000 to January 2004, 1,026 housing units have been rezoned for higher density residential development ranging from 6 to 16 units per acre. Recently, commercial development has begun to follow the residential development into the study area. Although both ends of Bells Ferry Road have had recent new residential and commercial development, the middle portion of the corridor (from south of the Highway 92 & Bells Ferry Road intersection, west to Wade Green Road, and north to just south of Red Barn Road) has experienced the characteristics of an area in economic decline.

However, both the residential and commercial development remains independent and do not compliment one another as would a mixed-use development. Retail commercial projects are developing in the northernmost portion of the corridor near Eagle Drive and Bells Ferry Road. These commercial projects are designed and located to serve the needs of a regional market incorporating the developed areas of Towne Lake and southwest Cherokee.

The Bells Ferry Corridor has suffered from the lack of a distinct vision. Currently, development that is taking place is doing so in a haphazard manner, converting various properties to single-focused disconnected uses with little regard to the character of the areas. The Livable Center Initiative Study established the vision for the Bells Ferry Corridor. The resulting effect of redevelopment in these areas will be the transformation from an area struggling to attract quality development to a community of choices.

Recent developments that have been completed or are nearly complete include:

- Gregory Lane & Walden Pond apartments: 220 units on 22 acres;
- Britley Park Patio Homes: 184 units on 36.6 acres;
- Mirramount single-family homes: 93 units on 20.74 acres;
- Cherokee Summit apartments: 283 units on 20.28 acres;
- Peaks of Bells Ferry Town Homes and Apartments: 248 units on 15.48 acres;
- Grantham Park Apartments: 137 units on 17.11 acres;
- Robert Harris Town Homes: 76 units on 15.24 acres;
- Ralph Davis Apartments: 192 units on 12.5 acres; and
- Pridemark Town Homes: 75 units on 11.62 acres.

Ball Ground

The City of Ball Ground, located in the northeastern quadrant of the county, was incorporated in 1883. The Cherokee Indians met here during an earlier century to play a game resembling lacrosse, hence the name 'Ball Ground.' This small community is a family-oriented town with a total area of 1.24 square miles, and boasts a compact and historical downtown district.

While the City of Ball Ground strongly encourages infill, particularly in the Old Canton Road area north of Georgia 372, the majority of new growth, similar to the other cities in the county, will be from development of larger tracts of vacant land and annexations. The majority of annexed land is residential. Out of the 399 acres annexed since 2000, 210 acres are single-family residential. Recent developments include Mountain Brook with 237 units, Olde Mill with 44 units, and Preston Manor with 10 homes.

The City of Ball Ground will continue to grow through limited infill and through development of projects in recent and future annexation areas. Ball Ground is undertaking a 165-acre major mixed-use project under TND zoning to the south and west of the City toward the I-575 Intersection with Howell Bridge with the following uses: Commercial—21.59 acres; Office Warehouse—7.3 acres; Mixed Use—5.98 acres; and Residential—130.13 acres. The residential component is a combination of single-family detached and 100 town homes. The mixed-use area allows residential over the commercial uses. It should be noted that these are three separate parcels and owners and not a "single development." The most recent piece of this project was zoned in May 2005.

Waleska

Waleska was incorporated in 1889, but the area was settled years earlier, primarily by the Reinhardt, Sharp, Rhyne and Heard families. A store, cotton gin and tobacco factory were in operation at the crossroads by 1856, and a post office was added to the store soon after. In the past, industry in Waleska included gristmills, lumbering, tobacco manufacturing and some mineral development. The lumber industry is still active in the

area, as is agriculture. The chief “industry” of the town, however, has always been the Reinhardt College, and Waleska has come to be regarded, almost exclusively, as a college town. The current City covers 1.46 square miles. The lack of sewer service historically has deterred significant development in the area, while nearby Lake Arrowhead (with its self-contained sewer system) has blossomed. The extension of public sewer to the area (or construction of more private systems) in and around Waleska would potentially release a great deal of pent-up demand for Greenfield development and downtown redevelopment.

Woodstock

The City of Woodstock was incorporated in 1897 with a population of 300. Woodstock had industries of various kinds, including the first gristmills in the county, woodcarving and yarn spinning, facilitated by the abundance of waterpower around the city. As in many of the Cherokee County cities, the railroad was influential in the development of Woodstock, so much so that the original city charter set its boundaries as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile north and south of the railroad depot and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east and west of the depot. In 1897 at the time of incorporation, the City consisted of 960 acres. By 2005, the City had grown to 10,050 acres, or 8.8 square miles, to become the largest city in the county.

Since 2000, 980.4 acres of land have been annexed into the City of Woodstock. Of this, over one-half is comprised of the Woodlands subdivision, consisting of 543 acres; 144 acres for the Mountain Brook mixed-use development with the Highlands at Mountain Brook residential component; and 101.7 acres is devoted to commercial uses. The remainder is comprised of scattered residential enclaves and individual units, including the Riverpark subdivision, a townhome complex on Highway 92, The Willows at Hames Road ranch-style townhome community for active seniors, a KB Homes single-family residential subdivision, Cornerstone Park single-family detached and townhome community, a Jim Cowart single-family enclave at Neese Road, and the Madison Retail mixed-use project with townhomes in the Towne Lake subdivision.

Woodstock’s proximity for commuters to Cobb and Fulton Counties enhances its draw for new families to the area, while its proximity to several I-575 interchanges (with one new interchange planned) and several east-west highway corridors enhances its attraction to nonresidential developments.

The City of Woodstock has been processing a number of higher-density and mixed-use projects, targeted primarily in the downtown district, that integrate additional workforce housing, protect existing stable neighborhoods and assist in the revitalization of their downtown and commercial core areas.

Approximately 200 acres of land within the city is considered vacant or underutilized, of which 132 acres are located within the LCI area (downtown). Most of this vacant/underutilized land within the LCI is designated AG (an existing horse farm). The other large concentration of “vacant land” (now under development) in the LCI is near the railroad depot. The Downtown Master Plan fosters mixed-use and higher density development at a maximum up to 16 housing units per acre. Townhome and apartment developments completed in the past 5 years include: Alta Woods Apartments (498 units); Creekwood Commons townhomes, Magnolias at Ridgewalk townhomes; the Regency at The Village at Weatherstone townhomes; the Ridge at River Park townhomes; Weatherstone Park townhomes; The Village at Weatherstone townhomes; and The Willows townhomes. The Hedgewood mixed-use project is currently developing on the east side of Main along Arnold Mill within the LCI that will include single-family, townhome and apartment units. In the northwest quadrant off I-575 on Dupry Road, 300+ townhome or patio homes are proposed. As well, the 340-unit Alta Ridgewalk Apartments are under construction in the City of Woodstock, and a proposed annexation on Highway 92 will include a townhome complex planned to the rear of a retail development.

Areas of Significant Disinvestment, Levels of Poverty or Unemployment

The majority of the county and its cities’ residential neighborhoods have been developed since 1980, with over 73 percent of the county’s total housing stock completed between 1980 and January 2000, resulting in a community with few areas of instability or deterioration. Based on housing counts as of 2000, within the un-

incorporated area, almost 75 percent of the housing stock is less than 30 years old. In comparison, almost 65 percent of the housing stock in the incorporated areas is less than 30 years old.

Since the vast majority of Cherokee County is relatively new, and the County was able to apply modern land use planning concepts to so much of the development before it occurred, areas of blight and transitional land use are very limited. Where they occur is in the older parts of the county and cities along major thoroughfares.

Unincorporated Area

While there are no large districts of blight or substandard housing found within the unincorporated county, small pockets of housing found in need of maintenance or minor to moderate rehabilitation are located primarily in the southwest portion of the county where older homes and existing higher density residential products are concentrated in the vicinity of Bells Ferry and SR 92, as well as some individual sites along Arnold Mill Road and Highway 20. Over the past 5 to 7 years, the portions of the unincorporated area have undergone a notable transition as older mobile homes are replaced with patio homes, apartments and townhouses. However, 14 trailer parks remain in the area, ranging from good condition to those exhibiting signs of deterioration and disrepair. In Emerald Forest, located in the southwest corner of the county and constructed in the late 1960's to early 1970's, a sizeable number of units appear to require attention for deferred maintenance and rehabilitation in general, although there are several well maintained units in the subdivision. It is possible that a number of lower priced detached single-family rental units are located in this subdivision and subsequently may receive minimal repair and maintenance. There are also a number of scattered, older single-family homes near Lake Allatoona that are exhibiting significant signs of deterioration and deferred maintenance. The mobile home parks, particularly the parks with older coaches that may not meet current safety and health standards, exhibit the greatest signs of deferred maintenance and deterioration in the county. The County Marshall Department, which handles code enforcement issues, annually inspects the mobile home parks to ensure compliance with current license and permit requirements. The mobile home parks along Arnold Mill Road, in particular the Fountain and Lake mobile home park, and those in the southwest quadrant of the county near Lake Allatoona, appear to exhibit the most significant conditions.

The Bells Ferry LCI Corridor is located in the southwest portion of the Cherokee County. Of primary concern to area residents and business owners is the "greyfield" redevelopment of declining shopping and service centers within the Corridor. The Bells Ferry Corridor has a number of existing older commercial, office and service uses in need of redevelopment. This is of particular important in the core of the corridor where SR 92 and Bells Ferry Road intersect. Several of the shopping centers as well as many stand alone commercial buildings have experienced significant tenant turnover, which has led to declining rents and/or revenues and an increase in vacancies.

Ball Ground

In the City of Ball Ground there is a small pocket of older homes which exhibit problems associated with disrepair, located on the west side of Old Canton Road, between Stripling Street and Terrell Street. Land is slowly being acquired by the private sector for redevelopment, and possibly with town homes. Three structures in the area have already been removed, with three critical pieces remaining to be obtained.

Waleska

There are no concentrations of housing in need of rehabilitation. Some deteriorating properties are scattered throughout the community, with a few sited on Reinhardt College Parkway just north of Canton.

Woodstock

The Woodstock LCI Study identified the existence of a number of residential and commercial structures that are in need of rehabilitation within the LCI study area. Older homes that might be considered for rehabilitation are located on or near Highway 92/Trickum Rd. As well, there are units exhibiting signs of deterioration located primarily on secondary streets around the older downtown core area, although overall the residential

stock is in good condition and well maintained with only a few structures in disrepair. Subdivisions north of the Downtown LCI study area appear to have been built between the early 1960's and the 1980's, and therefore contain some structures over 40 years old which may be exhibiting signs of disrepair, in addition to scattered units throughout the city. Strategies for revitalization, rehabilitation or replacement of units in these neighborhoods are addressed in the Woodstock Livable Centers Initiative Plan.

Potential Character Areas

The following Character Areas are offered as examples of the types of Character Areas that may be appropriate for unincorporated Cherokee County, and participating jurisdictions: Ball Ground, Waleska, and Woodstock. *These Character Areas will be refined and revised, and new Character Areas may be created, as the Community Agenda is developed and public input is received through the Community Participation Program.* Currently there are two sets of character areas listed on the map, those for Cherokee County and those for Woodstock. During agenda development is assumed that many character areas will be used in common throughout the county, with specific character areas applying to specialized areas of the cities.

■ Natural Preserve

Undeveloped, natural lands with significant natural features, including views, steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas, conservation areas and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development of any kind are included in this character area. This character area also includes greenways and passive open space.

Development strategies:

- Maintain natural, rural character by not allowing any new development and promoting use of conservation easements;
- Widen roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary and carefully design the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact; and
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation designations.

■ Scenic Corridor

Scenic Corridors are developed or undeveloped land paralleling a transportation corridor that has significant natural, historic or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views.

Development strategies:

- Establish guidelines on development to protect the characteristics deemed to have scenic value;
- Enact guidelines for new development that enhances the scenic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping and architectural design;
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing, using directory signage to clustered developments;
- Steer development into nodes and clusters in order to keep the scenic viewshed in tact; and
- Provide pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential or commercial districts.

Allowable Nonresidential Development

- Country Crossroads
- Neighborhood Village Centers
- Transitional Corridor

■ Equestrian Lifestyle

Loss of open land has been identified as the greatest threat to the future of the equestrian lifestyle. This character area is developed to the cherished areas horse country character, provide social and economic stability of equestrian activities within the area, to preserve and enhance the natural environment, conserve natural resources and open space resources for passive recreation. Semi-rural equestrian related activities are the principal character of this area. Use of very low density residential and rural residential expressly supports equestrian focus and rural character. To support the character of this area, policies should be developed to acquire rights-of-way, construct and maintain trails and establish traffic control along trail system, provide equestrian crossing signals and to discourage incompatible land uses.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area;
- Encourage horse farms and appropriate accessory uses such as barns, corrals, grazing areas stables and similar structures;
- Intensive equestrian and animal keeping uses are expected and encouraged.
- Restrict new development to large-lot “estate” development of 5 acres or more or conservation subdivisions; and
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area.

Allowable Non-residential Development

- Country Crossroads;
- Agricultural related commercial usage, such as equestrian centers, boarding stables, riding academies and tack shops;

Note: this character area is under evaluation as to its positive and negative affects, and may be deleted or merged into another appropriate Character Area.

■ Country Estates

Areas within this character area are lands that are undeveloped or have been developed as “estate farms” or large-lot subdivisions. The intent of the Country Estates Character Area is to provide a low-intensity residential community, augmented with limited non-production agricultural activities, while accommodating low-intensity residential growth.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area;
- Prohibit production-oriented agricultural activities such as major cash-crop cultivation and animal production (including cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry broilers or eggs);
- Restrict new development to large-lot “estate” development of 2 acres or greater or conservation subdivisions and an overall density of .5 units per acre; and
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area.

■ Rural Places

Much of Cherokee County's identity is tied to its rural and small town heritage. Although large-scale farms are not a major use within the county, many smaller homestead and "estate farms" still exist. Areas within this character area are lands in a cultivated or pasturage state or sparsely settled, including woodlands and areas under forestry management. In addition, areas of sensitive natural resources that require protection but are not Natural Preserves are found in this character area. The intent of the Rural Places Character Area is to provide a residential-agricultural community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape with much of its identity based on its agrarian past while accommodating residential growth. This character area encompasses various areas of the county where public water may or may not be available; but sewer is not available or planned.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the rural character in the area;
- Achieve a net density of .5 units per acre
- Developments under 5 units must be on 2 acre lots; residential development over 5 units is restricted to conservation subdivisions;
- Livestock is allowable in this character area with appropriate buffering.
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area; and
- Provide a lower level of service to these areas, in terms of transportation and sewer improvements, in order to maintain and protect the rural character and low intensity development.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Country Crossroads;
- Neighborhood Village Centers; and
- Community Village Centers.

■ Suburban Growth Area

As Cherokee County continues to experience growth in both residential and commercial development, more and more areas will experience growth pressure for typical types of new suburban residential subdivision development. This character area covers areas with limited existing development but where this pressure is the greatest due to adjacency and current or proposed community infrastructure (such as sewer and water). The intent of this character area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment, and to areas that have a more "suburban" feel. Without intervention, these areas are likely to evolve with low pedestrian orientation, little or no alternative transportation options, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential development with scattered civic buildings and varied non-connecting street patterns, often curvilinear.

Development strategies:

- Promote TND style residential subdivisions with a strong level of connectivity;
- Promote Master Planned Developments blending residential development with schools, parks, and recreation, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision;

- Provide a strong base of coordination with existing and proposed infrastructure;
- Provide good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points;
- Whenever possible connect to regional network of green space and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes; and
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking and the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Centers
- Community Village Centers

■ **Suburban Living**

This character area includes older established suburban neighborhoods and areas adjacent to established neighborhoods. This character area could include appropriate senior housing. Characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, large lots, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominately residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. Public services and facilities are offered at a higher level of service to accommodate a denser population. Water and sewer are either existing or planned within this character area. Vacant tracts are often scattered throughout the area between existing neighborhoods.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock;
- Promote residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space;
- Assure compatibility of infill development with surrounding neighborhoods;
- Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development 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;
- Accommodate upscale executive housing to meet the market demand;
- Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walkability within and between existing neighborhoods; and
- Provide for areas of innovative development, such as golf, master planned and traditional communities in appropriate locations.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Center

■ Neighborhood Living

These neighborhoods have relatively well-maintained housing, possess a distinct community identity through architectural style; lot and street design and have higher rates of homeownership. The intent of this character area is to protect existing moderate density single-family neighborhoods through focusing on reinforcing stability by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. The interior of these neighborhoods will remain single-family residential on sewered lots, relying on nearby neighborhood commercial for services. Infill or redevelopment of parcels within this character area will provide greater lifestyle housing choices, but should be compatible with the existing neighborhoods. Sensitivity to surrounding residences in terms of light, bulk, setbacks, landscaping and mass should be reviewed. This character area is also appropriate for newly developing neighborhoods at moderate densities.

Development strategies:

- Allow for the conversion of sites to more intensive residential use, such as townhouses and patio homes, where appropriate;
- Allow smaller lot development with higher densities;
- Encourage locating residential development where full urban services, public facilities, and potential routes of public transportation are available;
- Permit in certain sections of the county or cities, multi-family housing developments that blend into the overall fabric of the area; and
- Develop residential areas that utilize innovative urban design principles to encourage community, pedestrian linkages and mixed-use environments.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Centers

■ Historic Neighborhood

Residential areas in older parts of the community typically developed prior to WWII, make up the Historic Neighborhood Character Area. Characteristics include high pedestrian orientation, sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture; on-street parking, small regular lots, limited open space, buildings close to or at the front property line, low degree of building separation, neighborhood-scale businesses scattered throughout the area. These older neighborhoods should be encouraged to maintain their original character, with only compatible infill development permitted. There are two types of historic neighborhoods that call for their own development strategies: stable and declining.

Stable: An historic neighborhood having relatively well maintained housing, possessing a distinct identity through architectural style, lot and street design, and having generally higher rates of homeownership. Location near declining areas of town may cause this neighborhood to decline over time.

Development strategies for stable historic neighborhoods:

- Encourage more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties to reinforce stability;
- Require infill development of new housing and other appropriate uses to be architecturally compatible with the historic neighborhood;

- Allow well-designed new neighborhood activity centers at appropriate locations to provide a focal point for the neighborhood and to provide a suitable location for local-serving retail uses, such as a grocery store, hardware store and drug store; and
- Provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shopping or other destinations in the area.

Declining: An historic neighborhood that has most of its original housing stock in place, although housing conditions are worsening due to low rates of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance. There may be a lack of neighborhood identity and gradual invasion of different types and intensities of use that may not be compatible with the neighborhood's residential use.

Development strategies for declining historic neighborhoods:

- Public assistance and investment should be focused where needed to ensure that the neighborhood becomes more stable, mixed-income community with a larger percentage of owner-occupied housing;
- Encourage and promote infill development of vacant properties for new housing, but assure that it is architecturally compatible with the historic neighborhood;
- Allow well-designed new neighborhood activity centers at appropriate locations to provide a focal point for the neighborhood and to provide a suitable location for local-serving retail uses, such as a grocery store, hardware store and drug store; and
- Provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shopping or other destinations in the area.

■ Urban Living

Urban Living Character Areas consist of a higher density mix of uses, mixed-use building types that accommodate local-serving retail and professional offices, small lot single-family neighborhoods, townhouses and apartment complexes. Urban Living Character Areas present an “in-town city neighborhood” environment, and commonly surround Urban Cores, providing a transition between the core and lower intensity residential character areas. These urban neighborhoods are walkable communities with easy access to restaurants, retail shopping and personal service establishments, professional office centers and recreational facilities.

Development strategies:

- Buffering is very important between lower intensity uses, such as higher density residential and traditional subdivisions;
- Internal and external connections and walkability are key to character area in order to reduce automobile trips and to encourage a close knit community; and
- The provision of community services and commercial uses create a “complete community” and allow a variety of life styles and life cycles within the community.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Centers
- Community Village Centers

■ Country Crossroads

Country Crossroads are very small commercial areas that currently exist at historic crossroads in the county that have developed over the years to serve local needs. These areas are located in the rural area of the county. Due to the rural nature and low-intensity single-family orientation of the surrounding area, Country Crossroads are envisioned to be localized service providers that provide limited local convenience goods and services to the adjacent single-family rural environment. Country Crossroads are intended to be limited to existing locations, and to provide for limited expansion to prevent these small commercial uses from growing into neighborhood village centers. If the location merits larger expansion, a future land use map change should be applied for as a neighborhood village center.

Development strategies:

- Limit to existing retail/service providers within the rural places character area;
- Limited expansion within existing crossroads areas at existing intersections within the character area on a case-by-case basis;
- Limit individual convenience retailers and service providers to 5,000 square feet of floor area; and
- Any further commercial development should be compatible with surrounding residential properties and developed to serve a very limited immediate service area and pass-by traffic.

■ Transitional Corridor

Areas suitable for designation as Transitional Corridors are those major roadways originally developed for single-family homes that have or will become impacted by adjacent multi-laned thoroughfare improvements and commercial encroachment, and that may no longer be suitable primarily for residential use. In the past, individual properties have been rezoned and converted in a way that has often been disruptive from an urban design sense: parking lots have replaced front lawns; houses have been remodeled unprofessionally, resulting in structures with incoherent design elements; signage has often been out of proportion to the structure and use advertised.

In order to propose an orderly, safe and aesthetic transition, properties within designated transitional corridors can be considered for nonresidential use at intensity compatible with surrounding residential areas and that maintain the essential residential “look and feel” of the area. Designation of this corridor is meant to encourage public and private investment that will promote vitality, activity and safety in the area, by controlling aesthetics, careful site planning and limiting nonresidential uses to those that will not overly affect existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to the site.

Development strategies:

- Adopt design and use requirements to guide new construction and adaptive reuse and conversion of existing structures that will assure compatibility with remaining residences on the road and with surrounding neighborhoods. These could include:
 - The new use should be compatible with the adjoining neighborhood and not attract a high volume of traffic or visitors, have late night or early morning hours of operation, produce outdoor sound or other distractions, or serve a market area that extends beyond the adjacent neighborhoods and passers-by. Generally, professional and business office uses, personal services and local-serving retail sales establishments, small-scale religious and other non-profit institutions, and other low-intensity neighborhood services are compatible with houses.
 - The conversion’s remodeling should be architecturally compatible with the neighborhood and must upgrade or at least be consistent with the basic architecture of the structure. Architectural integrity

and compatibility considerations include siting of the building, massing, proportion, scale, materials, colors, details, façade treatment, lighting and signage.

- New building design should take into consideration the unique qualities and the dominant character of the surrounding area.
- New occupancies in converted houses should be limited to one business enterprise (with one business entrance) for structures under 2,000 square feet of gross leasable area.
- Signs should be consistent with the form and materials of the building. Illuminated signs would not be permitted when adjacent to existing residential uses.
- Mechanical equipment must be screened from public view and sited so as not to cause noise impacts on adjacent properties, and trash and garbage enclosures must be restricted to rear yard areas.
- Landscaping must be installed in areas not designated for parking and circulation. Parking areas must have landscaping and be screened from public view.

■ Neighborhood Village Center

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses, such as a bank, grocery store, drug store, cleaner and gas station, are arranged in a village-like setting that might include a neighborhood park, pedestrian circulation and public spaces. Thus, a Neighborhood Village Center is envisioned as a compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores and services to address the demands of nearby residents. From an urban design perspective, sidewalks are important circulation features in Neighborhood Village Centers. Given a Neighborhood Village Center's small scale and emphasis on local-serving stores, the scale and size of individual businesses and the village center as a whole are most important. Adaptive re-use of existing structures and buildings is encouraged as a focal point.

Development strategies:

- Each Neighborhood Village Center should include a mix of retail, services and offices that are primarily oriented to serve neighborhood residents' day-to-day needs. A shopping center anchored by a national chain drug store would be an example of an appropriate use;
- Residential development should reinforce the neighborhood center through locating moderate-density housing options adjacent to the center in appropriate locations, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including smaller-lot single-family residential developments, patio homes and townhouses;
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses;
- Individual uses should be no larger than 20,000 square feet for an anchor, the majority of individual businesses under 10,000 square feet, and the entire center under 50,000 square feet.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear; and
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.

■ Community Village Center

Typically located at the convergence of major transportation corridors, Commercial Village Centers are envisioned, as places where a compatible mixture of higher intensity uses are located, such as larger scaled shop-

ping centers, professional offices and services. Mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, service and recreational uses integrated and linked together by a comprehensive circulation system are encouraged in these areas. Community Village Centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a market area consisting of many neighborhoods. Whereas someone might live near a neighborhood village center but work outside the county, the commercial village concept includes a variety of housing options, employment opportunities, businesses, office, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas and open spaces that create a community where it is possible to live, work and play. Land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Natural and historic resources within Community Village Centers should be enhanced and preserved as a means of defining a distinct identity or sense of place. Improved connections to natural assets, both pedestrian and vehicular, particularly from existing and developing higher density residential communities will tie the village together. A Community Village Center should create a focal point for its surrounding neighborhoods.

Development strategies:

- Each Community Village Center should include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services and employment to serve a wider market area than a neighborhood village, but not regional in nature. A shopping center anchored by a major grocery store would be an example of an appropriate use;
- Residential development should reinforce the community village center by locating higher-density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including smaller-lot single-family residential developments, patio homes, townhouses, apartments and condominiums;
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Individual uses should be no larger than 50,000 square feet for an anchor, the majority of individual businesses under 25,000 square feet, and the entire center under 125,000 square feet.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear; and
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.

■ **Regional Activity Center**

Regional Activity Centers include concentration of regionally marketed business and retail centers, “big box” commercial uses, office and employment areas, higher-education facilities, sports and recreational complexes, and higher density condominium and rental residential complexes. These areas are often characterized by a high degree of access by vehicular traffic, extensive on-site parking, a low degree of internal open space, a high floor-area-ratio (building coverage) on large tracts of land, and campus-like or unified development.

Development strategies:

- Regional Activity Centers include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services and employment oriented to serve a regional market area. Major religious, educational and other institutions and recreational facilities having a regional draw are appropriate in this character area. A stand-alone nationally-recognized big-box retailer or a shopping center anchored by a department store would be an example of an appropriate use (generally greater than 250,000 square feet of floor area);

- A Regional Activity Center should include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types within it or on adjacent properties, including townhouses, apartments, lofts and condominiums, and including affordable and workforce housing;
- Design should be very pedestrian oriented, with strong, walkable connections to other uses and to nearby networks of greenspace or trails.
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety, provide conveniently located, preferably sheltered, bicycle parking at retail and office destinations and in multi-family dwellings.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.

■ **Urban Core**

An Urban Core Character Area generally consists of the highest density development and provides for the widest range of mixed uses in its general area, combined with central civic areas such as City Halls. Though differing in scale and intensity.

Downtown Woodstock

The historic “Olde Towne” in the heart of the City of Woodstock is an example of an “urban core,” and includes the city’s municipal facilities, streetscaping with brick paved sidewalks and decorative lighting, the City Park, historic buildings dating back to 1879 and a strong residential community. Vacant land and underutilized parcels within Olde Towne provide opportunities for new pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development or redevelopment. Nearby creeks and recreational facilities, provide alternative transportation and recreation options. In addition, the Georgia Northeastern Railroad parallels Main Street, defining the downtown area, and provides future entertainment and community opportunities. Main goals within the Olde Towne urban core character area include:

- Increase transportation accessibility and mobility options and improve traffic flow in and around the downtown area;
- Expand and strengthen the downtown by building on its current successes and small-town atmosphere; and
- Increase the viability of live, work, and entertainment choices within the downtown area.

■ **Development Corridor**

Development Corridor Character Areas extend along major thoroughfares that have or are experiencing major development of retail, office or industrial land uses and multi-family housing, including mixed-use developments, and include redevelopment of aging mixed-use areas. The overall goal of this character area is to provide, through transportation, land use and streetscape projects and other physical enhancements to make this corridor environment a distinctive “place” not merely a roadway.

Development strategies:

- Focus development in villages, urban centers or compact activity centers;
- Provide for mixed uses and higher densities than surrounding areas;
- Redesign existing strip development into pedestrian scale, interconnected nodes;

- Plan for a community street network that is as friendly to alternative modes of transportation to the automobile;
- Require master planning to address access management; and
- Plan and design transportation improvements that fit with community character.

Examples of Development Corridors are:

Bells Ferry Corridor

Cherokee County is seeking to balance growth and development within the Bells Ferry Corridor by encouraging redevelopment of greyfield commercial developments into vibrant mixed-use centers; creating a variety of housing choices at appropriate destinies to enable residents to remain in their community; creating an environment of mobility and opportunity within the corridor for all ages and income levels; and investing in the area's neighborhoods by weaving civic uses and buildings into the local fabric. The Bells Ferry Corridor is a gateway into Cherokee County from Cobb County. It connects the southwestern portions of the county with Towne Lake and Woodstock, areas of significant private investment and attractive physical development.

The Bells Ferry Corridor is envisioned to be a corridor that empowers community. A true community is inclusive and diverse. It is a place where one can live, work, shop and play. Cherokee County will provide the framework necessary to allow for a mix of land uses within the Bells Ferry Corridor. A longer vision may include the location of TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) within the Bells Ferry Corridor to serve a variety of populations (e.g.—seniors, lower income groups) which prefer or by necessity do not utilize automobiles. The integration of land uses and emphasis on patterns of more compact development can facilitate the feasibility of transit.

Parkway Village Corridor (SR 92)

This Development Corridor Character Area is envisioned to provide destinations for expanded interstate trade opportunities and small business opportunities, and would accommodate higher density single- and multi-family residential in order to create a synergy between retail, office, industry, other commercial uses and surrounding residential development. Development of a wide range of housing choices can be important to ensuring the viability of this corridor.

These land use components will coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. The purpose of this character area is the creation of an inviting commercial and mixed-use area. "How does my particular building work on the street, and what elements can I add to create an inviting and pleasant environment." From an urban design standpoint, the most critical element in creating a visually appealing mixed-use corridor is the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping. Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses.

Buildings will be designed to conform to architectural standards and oriented in close proximity to each other to facilitate walking instead of driving. For a retrofit to be successful, the public right-of-way, the adjacent land uses and the interface between the two should be addressed comprehensively. Urban design features such as lighting, coordinated signage, street furniture and landscaping are used as visual cues that create a recognizable character for the area. Design factors fostering community commercial, including limitation of size of commercial development in terms of square footage; design parameters for parking and internal circulation/access, recommended façade treatments, building setbacks, siting and orientation; buffer requirements to ensure compatibility with adjacent single-family residential; and other factors which promote pedestrian-friendly movements, are important considerations. Anticipated land uses will provide commercial and services support to the community as a whole on a larger scale than a neighborhood village center, yet the

square footage size restriction and required design parameters will retain a neighborhood feel as opposed to creating a regional draw.

Parkway Village Corridor regulations promote specialized planned commercial development standards and requirements limiting the types of uses permitted by regulating the square footage allowed; establishing pedestrian oriented setbacks and parking lot layouts; specifying site layout and building orientation; recommending design features such as façade treatments, landscaping and streetscape elements; and instituting buffer requirements to protect the residential uses behind the corridor.

■ Highway Business Corridor

The Highway Business Corridor Character Area is a specially designated corridor to encompass an existing working commercial and light industrial “auto-oriented” area along a major thoroughfare. These areas may be going through transition to uses attractive to the traveling public, or continued development as transportation improvements are made. Mixed-use developments incorporating commercial and office uses fronting major commercial corridors and light industrial uses along major thoroughfares are encouraged; the introduction of design and landscaping standards may be needed.

This Character Area relies on major transportation access, particularly from interstates or major arterials. Similarly, the provision of adequate public services in the form of water, sewer and power are critical to the functionality of these areas. This corridor is intended to create a pleasant, hazard-and-nuisance-free environment and does not create either appreciable nuisance or hazard to other property, individuals or the public in general. The purpose of this corridor is the creation of an inviting commercial and mixed-use area.

The intent of the Highway Business Corridor designation is to provide a variety of tracts for heavy commercial uses, light industrial and employment uses such as business parks, distribution/services, light industrial, auto repair and service, high technology and research, wholesaling companies and similar businesses that have no significant impacts on the environment.

Development strategies:

- Create a visually appealing highway business corridor through the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping;
- Buffers are critical between incompatible uses;
- Apply guidelines that address outdoor signage, sound and lighting to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of heavy commercial and light industrial uses.

■ Workplace Center

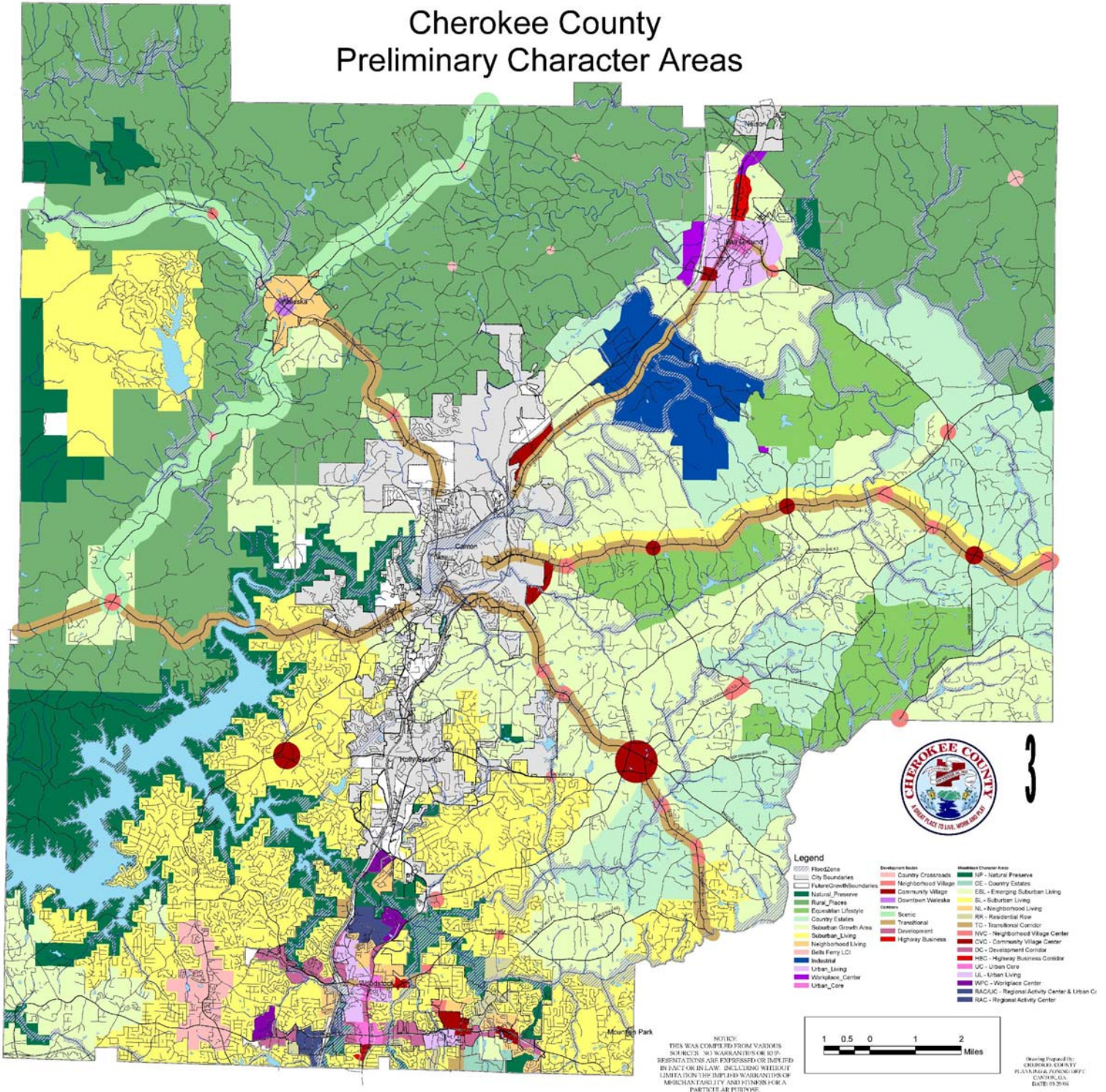
Considered major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, commercial, office and some high-intensity residential uses, these character areas are located relative to major transportation connections. Internal housing would provide a customer base for offices, cafés, restaurants, and retail uses located in the corridor, and also enhance the safety of the area by maintaining a continuous population base in a location that is typically unpopulated in the evening hours.

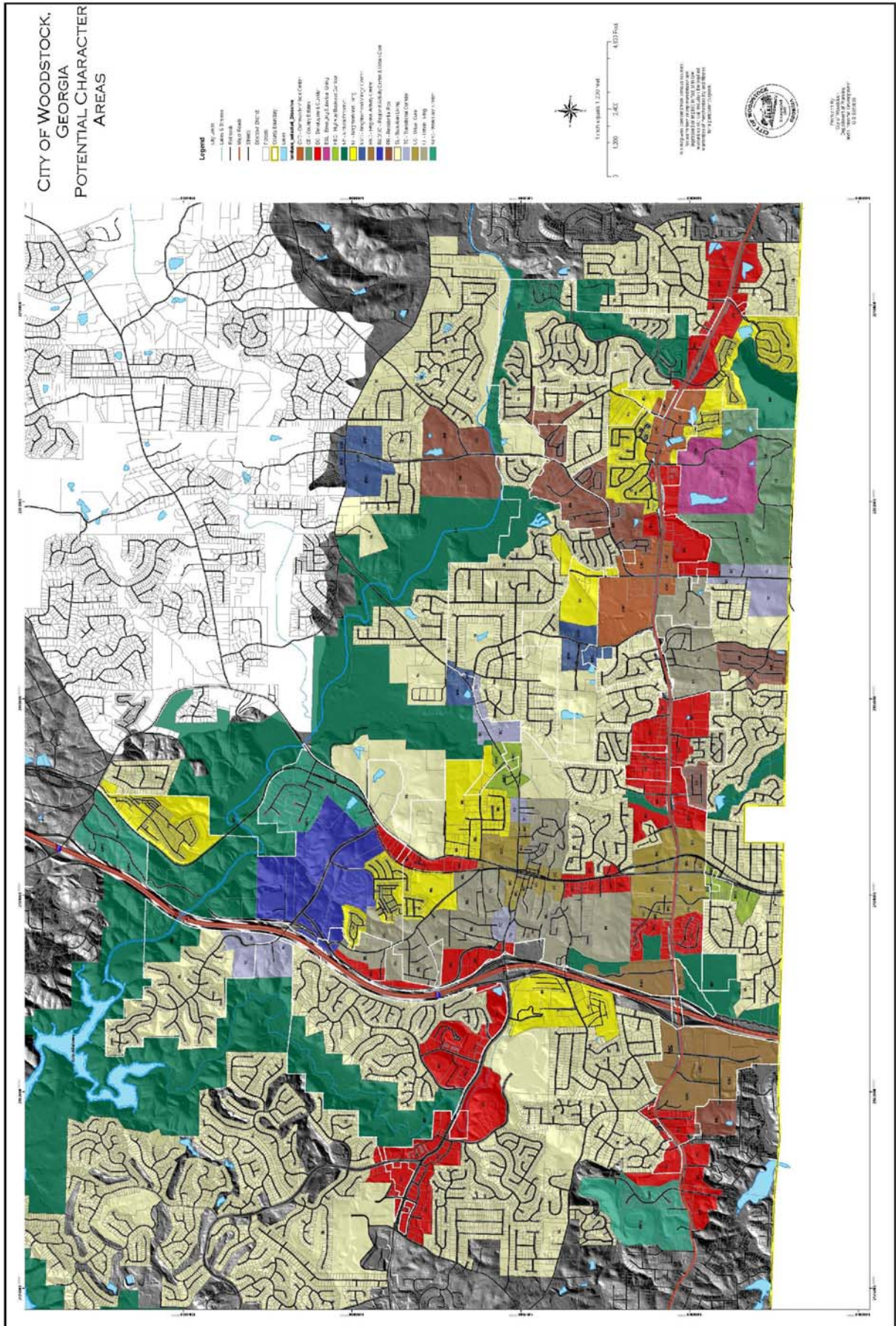
Development strategies:

- Enforce appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping;
- Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial and industrial uses;

- Vast amounts of parking and truck loading/unloading areas should be screened from view;
- Where possible, the parking areas should be distributed to two or more sides of the business to “visually scale down” the size of the parking lot;
- Inter-parcel access between sites should be used whenever possible; and
- Grouping or “clustering” of shops with co-mingled parking, landscaping and pedestrian areas are encouraged.

Cherokee County Preliminary Character Areas





Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities.

This assessment is meant to give a community an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the Department, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community that “you are here.” Each of the fifteen Quality Community Objectives has a set of yes/no statements, with additional space available for comments. The statements focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of “yes” answers for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. “No” answers may provide guidance in how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives.

This initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the community’s policies, not an in-depth analysis. There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Its merit lies in completion of the document, and the ensuing discussions regarding future development patterns, as governments undergo the comprehensive planning process.

Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective, it may consider a “yes” to each statement a benchmark toward achievement. Please be aware, however, that this assessment is only an initial step. Local governments striving for excellence in quality growth may consider additional measures to meet local goals.

■ **Regional Identity Objective:**

Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

■ **Growth Preparedness Objective:**

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

■ **Appropriate Businesses Objective:**

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

■ **Educational Opportunities Objective:**

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

■ **Employment Options Objective:**

A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

■ **Heritage Preservation Objective:**

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.

■ **Open Space Preservation Objective:**

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

■ **Environmental Protection Objective:**

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

■ **Regional Cooperation Objective:**

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

■ **Transportation Alternatives Objective:**

Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

■ **Regional Solutions Objective:**

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.

■ **Housing Opportunities Objective:**

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

■ **Traditional Neighborhood Objective:**

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

■ **Infill Development Objective:**

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

■ **Sense of Place Objective:**

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

Quality Community Objectives

Local Assessment

The following summary covers all jurisdictions in this Joint Comprehensive Plan—Ball Ground, Waleska, Woodstock and the unincorporated portions of Cherokee County—except where indicated otherwise in the “Comment” column.

<i>Development Patterns</i>			
Traditional Neighborhoods			
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	X		
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	X		
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	X		
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.	X		
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X		Cherokee Clean and Beautiful
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X		
7. In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X		Improvement of walkability is a major goal of this plan update.
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X		Increased connections between the schools and neighborhoods are a major goal of this plan.
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	X		An increased connection between the schools and neighborhoods is a major goal of this plan.

10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X		In some areas. Coordination between plan land use and school placement will be addressed further.
Infill Development			
Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	X		
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.	X		
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	X		
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		X	The development of character areas that include villages and centers is part of this plan update.
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.	X		Primarily in the cities.
Sense of Place			
Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.		X	Other than a few distinct places, such as downtown areas of most of the cities, Cherokee County shares the same characteristics of suburban living, strip and big box commercial shopping, and rural hinterland found in other counties circling the Atlanta Metro core.
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	X		There has recently been an emphasis placed on both rural preservation and historic preservation within the county. Cherokee County possesses valuable resources in both its authentically rural landscape and the local vernacular building tradition of the 19th century. These resources not only enhance Cherokee County visually and aesthetically, but also positively affect the lives of its citizens and increase the property values and desirability of the area. Each City within the county has taken steps to emphasize, enhance and protect their historic downtowns.

3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X		The Zoning Ordinances of the County and its cities establishes development standards and regulations that regulate the impact of development on the environment both physically and aesthetically, including but not limited to: building height, lot coverage, setbacks, tree preservation, landscaping requirements, signage and lighting. In addition, the County and Woodstock have adopted development and architectural standard regulations along the SR 92 Corridor in the form of the SR 92 Overlay District. As well, similar guidelines and regulations within the Downtown Development Ordinances and/or Livable Communities study reports for the cities of Woodstock, Holly Springs and Canton, and the Bells Ferry Corridor in the unincorporated county.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X		
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X	
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X	The rural places and Equestrian Lifestyle character areas are designated to protect the community's rural character.
Transportation Alternatives			
Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. We have public transportation in our community.	X		There is limited public transportation in Cherokee County, including the City of Canton Transit, Mountain Area Transportation Service, Cherokee Area Transportation System and GDOT Park and Ride Lots.
2. We require that new development connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		X	Development in Cherokee County requires compliance with established access management standards.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		One of the primary elements of a successful community transportation network system is a system of interconnecting bicycle/pedestrian pathways. It allows free movement among spatial area (i.e. greenway corridors, residential neighborhoods, and commercial sectors), thus contributing to the over all well being of the community. It is recommended that Cherokee County incorporate a network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways into its roadway improvement program that would be coupled with commuter rail corridors. The recommendations specifies pedestrian and bicycle pathways on both sides of an arterial classified roadway, where as pathways would be located on only one side of a major and minor collector streets.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	X		New development is required to include four-foot sidewalks on at least one side of each new subdivision street. In addition, any widening or new location of state routes will include sidewalks.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	X		

6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		X	The Bicycle Suitability map shows the roadways in Cherokee County that offer "best conditions" through "very difficult conditions" for bicycling. The suitability of a roadway for bicycling depends on several factors including traffic volumes, travel speeds, and functional classification. Most of Cherokee County's arterial roadways are too highly traveled to offer a comfortable bicycling environment, but much of the system provides the cyclist sufficient connectivity to not only enjoy effective transport but also access to Cherokee County's natural beauty and many attractions.
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X		Especially encouraged in the Traditional Neighborhood Development Ordinance in the County and the Woodstock Downtown Master plan.

Regional Identity

Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X		Officially created in 1831, Cherokee County is a mix of historic properties, including residential, farming, industrial and commercial, institutional and transportation facilities, downtowns within the incorporated areas with turn of the century traditional design, new commercial and industrial facilities, although the majority of the housing stock has been built after 1980. These characteristics are similar to a number of urbanizing counties in the metro Atlanta area.
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.		X	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).		X	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	X		
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.		X	Tourism is not one of the County's economic development target industries.
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X		The County has developed its own identity and slogan "Choose Cherokee...Where Metro Meets the Mountains." The Development Authority believes that this motto reflects the atmosphere of the county, and intends to maximize on the belief that businesses and residents want to be close to a major city but have a true feel of a quality community.

Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation

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

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	X		Within Woodstock.
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	X		Within Woodstock.
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	X		Within Woodstock.

Open Space Preservation

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.	X		An extensive greenspace plan was developed in conjunction with the Governor's Greenspace Initiative. Since the ending of this program, alternative funding sources are being investigated.
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	X		Limited funding has reduced greenspace acquisition. A question to be investigated in this plan is whether there is citizen agreement to use other funding sources to acquire additional greenspace.
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	X		The County encourages conservation subdivisions.
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	X		

Environmental Protection

Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		X	
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		N/A	

3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	X		
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	X		
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance that is actively enforced.	X		The County has a Tree Preservation Ordinance, which is being updated and is still under review. The County enforces its ordinance and employs a trained County Arborist in the Engineering Department.
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X		The purpose of the County's Tree Preservation Ordinance is to protect and replace trees as part of the development process. The County's Technology Ridge Tree Buffer requires vegetative screening (existing or planted) along I-575.
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X		Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinances adopted by all jurisdictions.
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	X		Flood Damage Prevention ordinances.

Social and Economic Development

Growth Preparedness

Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X		
2. Our local governments, the local school board and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X	This is a major goal of this plan update.
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		Current ordinances achieve these goals partially. The County and the City of Woodstock plan on revisiting their ordinances at the end of the comprehensive plan process in order to further enhance the County and Cities guiding principals.
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		Funding is still an issue.
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.	X		The County and the Cities already have designated growth areas such as the Bells Ferry Corridor, Hwy 92, the TND development in Ball Ground and downtown Woodstock. Additional areas are being identified as part of this process.

7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X		
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	X		
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X		
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X		
Appropriate Businesses			
The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X		
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X		
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.		X	
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.		X	The County and the Cities are developing programs to increase management and higher skilled employment.
Employment Options			
A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X		
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		Not enough.
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		Not enough.
Housing Choices			
A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.			
	Yes	No	Comments

1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	X		Within Woodstock.
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X		
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).	X		Although there is a shortage of higher cost and move up housing.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	X		Within Woodstock.
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo-traditional" development.	X		Especially within the cities.
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X		Primarily within the cities.
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		Primarily within the cities
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X		We support Habitat for Humanity.
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		X	
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	X		

Educational Opportunities

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

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce-training options for its citizens.	X		
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.		X	A few, but higher skilled and managerial jobs is part of the focus of the economic development plan.

Governmental Relations

Regional Solutions

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

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X		
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X		
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X		
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X		
Regional Cooperation			
Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X		
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	X		
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	X		The Cherokee Recreation & Parks Authority (CRPA), City of Woodstock and Cobb County are looking at linking Noonday Trail in Cobb with CRPA & Woodstock trails on Little River.
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections and discuss issues of regional concern.	X		

PLAN CHEROKEE

DIALOGUE • DIRECTIONS



DECISIONS • DESTINY

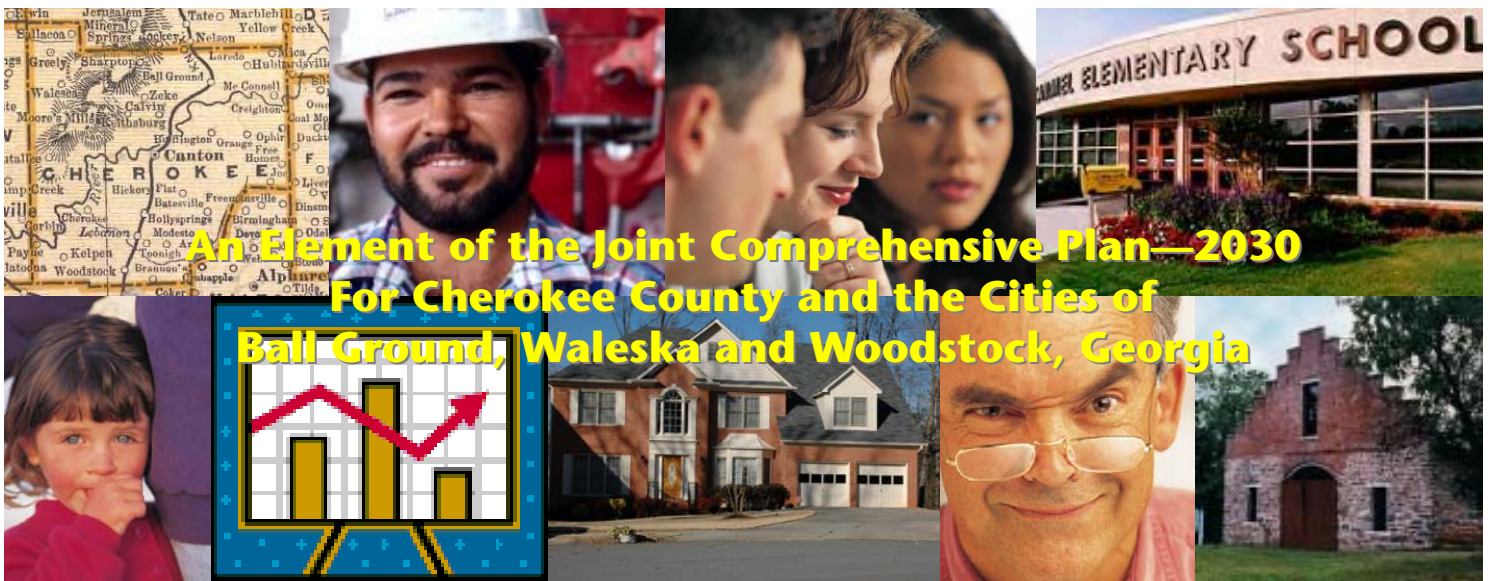
Cherokee County

Community

Assessment

Vol. 2: Technical Data and Analyses

January, 2007



**Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update
Cherokee County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock**

**Community Assessment
Vol. 2: Technical Data and Analyses**

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**Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update
Cherokee County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock**

**Community Assessment
Vol. 2: Technical Data and Analyses**

Introduction

The purpose of this Community Assessment report is to present a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the comprehensive plan is built. In the view of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, preparation of the Community Assessment is largely a staff or professional function of collecting and analyzing data and information about the community and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda. The preparation of this Community Assessment, however, has greatly benefited from input and active participation by the Citizens' Roundtable and from the public through Plan Forum exercises and surveys.

This Community Assessment is comprised of two volumes:

- **Volume 1** focuses on issues and opportunities facing the Joint Comprehensive Plan participating jurisdictions now and that are anticipated in the future as a result of growth and development.
- This **Volume 2** is an 'addendum' to the Community Assessment, containing detailed data and analyses that relate to the issues and opportunities discussed in Volume 1.

The following topical chapters are included in this Volume:

- Demographics
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination

In addition, a review of the current status of past plan goals and objectives of Cherokee County and the cities of Waleska and Ball Ground included in the last adopted Joint Comprehensive Plan is summarized at the end of this document.

While the focus of the data and analyses in this report is on those jurisdictions participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update—Ball Ground, Waleska, Woodstock and Cherokee County (for the unincorporated area)—countywide data and data or estimates for the nonparticipating jurisdictions (Canton, Holly Springs and parts of Nelson and Mountain Park) are often included for comparison and a complete, countywide perspective.

Cherokee County is one of the fastest growing areas in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Between 1990 and 2000, the population went from 90,204 persons to 141,903, a change of 57 percent. The more recent population growth is closely tied to the county's continuing transformation from a rural community to an urbanizing bedroom community, with strides being made to become a more self-encompassing community in terms of the jobs/housing ratio. During the past five years, a concerted effort by the County, and its cities, has been made to attract commercial, business and employment opportunities to support its residents, and the economic and employment climate is slowly shifting. As the county continues to urbanize along its primary corridors, with housing prices remaining moderate, the racial and ethnic composition of the county has begun to experience a slowly increasing representation, with corresponding decreases in the proportional representation of the Caucasian population. Still, the county remains primarily Caucasian as young professionals, young families and established households seeking move-up housing opportunities continue to be attracted to the area.

■ Population and Employment Forecasts

This Section contains the results of detailed forecasts published in three Technical Reports, prepared as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update. The three Technical Reports present the methodologies used in preparing the population, housing and employment forecasts for Cherokee County and each of its cities, and provide analyses of the data and recommendations for use in the Comprehensive Plan. Three scenarios are addressed in each of the Technical Reports, characterized as the Low, Medium and High Forecasts.

The 'low forecast' is based on projections made by the Atlanta Regional Commission as part of *Mobility 2030*, related to ARC's transportation planning activities, updated to the 2004 Census estimates. The 'medium forecast' and the 'high forecast' result from regression analyses applied to historic growth trends, which are discussed more fully in the Technical Report on Population Forecasts. In the Population Technical Report, growth trends are analyzed for the 1970-2005 period at the countywide level and growth trends are analyzed for each jurisdiction over the more recent 1993-2004 period and the immediate past 2000-2004 period, for relevance to future projections.

The **population forecasts** provide the basis for household and housing unit forecasts, and for other population-related tables that will be incorporated into the Joint Comprehensive Plan's Assessment Report (such as age breakdowns). The **household forecasts** are based on the population forecasts and average household sizes specific to each jurisdiction. By adding together the number of households (i.e., the number of occupied housing units) and the number of vacant housing units, future estimates of total **housing units** is produced.

The **employment forecasts** are based on household forecasts, using jobs-per-household ratios derived from an econometric model published by a nationally recognized source—Woods & Poole Economics.

Forecasts of the increase in housing units and employment in Cherokee County and its cities provide basic input to the assessment of residential and nonresidential market forces in the county. This, in turn, leads to estimates of the demand for land for the construction of new subdivisions and other housing developments, and new stores, businesses and industry, over the forecast period to 2030.

More detailed tables regarding population, household, housing and employment forecasts for each city are found in each of the Technical Reports. The cities have been grouped together on some tables in this Section only for convenience and clarity.

Analysis of Population Forecasts

The first table on the page following this summary text presents the population forecasts for each city (or portion of a city) in the county. The second page shows the population forecasts for the county as a whole,

calculated under the 'low,' 'medium' and 'high' forecast scenarios. In each methodology, the population forecast for all of the cities together is subtracted from the countywide total to estimate the population each year in the unincorporated area.

All of the methodologies used for the countywide population forecasts reflect an increasing share of the population located in one or another city—most notably Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock—each of which is anticipated to roughly quadruple their 2004 population. Under the 'low' forecast, by 2030 the share of the countywide population living within all of the cities combined will have grown from 22% in 2004 to 41% in 2030. If the 'medium' countywide population forecast is considered, the total share among the cities grows to 36%, while the 'high' forecast results in an all-cities share of 29% (still an increase over 2004).

Differences can be seen between the three forecast scenarios that are most notably evident in the growth rate and pattern for the unincorporated area. Under the 'low forecast' scenario, the countywide population continues to increase at an increasing rate (note the upward curve in the line on the first graph of the County Population Forecasts table). With the comparably higher rate of growth in population located within the cities, the unincorporated population grows at a much lower, but steady, rate (note the 'flatness' of the line on the first graph).

Considering the 'medium forecast' scenario, however, the countywide total increases at a steady rate, but the unincorporated population exhibits a much stronger 'ess' curve shape. This 'ess' curve shape suggests a continuation of an increasing growth rate over the next 10 years or so, then dropping off in the latter part of the forecast period—still growing but at a decreasing annual rate. Ultimately, under the 'medium' scenario, the unincorporated population in 2030 will be higher than under the 'low' scenario, but the pattern of that increase could be characterized as a higher rate of growth in the coming decade that drops off in time, compared to a 'steady state' of growth throughout the forecast period under the 'low' scenario.

In the 'high forecast' scenario, growth in the unincorporated area continues at a steady but ever-increasing rate. This forecast is considered 'unconstrained' by the natural-growth effects of dwindling land resources, increasing land prices, increasing congestion and market forces that more clearly constrain the 'medium' scenario in its later years.

The countywide population projections result in a 'low' forecast in the mid+ 300,000s, a 'medium' forecast in the low 400,000s and a 'high' population forecast in the low 500,000s.

The 'low' forecast may prove accurate in the long-run if the negative effects of continued growth are worse than expected, the pace of historic growth trends dwindles, housing market demand is overly constrained, and/or more future growth in the region sprawls beyond the county's boundaries. The 'low' scenario, however, is based on forecasts by the Atlanta Regional Commission that was already exceeded as early as 2004.

Although we believe the 500,000s will not be achieved by 2030 because of all the 'natural growth' processes that are evident in the 'medium' forecast, such a 'high' estimate is presented for discussion and may represent the initial 'build-out' of the county after 2030.

The 'medium forecast' scenario appears to be the most realistic on a countywide basis. It is well grounded in historic trends, both over the long run going back to 1970 and over the more recent past decade or so; it recognizes the 'natural' negative effects of continued growth in the future; and it accommodates the continued annexation and growth of the cities relative to the unincorporated area.

Analysis of Household and Housing Forecasts

As noted above in the Analysis of Population Forecasts, the 'medium' population forecast is considered the most realistic, in part because it reflects the natural growth processes that will increasingly affect new development as the county continues to grow. The 'low' population forecast achieved a 2030 population most consistent with a straight line projection against only the past few years (2000-2004), while the 'high' fore-

cast represents an ‘unconstrained’ projection at a steady but ever-increasing rate (and may represent the initial ‘build-out’ of the county after 2030).

This same analysis applies to the household and housing unit forecasts. These are shown on the third and fourth tables that follow this text, respectively.

Analysis of Employment Forecasts

Just as the ‘medium forecast’ scenario of population growth is considered the most realistic, the same can be said of the employment forecast scenarios because population growth (directly or as households) is tightly bound to employment growth in the methodologies used.

The table and graphs on the last page summarize the employment forecasts for each of the three scenarios. The most notable difference between the scenarios is the rate of employment growth in the unincorporated area in comparison to the cities. Under the ‘low forecast’ scenario, most of the increase in employment over the forecast period (almost two-thirds) gravitates to the cities (or is transferred through annexation) such that by 2030 there are just about the same levels of employment in the cities as a group and in the unincorporated area (a 51%-49% split, respectively). Under the ‘high forecast,’ employment growth in the unincorporated area out-paces the cities by 2-to-1 as growth spreads more densely throughout the county. The ‘medium forecast’ scenario results in roughly the same overall numerical increase in employment in the unincorporated area and the cities, while the cities’ share of employment in 2005 and 2030 grows from 40% to 44%.

Forecasts of Other Factors

Forecasts for various other demographic characteristics are provided by DCA’s DataViews, which include projections for factors such as age, racial and ethnic distribution, household sizes, educational attainment, and housing units by type, but are only available to 2025. Therefore, where applicable, either multipliers have been added to those projections to bring them into consistency with the assumptions and forecast methodology used to create the population, household or employment forecasts in this Section, or the percentage of the DataViews projections was calculated and applied to the population or housing number to determine an approximate forecast. These are cited where applicable to develop an adequate assessment of the conditions in the county and its cities.

Table 1: City Population Forecasts—2004-2030

	Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Mt. Park (pt)	Nelson (pt)	Waleska	Woodstock	All Cities Total
Rate:	8.561%	5.583%	5.417%	n/a	4.288%	4.405%	5.038%	n/a
2004	791	15,094	4,699	13	319	726	17,214	38,856
2005	859	15,937	4,954	13	329	758	18,081	40,931
2006	933	16,827	5,222	13	341	791	18,992	43,119
2007	1,013	17,767	5,505	13	354	826	19,949	45,427
2008	1,100	18,759	5,803	13	369	862	20,954	47,860
2009	1,194	19,806	6,117	13	385	900	22,010	50,425
2010	1,296	20,912	6,448	13	402	940	23,119	53,130
2011	1,407	22,080	6,797	13	420	981	24,284	55,982
2012	1,527	23,313	7,165	13	440	1,024	25,507	58,989
2013	1,658	24,615	7,553	13	461	1,069	26,792	62,161
2014	1,800	25,989	7,962	13	483	1,116	28,142	65,505
2015	1,954	27,440	8,393	13	507	1,165	29,560	69,032
2016	2,121	28,972	8,848	13	532	1,216	31,049	72,751
2017	2,303	30,590	9,327	13	558	1,270	32,613	76,674
2018	2,500	32,298	9,832	13	585	1,326	34,256	80,810
2019	2,714	34,101	10,365	13	614	1,384	35,982	85,173
2020	2,946	36,005	10,926	13	644	1,445	37,795	89,774
2021	3,198	38,015	11,518	13	675	1,509	39,699	94,627
2022	3,472	40,138	12,142	13	708	1,575	41,699	99,747
2023	3,769	42,379	12,800	13	742	1,644	43,800	105,147
2024	4,092	44,745	13,493	13	777	1,716	46,006	110,842
2025	4,442	47,243	14,224	13	813	1,792	48,324	116,851
2026	4,822	49,881	14,995	13	851	1,871	50,758	123,191
2027	5,235	52,666	15,807	13	890	1,953	53,315	129,879
2028	5,683	55,607	16,663	13	930	2,039	56,001	136,936
2029	6,170	58,712	17,566	13	972	2,129	58,822	144,384
2030	6,698	61,990	18,518	13	1,015	2,223	61,785	152,242

Notes: 2000-2004 population figures: U.S. Bureau of the Census annual estimates, as of July 1 each year.

2005-2030 population figures for Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Waleska and Woodstock based on average annual rate of increase for each city.

2005-2030 population figures for the portion of Mt. Park in Cherokee County assumes a continuation of current population.

2005-2030 population figures for the portion of Nelson in Cherokee County based on 2nd order (parabolic) trend line regression against 2000-2004 historic data.

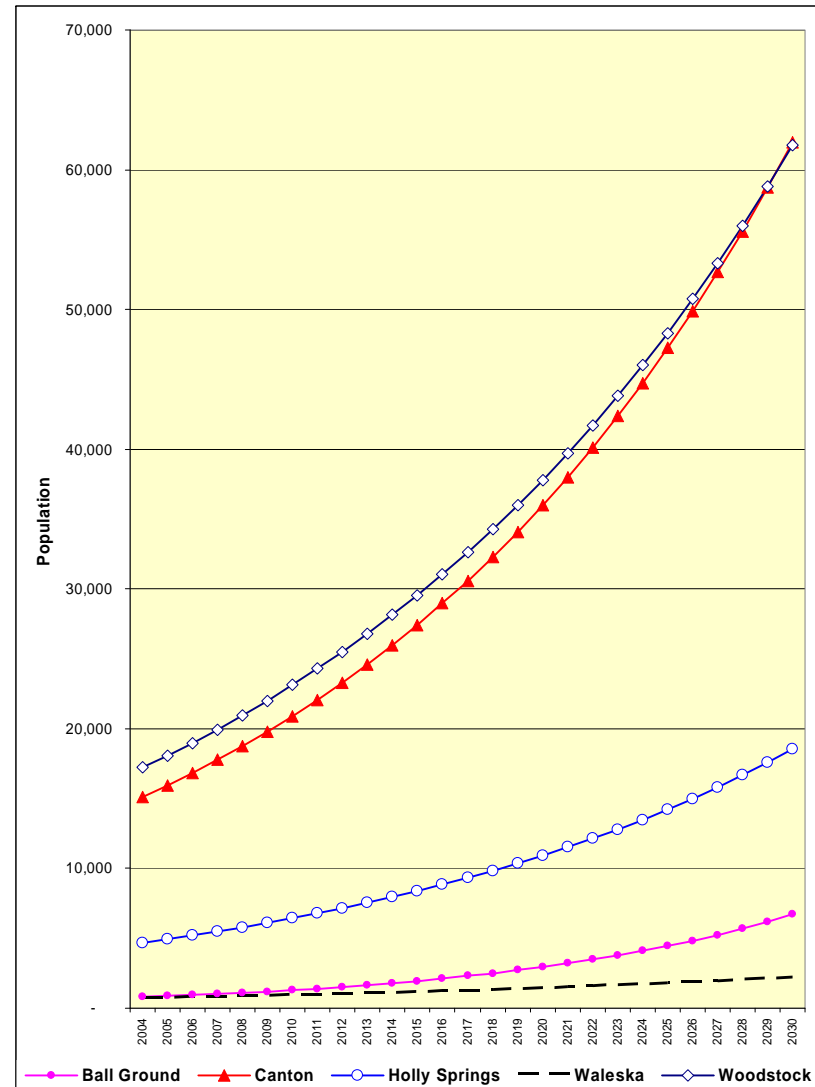


Table 2: County Population Forecasts—2004-2030

	All Cities Total	LOW FORECAST		MEDIUM FORECAST		HIGH FORECAST	
		County Total	Uninc. County	County Total	Uninc. County	County Total	Uninc. County
	n/a	2.847%	1.693%	3.410%	2.610%	4.288%	3.910%
2004	38,856	174,680	135,824	174,680	135,824	174,680	135,824
2005	40,931	179,653	138,722	183,449	142,518	183,908	142,976
2006	43,119	184,767	141,648	192,107	148,988	192,989	149,870
2007	45,427	190,027	144,600	200,979	155,551	202,435	157,008
2008	47,860	195,437	147,577	210,044	162,184	212,247	164,386
2009	50,425	201,001	150,576	219,283	168,858	222,423	171,998
2010	53,130	206,723	153,593	228,675	175,545	232,964	179,834
2011	55,982	212,608	156,626	238,200	182,218	243,870	187,887
2012	58,989	218,661	159,672	247,838	188,849	255,141	196,151
2013	62,161	224,886	162,725	257,569	195,408	266,776	204,615
2014	65,505	231,288	165,783	267,372	201,867	278,777	213,272
2015	69,032	237,872	168,840	277,228	208,196	291,143	222,111
2016	72,751	244,644	171,893	287,116	214,366	303,873	231,122
2017	76,674	251,609	174,935	297,017	220,343	316,969	240,295
2018	80,810	258,772	177,962	306,909	226,099	330,429	249,619
2019	85,173	266,139	180,966	316,773	231,600	344,254	259,081
2020	89,774	273,715	183,941	326,589	236,815	358,445	268,670
2021	94,627	281,507	186,880	336,336	241,709	373,000	278,372
2022	99,747	289,521	189,774	345,995	246,248	387,920	288,173
2023	105,147	297,763	192,616	355,545	250,398	403,205	298,058
2024	110,842	306,240	195,398	364,966	254,124	418,855	308,013
2025	116,851	314,958	198,107	374,238	257,386	434,869	318,018
2026	123,191	323,924	200,733	383,340	260,149	451,249	328,058
2027	129,879	333,146	203,267	392,253	262,374	467,994	338,115
2028	136,936	342,630	205,694	400,957	264,020	485,103	348,167
2029	144,384	352,384	208,000	409,430	265,046	502,578	358,194
2030	152,242	362,414	210,172	417,654	265,412	520,417	368,175

Notes: **Low Forecast** based on ARC Mobility 2030, Atlanta Regional Commission, 2030 forecast for Cherokee County. Calculated annual rate of increase for 2004-2030 applied to intervening years.

Medium Forecast reflects 3rd order ("ess" curve") trend line regression for Cherokee County against 1993-2004 historic data.

High Forecast reflects 2nd order (parabola) trend line regression for Cherokee County against 1993-2004 historic data.

All figures for Unincorporated Cherokee County calculated by subtracting All City Population from Total County Population.

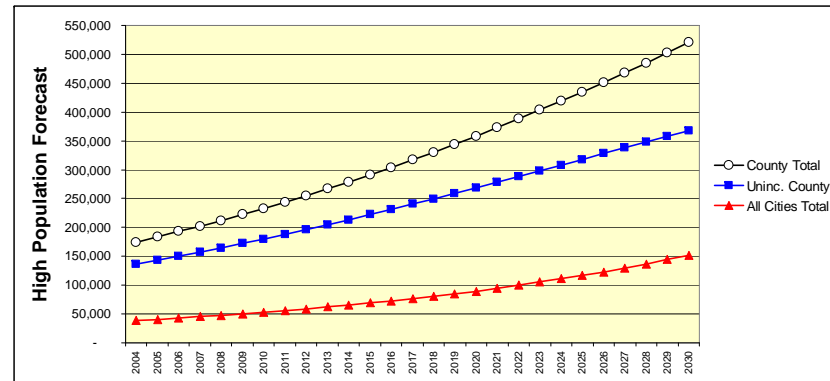
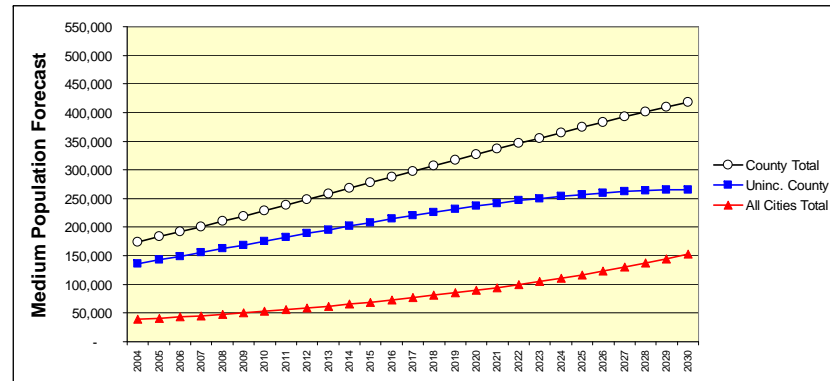
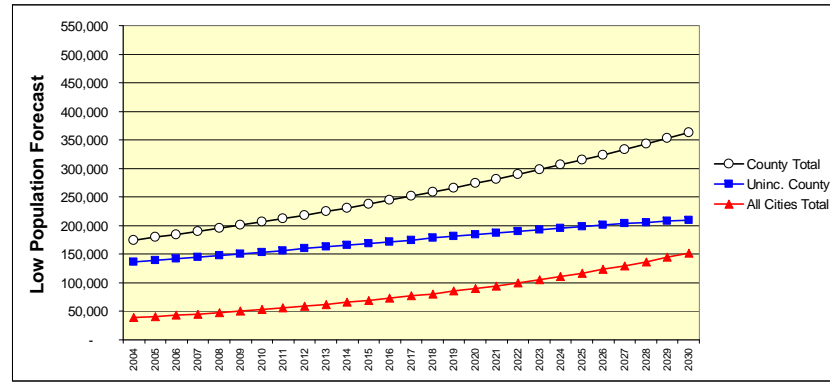


Table 3: County Household Forecasts—2005-2030

	LOW FORECAST		MEDIUM FORECAST		HIGH FORECAST		
	All Cities Total	County Total	Uninc. County	County Total	Uninc. County	County Total	Uninc. County
2005	15,202	63,851	48,649	65,209	50,007	65,373	50,171
2006	16,069	65,885	49,816	68,521	52,452	68,838	52,769
2007	16,985	67,969	50,984	71,915	54,930	72,440	55,455
2008	17,945	70,103	52,158	75,382	57,437	76,178	58,233
2009	18,961	72,289	53,328	78,914	59,953	80,052	61,091
2010	20,028	74,525	54,497	82,501	62,473	84,058	64,030
2011	21,152	76,812	55,660	86,132	64,980	88,197	67,045
2012	22,335	79,152	56,817	89,799	67,464	92,464	70,129
2013	23,578	81,542	57,964	93,491	69,913	96,857	73,279
2014	24,887	83,985	59,098	97,199	72,312	101,375	76,488
2015	26,263	86,480	60,217	100,912	74,649	106,015	79,752
2016	27,707	89,027	61,320	104,620	76,913	110,771	83,064
2017	29,227	91,626	62,399	108,312	79,085	115,643	86,416
2018	30,824	94,278	63,454	111,978	81,154	120,626	89,802
2019	32,501	96,982	64,481	115,608	83,107	125,717	93,216
2020	34,260	99,738	65,478	119,191	84,931	130,911	96,651
2021	36,109	102,547	66,438	122,717	86,608	136,205	100,096
2022	38,050	105,408	67,358	126,176	88,126	141,594	103,544
2023	40,085	108,321	68,236	129,557	89,472	147,074	106,989
2024	42,219	111,285	69,066	132,850	90,631	152,640	110,421
2025	44,457	114,301	69,844	136,046	91,589	158,287	113,830
2026	46,805	117,369	70,564	139,134	92,329	164,011	117,206
2027	49,266	120,488	71,222	142,105	92,839	169,806	120,540
2028	51,845	123,657	71,812	144,950	93,105	175,668	123,823
2029	54,548	126,877	72,329	147,658	93,110	181,590	127,042
2030	57,379	130,146	72,767	150,222	92,843	187,568	130,189
Increase	42,177	66,295	24,118	85,013	42,836	122,195	80,018

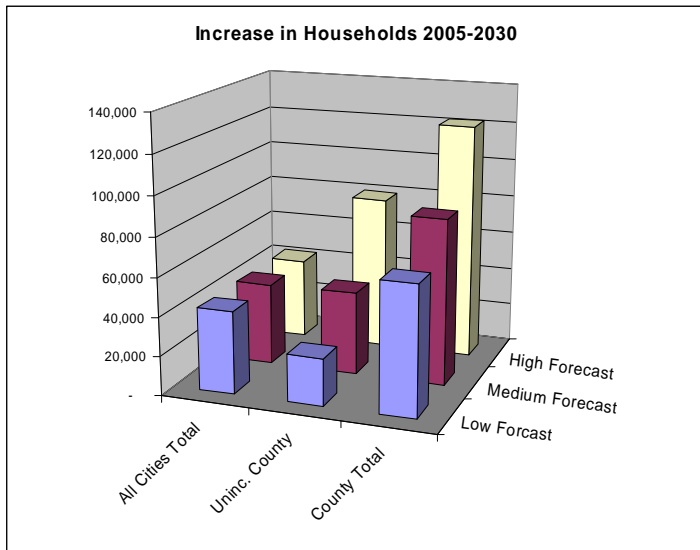
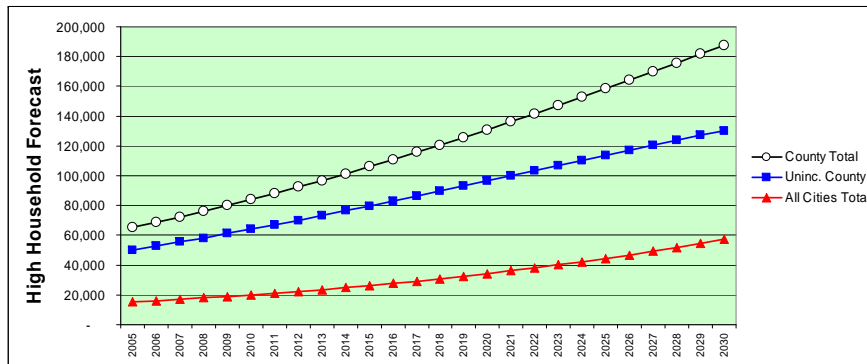
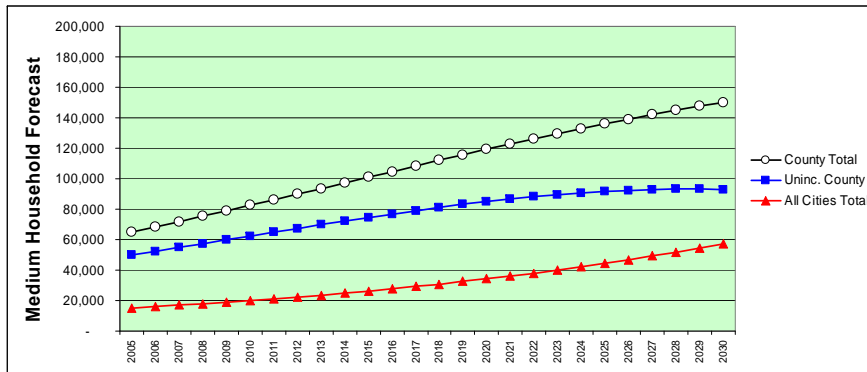
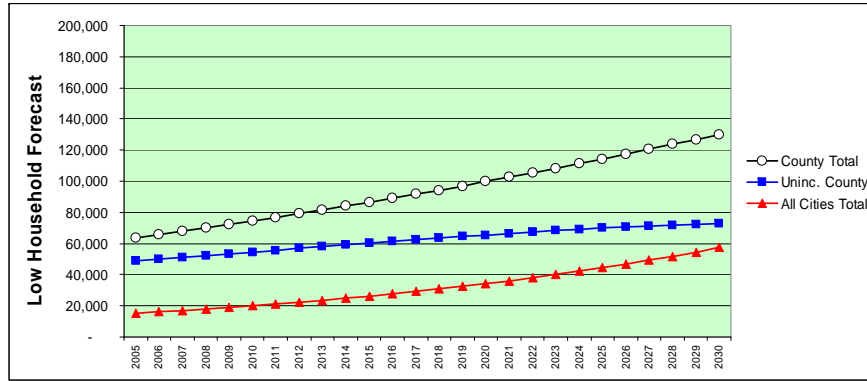


Table 4: County Housing Forecasts—2005-2030

All Cities Total	LOW FORECAST		MEDIUM FORECAST		HIGH FORECAST		
	County Total	Uninc. County	County Total	Uninc. County	County Total	Uninc. County	
2005	16,118	67,001	50,883	68,426	52,308	68,598	52,480
2006	17,038	69,136	52,098	71,902	54,864	72,234	55,196
2007	18,008	71,322	53,314	75,463	57,455	76,014	58,006
2008	19,028	73,562	54,534	79,101	60,073	79,936	60,908
2009	20,105	75,856	55,751	82,807	62,702	84,002	63,897
2010	21,236	78,202	56,966	86,571	65,335	88,205	66,969
2011	22,431	80,602	58,171	90,382	67,951	92,548	70,117
2012	23,684	83,057	59,373	94,230	70,546	97,026	73,342
2013	25,005	85,565	60,560	98,104	73,099	101,636	76,631
2014	26,393	88,129	61,736	101,995	75,602	106,377	79,984
2015	27,855	90,747	62,892	105,891	78,036	111,246	83,391
2016	29,386	93,419	64,033	109,782	80,396	116,236	86,850
2017	31,000	96,147	65,147	113,656	82,656	121,349	90,349
2018	32,696	98,930	66,234	117,503	84,807	126,577	93,881
2019	34,475	101,767	67,292	121,312	86,837	131,920	97,445
2020	36,343	104,659	68,316	125,072	88,729	137,370	101,027
2021	38,306	107,606	69,300	128,772	90,466	142,925	104,619
2022	40,367	110,609	70,242	132,401	92,034	148,580	108,213
2023	42,528	113,665	71,137	135,949	93,421	154,330	111,802
2024	44,794	116,776	71,982	139,405	94,611	160,171	115,377
2025	47,172	119,940	72,768	142,758	95,586	166,097	118,925
2026	49,664	123,160	73,496	145,999	96,335	172,103	122,439
2027	52,279	126,433	74,154	149,116	96,837	178,184	125,905
2028	55,019	129,758	74,739	152,102	97,083	184,335	129,316
2029	57,891	133,137	75,246	154,943	97,052	190,549	132,658
2030	60,898	136,567	75,669	157,634	96,736	196,822	135,924
Increase	44,780	69,566	24,786	89,208	44,428	128,224	83,444

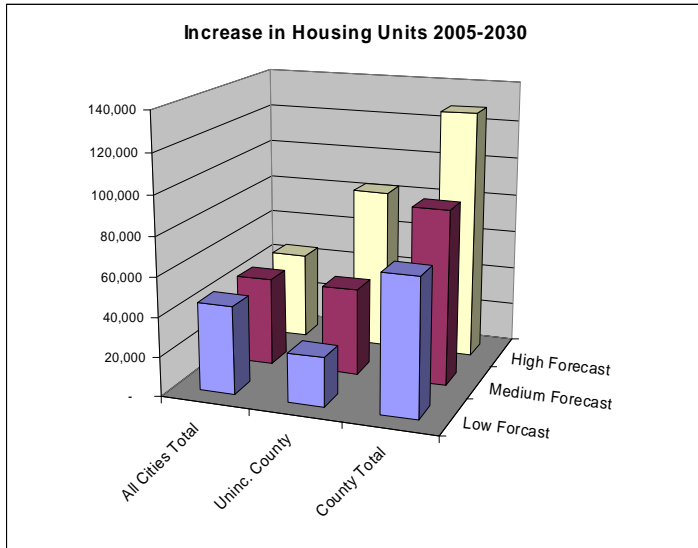
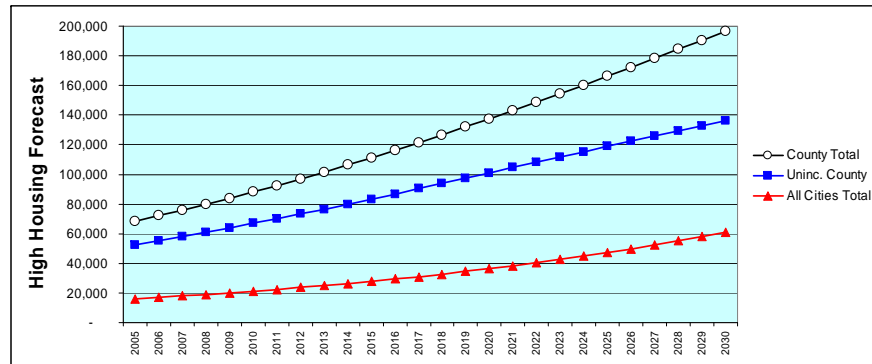
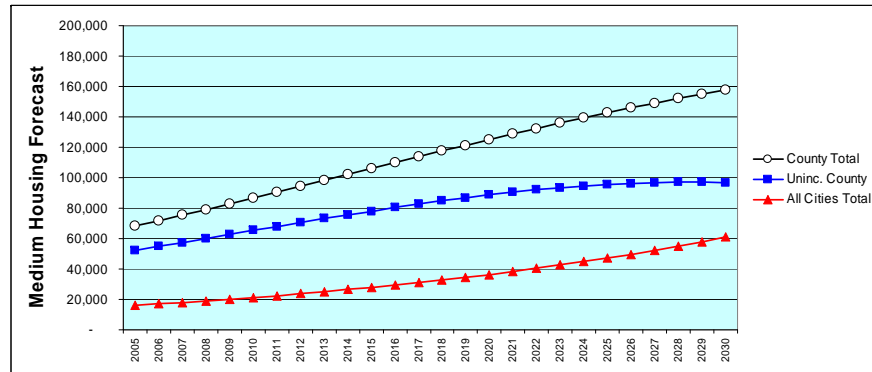
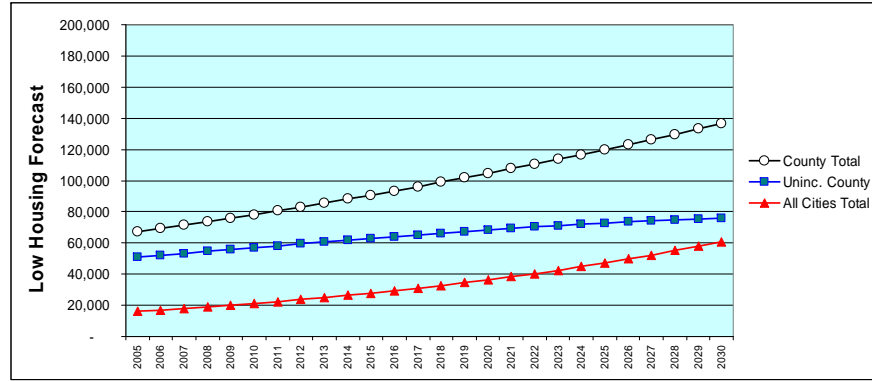
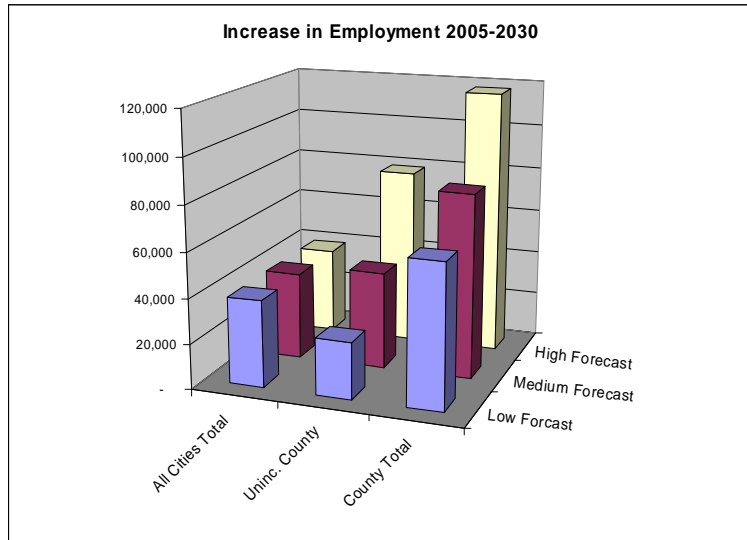
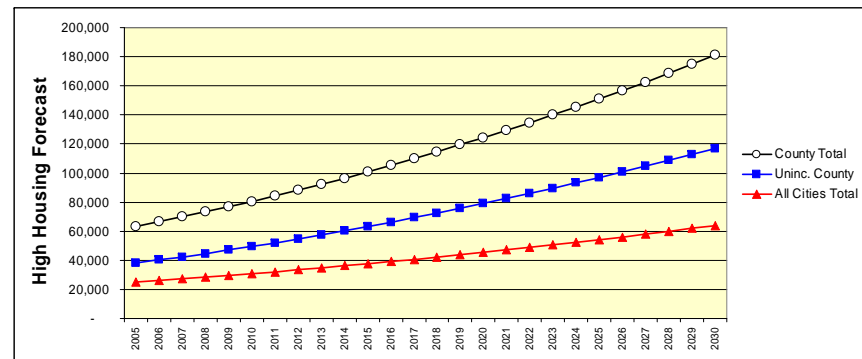
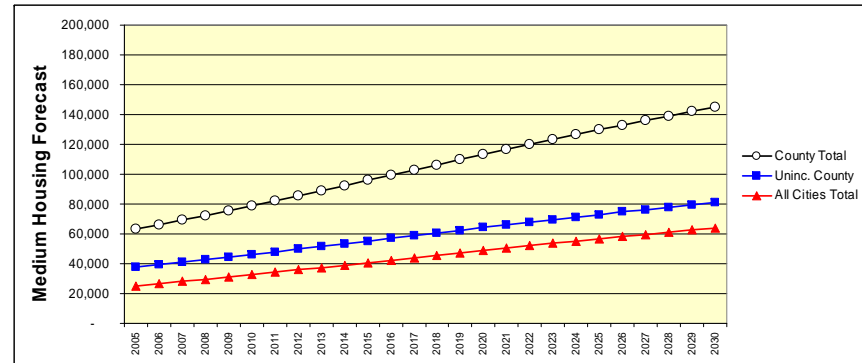
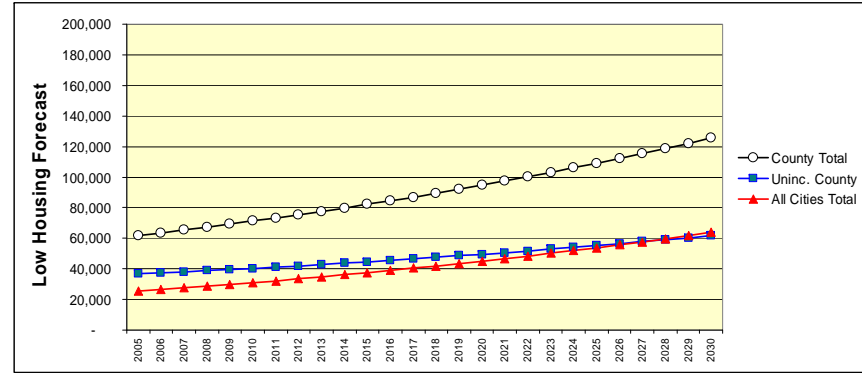


Table 5: County Employment Forecasts—2005-2030

	LOW FORECAST			MEDIUM FORECAST			HIGH FORECAST		
	County Total	Uninc. County	All Cities Total	County Total	Uninc. County	All Cities Total	County Total	Uninc. County	All Cities Total
2005	61,848	36,634	25,214	63,162	37,891	25,271	63,323	38,045	25,278
2006	63,632	37,338	26,294	66,186	39,487	26,699	66,499	40,177	26,322
2007	65,467	38,062	27,405	69,285	41,122	28,163	69,803	42,395	27,408
2008	67,354	38,807	28,547	72,451	42,793	29,658	73,235	44,699	28,536
2009	69,295	39,573	29,722	75,678	44,496	31,182	76,794	47,088	29,706
2010	71,291	40,361	30,930	78,959	46,227	32,732	80,481	49,563	30,918
2011	73,344	41,171	32,173	82,286	47,983	34,303	84,295	52,123	32,172
2012	75,455	42,004	33,451	85,653	49,759	35,894	88,237	54,769	33,468
2013	77,626	42,861	34,765	89,052	51,553	37,499	92,306	57,500	34,806
2014	79,859	43,742	36,117	92,476	53,360	39,116	96,503	60,317	36,186
2015	82,156	44,648	37,508	95,919	55,177	40,742	100,828	63,220	37,608
2016	84,518	45,580	38,938	99,373	56,999	42,374	105,280	66,209	39,071
2017	86,948	46,539	40,409	102,831	58,824	44,007	109,860	69,283	40,577
2018	89,447	47,525	41,922	106,286	60,647	45,639	114,567	72,443	42,124
2019	92,017	48,539	43,478	109,732	62,465	47,267	119,402	75,689	43,713
2020	94,660	49,582	45,078	113,161	64,274	48,887	124,365	79,021	45,344
2021	97,378	50,655	46,723	116,566	66,070	50,496	129,455	82,438	47,017
2022	100,173	51,758	48,415	119,940	67,850	52,090	134,673	85,941	48,732
2023	103,048	52,893	50,155	123,276	69,610	53,666	140,019	89,529	50,490
2024	106,005	54,060	51,945	126,567	71,346	55,221	145,492	93,203	52,289
2025	109,046	55,260	53,786	129,806	73,055	56,751	151,093	96,963	54,130
2026	112,173	56,494	55,679	132,985	74,733	58,252	156,822	100,808	56,014
2027	115,390	57,764	57,626	136,098	76,376	59,722	162,678	104,739	57,939
2028	118,698	59,070	59,628	139,138	77,980	61,158	168,662	108,756	59,906
2029	122,100	60,413	61,687	142,098	79,542	62,556	174,774	112,859	61,915
2030	125,598	61,796	63,802	144,971	81,057	63,914	181,013	117,045	63,968
Increase	63,750	25,162	38,588	81,809	43,166	38,643	117,690	79,000	38,690



■ Population

Total County

Population growth in Cherokee County has quadrupled in the past 20 years, increasing 75 percent between 1980 and 1990, and again by 57 percent between 1990 and 2000, for an annual average growth over the decade of 5.7 percent. In 1990, there were 90,204 people in the county compared to 141,903 in 2000 and an estimated 183,449 persons in 2005, of which an estimated 1,527 were living in group quarters. Cherokee County is currently the fifth fastest growing county in the state. Corresponding new household estimates in the county in 2005, are also up, with an estimated 65,209 households and 68,426 housing units. The lower ratio of households to housing units may be attributed to the presence of Lake Allatoona and the role of 259 reported vacation homes that are temporarily occupied, but not on a full time household basis, as well as a number of newly constructed homes which are not yet occupied. Although there was an increase in total households between 1990 and 2000, and again between 2000 and 2005 estimates, there was a corresponding decrease in average household size within the county, from 2.86 persons in 1990, to 2.85 persons in 2000 and an estimated 2.79 persons per household in 2005. The decrease in household size can be partially attributed to the fact that the current housing market in the county is attracting large numbers of first time homebuyer households with smaller average household sizes, such as households with two or fewer children, single persons entering the workforce or maximizing their housing market opportunities, the aging of the existing population, empty nesters, or childless couples.

Table 6: Cherokee County Population Characteristics								
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
TOTAL COUNTY								
Population	90,204	143,811	183,449	228,675	277,228	326,589	374,238	417,654
Housing Units	33,840	51,937	68,426	86,571	105,891	125,072	142,758	157,634
Households	31,309	49,495	65,209	82,501	100,912	119,191	136,046	150,222
Persons Per Household	2.86	2.85	2.79	2.75	2.72	2.71	2.72	2.75
INCORPORATED AREA								
Population	13,189	21,711	40,931	53,130	69,032	89,774	116,851	152,242
Housing Units	5,045	8,026	16,118	21,236	27,855	36,343	47,172	60,898
Households	4,670	8,520	15,202	20,028	26,263	34,260	44,457	57,379
Persons Per Household	2.73	2.61	2.61	2.56	2.55	2.54	2.55	2.57
UNINCORPORATED AREA								
Population	77,015	120,192	142,518	175,545	208,196	236,815	257,387	265,412
Housing Units	28,795	41,469	52,308	65,335	78,036	88,729	95,586	96,736
Households	26,639	43,417	50,007	62,473	74,649	84,931	91,589	92,843
Persons Per Household	2.89	2.89	2.85	2.80	2.78	2.78	2.80	2.85
BALL GROUND								
Population	899	734	859	1,296	1,954	2,946	4,442	6,698
Housing Units	362	298	358	548	834	1,262	1,897	2,834
Households	342	269	323	495	753	1,139	1,712	2,558
Persons Per Household	2.63	2.71	2.66	2.62	2.60	2.59	2.59	2.62
WALESKA								
Population	635	619	758	940	1,165	1,445	1,792	2,223
Housing Units	141	114	143	180	226	280	346	426
Households	134	107	134	169	212	263	325	400
Persons Per Household	4.74	2.43	2.38	2.35	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.34

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
WOODSTOCK								
Population	4,749	10,342	18,081	23,119	29,560	37,795	48,324	61,785
Housing Units	1,652	4,102	7,532	9,776	12,617	16,183	20,631	26,133
Households	1,522	3,869	7,104	9,221	11,900	15,264	19,459	24,649
Persons Per Household	3.12	2.55	2.50	2.46	2.44	2.43	2.44	2.46

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000; ROSS+associates, 2005-2030.
 Note: Incorporated 2005-2030 includes portions of Nelson and Mountain Park. Unincorporated area 1990-2000 includes these portions.

In 2005, analysis of the county by incorporated and unincorporated areas indicates that the cities comprise a relatively small, but growing, proportion of the current total population. Approximately 22 percent of the county's population resided in the incorporated cities of Canton, Ball Ground, Holly Springs, Woodstock and Waleska, a small portion of the City of Nelson at the northern boundary of the county and a few residential lots in Mountain Park in 2005. The number of housing units in the incorporated areas constituted 24 percent of the total county stock. The remainder of the population resided in the unincorporated portions of the county.

Municipality Breakdown

In 2005, the City of Woodstock is the largest incorporated area in the county, constituting 9.86 percent of the total county population, followed by Canton and Holly Springs at 8.69 and 3 percent of the county respectively. Both Waleska and Ball Ground comprise less than one percent of the total county population. All of the incorporated areas have smaller household sizes than within the unincorporated county, with a collective average household size of 2.61 persons as compared to 2.85 in the unincorporated portions of the county. (Persons living in group quarters are not included in the ratio.) This may be because proportionally, a larger percentage of the housing units in the primary incorporated areas are multi-family, which typically accommodate a smaller number of persons per household. In 2030, the incorporated portion of the county will comprise 36.45 percent of the total county population, up from 22.3 percent in 2005. Canton is expected to become the largest incorporated city with 14.84 percent of the population, closely followed by Woodstock with 14.79 percent of total population. Holly Springs' share of total population will increase to 4.43 percent.

	Cherokee County Total	City Forecasts							All Cities Total	Uninc. County
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Mt. Park (pt)	Nelson (pt)	Waleska	Woodstock		
2005	183,449	859	15,937	4,954	13	329	758	18,081	40,931	142,518
2006	192,107	933	16,827	5,222	13	341	791	18,992	43,119	148,988
2007	200,979	1,013	17,767	5,505	13	354	826	19,949	45,427	155,552
2008	210,044	1,100	18,759	5,803	13	369	862	20,954	47,860	162,184
2009	219,283	1,194	19,806	6,117	13	385	900	22,010	50,425	168,858
2010	228,675	1,296	20,912	6,448	13	402	940	23,119	53,130	175,545
2011	238,200	1,407	22,080	6,797	13	420	981	24,284	55,982	182,218
2012	247,838	1,527	23,313	7,165	13	440	1,024	25,507	58,989	188,849
2013	257,569	1,658	24,615	7,553	13	461	1,069	26,792	62,161	195,408
2014	267,372	1,800	25,989	7,962	13	483	1,116	28,142	65,505	201,867
2015	277,228	1,954	27,440	8,393	13	507	1,165	29,560	69,032	208,196
2016	287,116	2,121	28,972	8,848	13	532	1,216	31,049	72,751	214,365

Table 7: Population Forecasts—2005-2030

	Cherokee County Total	City Forecasts							All Cities Total	Uninc. County
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Mt. Park (pt)	Nelson (pt)	Waleska	Woodstock		
2017	297,017	2,303	30,590	9,327	13	558	1,270	32,613	76,674	220,343
2018	306,909	2,500	32,298	9,832	13	585	1,326	34,256	80,810	226,099
2019	316,773	2,714	34,101	10,365	13	614	1,384	35,982	85,173	231,600
2020	326,589	2,946	36,005	10,926	13	644	1,445	37,795	89,774	236,815
2021	336,336	3,198	38,015	11,518	13	675	1,509	39,699	94,627	241,709
2022	345,995	3,472	40,138	12,142	13	708	1,575	41,699	99,747	246,248
2023	355,545	3,769	42,379	12,800	13	742	1,644	43,800	105,147	250,398
2024	364,966	4,092	44,745	13,493	13	777	1,716	46,006	110,842	254,124
2025	374,238	4,442	47,243	14,224	13	813	1,792	48,324	116,851	257,387
2026	383,340	4,822	49,881	14,995	13	851	1,871	50,758	123,191	260,149
2027	392,253	5,235	52,666	15,807	13	890	1,953	53,315	129,879	262,374
2028	400,957	5,683	55,607	16,663	13	930	2,039	56,001	136,936	264,021
2029	409,430	6,170	58,712	17,566	13	972	2,129	58,822	144,384	265,046
2030	417,654	6,698	61,990	18,518	13	1,015	2,223	61,785	152,242	265,412

Source: Cherokee County Forecasts: Technical Report—Population, ROSS+associates.

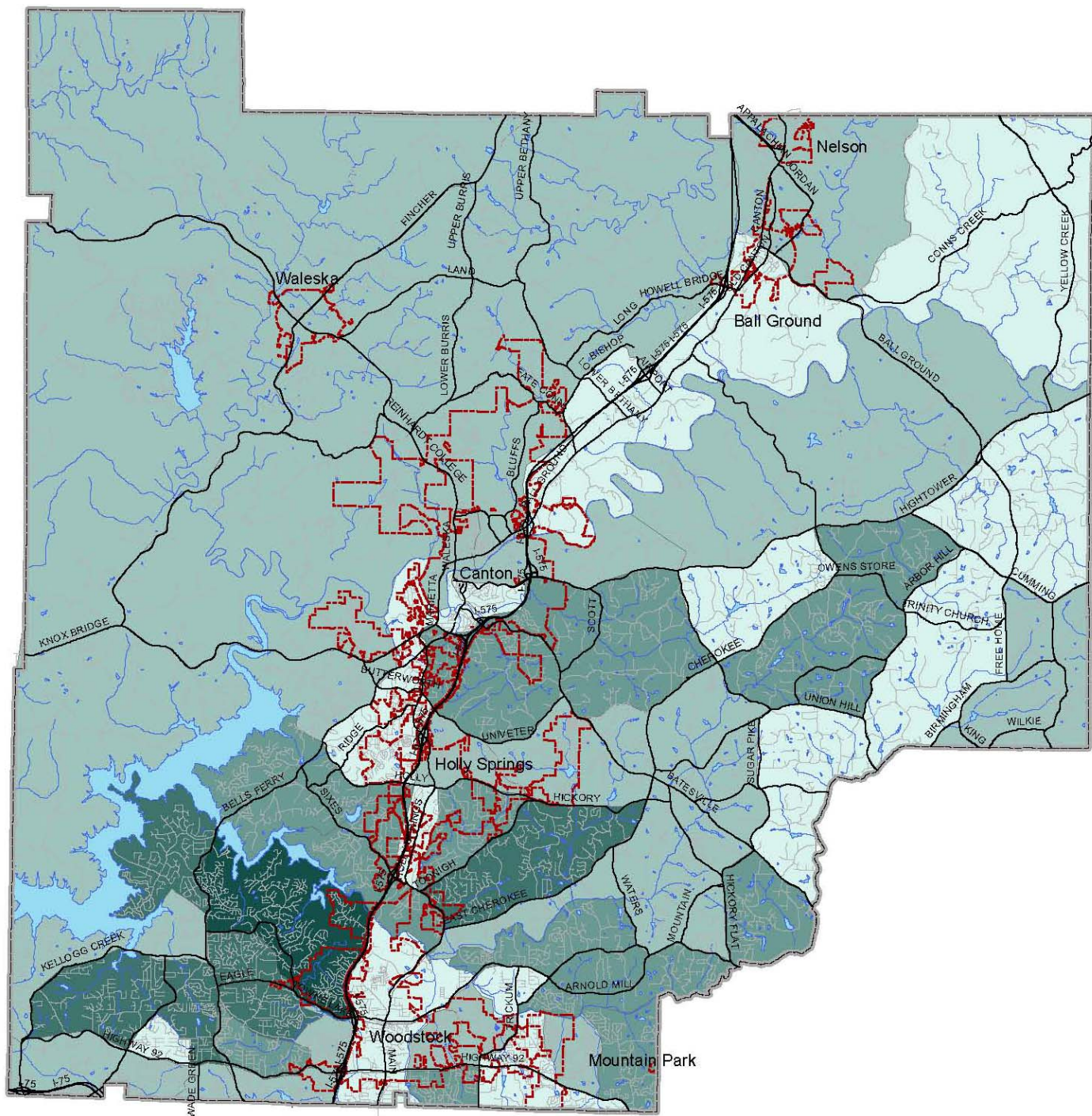
■ Housing Units

Between 2005 and 2030, the numerical increase of housing units in the incorporated areas is anticipated to be almost comparable to that of the unincorporated county, although the population in the unincorporated area will grow at a faster rate. The incorporated areas are projected to add 44,730 housing units and 111,311 persons, and the unincorporated areas projected to add 44,428 housing units and 122,894 persons. The greater numerical increase in population in the unincorporated areas, which is reflective of a larger average household size, is due in part to the types of housing units that are expected to be built—larger units with a greater number of bedrooms that would accommodate larger families, as compared to potentially a range of unit sizes and product types, some with higher densities and/or smaller lot sizes, in the incorporated areas that would better accommodate empty nesters and couples with no children, the workforce population, renters, and single persons.

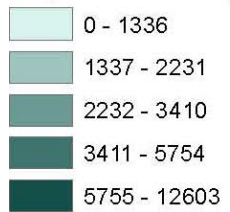
■ Average Household Size

Projections of population, households, household sizes and housing units suggest that although the county will continue to grow numerically, the rate of growth and proportional representation of the cities will increase as land is annexed and infill areas are developed, while growth in the unincorporated areas is forecast to slow down in pace and reflect the annexation of lands into city boundaries. By 2030, the proportion of the population in the incorporated area is forecast to comprise 36.5 percent of the population, and 38.6 percent of the housing units, up from an estimated 22.3 and 23.6 percent respectively in 2005. Overall, household size is forecast to decrease slightly within the county as a whole and in each city between 2000 and 2005. Following past trends in Cherokee County, national experience and econometric models of future growth, average household sizes are expected to continue to fall slightly through 2020, and begin to increase slightly thereafter to 2030.

Cherokee 2000 Population by Census Block Group



Population Ranges



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PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.
CANTON, GA
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■ Household Composition

Household composition is reported in the 2000 Census as follows: Approximately 80 percent of the households in the county are family households (that is, two or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption), with the remaining 20 percent being non-family households. Almost 49 percent of the total households in the county are comprised of one and two person households. Three and four person households comprise 39.4 percent of the total, with the remaining 11.6 percent of the households being larger households of five or more persons. The majority of the residents of the county (83.9 percent of the households) own their own residences. Of the one and two person household population, 83.2 percent own their own residences. Countywide, approximately 56 percent of the family households have one or more children.

Household characteristics vary between the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county. Within the unincorporated county, 81.8 percent of the households are family households, with over 70 percent of all households being married couple families, and 11.1 percent either female headed or male headed families. Single persons comprise 14.3 percent of the households, and non-family households of two or more persons constitute 4.3 percent of the total households. Within the incorporated areas, 24.5 percent of the households are single person, and 67.6 percent are families, the majority of which are married-couple families at 57.8 percent of the incorporated area households. Non-family households are more highly represented in the incorporated areas, at 5.6 percent of incorporated area households.

Table 8: Types of Household by Size—2000

	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total:	49,562	241	2,662	1,092	94	3,796	7,885	41,677
1-person household:	7,913	59	741	159	21	954	1,934	5,979
Male householder	3,475	19	291	91	5	415	821	2,654
Female householder	4,438	40	450	68	16	539	1,113	3,325
2-or-more-person household:	41,649	182	1,921	933	73	2,842	5,951	35,698
Family households:	39,409	180	1,736	884	73	2,637	5,330	34,079
Married-couple family:	33,849	150	1,324	789	62	2,233	4,558	29,291
With own children under 18 years	17,525	51	608	476	16	1,115	2,266	15,259
No own children under 18 years	16,324	99	716	313	46	1,118	2,292	14,032
Other family:	5,560	30	412	95	11	404	952	4,608
Male householder, no wife present:	1,807	3	138	41	2	100	284	1,523
With own children under 18 years	950	0	112	9	2	45	168	782
No own children under 18 years	857	3	26	32	0	55	116	741
Female householder, no husband present:	3,753	27	274	54	9	304	668	3,085
With own children under 18 years	2,255	11	178	27	4	208	428	1,827
No own children under 18 years	1,498	16	96	27	5	96	240	1,258
Nonfamily households:	2,240	2	185	49	0	205	441	1,799
Male householder	1,459	2	114	25	0	136	277	1,182
Female householder	781	0	71	24	0	69	164	617

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.

Household composition is further differentiated at the city level. In the cities of Ball Ground and Holly Springs, the proportion of households by family type closely approximates that of the unincorporated county. In Woodstock and Waleska, there are a much higher proportion of single person households at 25.1 percent and 22.3 percent respectively. Again, rationale for the high proportion of single persons is the existence of Reinhart College and its associated student population, comprised primarily of single persons, or non-family households. In Woodstock, the availability of a varied base of apartment and other multi-family type products at reasonable rents and purchase prices makes it attractive for single persons, particularly the workforce population employed within the county. In Woodstock, 69.5 percent of the households are family, with 58.8 percent of total households being married couples. The proportion of male- or female-headed family households is actually lower than that of the unincorporated area in both Woodstock and Waleska.

■ Age Characteristics

Cherokee County is primarily a mid-life age community. Over 57 percent of households range from age 25 to 64. This represents the workforce of the county. Approximately 80 percent of family households are comprised of heads of household in the 25 to 54 years old range, and 61.6 percent of the non-family households have heads of household in that age group. This portion of the county’s population is responsible for financially supporting the municipal services and the economic viability of the county as a whole. By 2025, this portion of the community will increase to almost 60 percent of the population. An increase in job opportunities will become a crucial component of the county’s future economic development if it is to retain these

working individuals within the county and continue to attract a resident population.

Age Group	Cherokee County	Atlanta Region	State of Georgia
0 to 4	8.2%	7.4%	7.3%
5 to 13	16.0%	14.9%	14.9%
14 to 20	9.0%	6.8%	7.3%
21 to 24	4.1%	7.0%	7.2%
25 to 34	15.9%	17.9%	15.9%
35 to 44	19.8%	18.0%	16.5%
45 to 54	14.2%	13.6%	13.2%
55 to 64	7.5%	7.2%	8.1%
65+	6.6%	7.3%	9.6%

Source: 2000 Census and ARC.

The age group of 20-34 year olds reflects persons of marriageable age, at 20.6 percent of the population, who are potential single-family homeowners.

The 35 to 54 year old age group comprises the largest percentage of the population, at 34 percent. While almost half of the population may be comprised of young families with children, it appears that the mature population with older children is steadily increasing. The 35 to 44 group, typically with children of school age, as well as the “baby boom” generation of the 45 to 54 year old age group, is more highly represented in the county and its cities than the region and state, possibly reflecting the wealth of new housing opportunities in the

moderate and move-up, executive level range, which has contributed to the image of the county as a stable, family oriented place to live and raise children.

Almost 42 percent of the households in the county indicate the presence of children under the age of 18. In 2000, approximately 28.2 percent of the population was comprised of children under the age of 18, with 8.2 percent under the age of five. While the age group of 0 to 4 year olds will remain constant, by 2025, the proportion of persons under 18 is anticipated to decrease to 27.2 percent. The proportion in 2025, however, will numerically constitute a large component of children, potentially exceeding 102,000, with 70 percent of them school age, to be added to the population. This is a significant number of children for the school district to accommodate—a total of over 71,000—compared to an estimated 36,000+ in 2005.

Table 10: 2000 Population by Age

AGE	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
0 – 4 Years Old	11,670	56	707	324	15	905	2,007	9,663
5 – 13 Years Old	22,760	110	950	503	35	1,422	3,020	19,740
14 – 17 Years Old	5,680	33	261	134	16	368	812	4,868
18 – 20 Years Old	5,038	26	403	86	267	316	1,098	3,940
21 – 24 Years Old	5,836	19	571	147	93	473	1,303	4,533
25 – 34 Years Old	22,619	110	1,504	696	42	2,068	4,420	18,199
35 – 44 Years Old	28,152	104	1,089	609	44	1,850	3,696	24,456
45 – 54 Years Old	20,161	113	707	355	43	1,255	2,473	17,688
55 – 64 Years Old	10,634	75	540	180	30	587	1,412	9,222
65 and over	9,353	84	977	161	31	806	2,059	7,294
Total	141,903	730	7709	3195	616	10050	22,300	119,603

Source: 2000 Census STF-3

Note: Unincorporated area includes portions of Mountain Park and Nelson

In the incorporated areas, the proportion of school age children is slightly less than the county average, at 26.2 percent, and as compared to 28.7 percent in the unincorporated county. Incorporated areas are comparable, or significantly lower, at: 27.2 percent in Ball Ground; 26.8 percent in Woodstock; 24.9 percent in Canton; and a low of 10.7 percent in Waleska. This low in Waleska is countered by the large percentage, 58 percent, of young adults due to the presence of Reinhardt College. The school age group represents the future needs for educational and job training programs. Job opportunities will be crucial to retain these individuals in the county as they enter the workforce. The projected population capture is expected to be singles, young couples and families with children.

Table 11: Percent Population Projection by Age Cherokee County 2000-2025

Age Category	2000	2005	2015	2025
0 – 4 Years	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%
5 – 13 Years	16.0%	16.0%	15.8%	15.8%
14 – 17 Years	4.0%	3.8%	3.4%	3.2%
18 – 20 Years	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%	3.3%
21 – 24 Years	4.1%	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%
25 – 34 Years	15.9%	15.6%	15.2%	15.0%
35 – 44 Years	19.8%	20.4%	21.0%	21.5%
45 – 54 Years	14.2%	14.7%	15.3%	15.7%
55 – 64 Years	7.5%	7.5%	7.6%	7.6%
65 and over	6.6%	6.5%	6.3%	6.2%

Source: DataViews, Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

In 2000, there were 9,353 persons 65 or older, comprising 6.6 percent of the total population. By the year 2025, an even greater number of residents (over 23,000) will move into the 65 and over age range, although the proportion will have fallen to 6.2 percent of the population. As the county's age characteristics continue to diversify, special planning attention should be aimed towards community facility improvements, "live, work, play" environments, linkages and housing to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and lifestyles.

Within the unincorporated area, the proportion of the population over 65 is smaller than the countywide average, at 6.1 percent. Percentages range within the incorporated areas, with 8.0, 11.7 and

11.5 percent of the population in Woodstock, Canton and Ball Ground, respectively, 65 or older, as compared to 5.0 and 5.2 percent in the cities of Holly Springs and Waleska. This higher incidence of older persons may relate to the existence of a greater concentration of older homes, in which some of the residents may have lived for decades. The lower representation of older persons in Waleska may be attributed to the student population in association with Reinhardt College.

■ Lifecycle and Lifecycle Housing and Service Needs

Residents require different accommodations and services throughout their lifecycle. The needs of a single person are very different when compared to that of a family and again to someone we would consider an “empty” nester. According to Census data, median age in Cherokee County has increased to 34 in the year 2000. The median age varies throughout the county, particularly within the incorporated areas. The median ages in the Cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock are in the same range, within the low to mid 30s. The median age in Waleska, however, is 20.7, reflecting the presence of Reinhart College and the students residing in close proximity.

	Cherokee County	Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock
Both sexes	34.0	35.8	31.0	31.2	20.7	32.8
Male	33.5	34.0	29.4	31.2	20.9	32.0
Female	34.5	39.0	33.3	31.3	20.6	33.4

Source: 2000 Census STF-1.

Various housing types and services will be required to meet the lifestyle characteristics of the area. Master planned developments that incorporate a non-residential component and special considerations to linkages and mixed uses within village centers will enable people of all ages to remain within the county. Not only will a diversified housing

stock (such as duplexes, townhouses, multi-family and loft apartments) be important to younger families, single persons and empty nesters as affordable housing alternatives, they will provide construction jobs and available housing for an increasing labor market. To meet the needs of this diversified population, the above population statistics reflect the need for an increased attention to public facilities such as schools, recreation, health facilities and a continued emphasis on youth oriented and elderly programs countywide.

Typically, one- and two-person households require smaller and less permanent housing opportunities, and represent the primary market audience for condos, townhomes and rental apartments, as well as some of the smaller two bedroom detached units. However, only 6.2 percent of the housing stock is classified as multi-family, including duplexes. Access to transportation systems may also be an important consideration for this age group when seeking housing options. There appears to be a relationship between the limited amount of this kind of housing in the county and the cities and the proportional representation in the community, especially among the age group just entering the work force. As opportunities for lower- and moderate-income higher-density housing products increase, including both rentals and ownership choices, the proportion of younger, workforce age population may begin to shift.

Larger, “family households” usually prefer single-family detached products, when within financial attainment, relative to one- and two-person households, and are assumed to be the future market audience to the majority of new residential development, which for the past five years have been predominantly single-family detached units.

As greater numbers of persons in the over-65 age group enter the population, a larger portion of the County’s services and financial budget will be consumed to meet this age cohort’s special needs. The county will need a high quality service and infrastructure base to accommodate this numerical increase in population, such as access to quality medical facilities, alternative transportation modes, senior services and housing development now and in the future that will accommodate this segment of the population. In addition, many retired persons living in the county may be living on fixed incomes. There also seems to be, and will continue to be, an influx of higher income seniors and empty nesters seeking a quality retirement setting where they may benefit from a semi-rural character, reasonable real estate prices, community amenities, the recreational features of Lake Allatoona, and reasonable proximity to the metropolitan Atlanta region. The county does offer a range of senior related services through the County’s Cherokee County Senior Center on Univeter Road in

Canton, which implements its Senior Services Department activities and programs offered through the county, as well as the Senior Activity Center in Woodstock.

As households continue to age, they may begin to seek low maintenance housing alternatives and public services that are more specialized. They may also become more alternative transit dependent.

■ Income

In 2000, Cherokee County's median household income was \$62,119, which ranked second among the counties in the northern ARC region, after Forsyth County at \$73,008, and third in the State. Cherokee County's median household income was well above the state's median of \$34,990 and the U.S. median of \$41,944.

Although the median county income is one of the highest in the State, Cherokee County is labeled as middle-income because, in addition to evidence that it is not low-income, there is also evidence that it is not an overwhelmingly wealthy place, at least those working in the county. Cherokee County's real per capita income in 2001 at \$29,150 is less than that of the Atlanta MSA at \$33,769 and the U.S. at \$30,413, and slightly more than the State at \$28,523. (Source: Market Street Services, *Cherokee County Economic and Demographic Profile*). In 2002, per capita income had risen to \$30,450 which was 106.8 percent of the State's and equivalent to that of the U.S. Overall, the county's real per capita income has shown strong growth between 1990 and 2001, where it increased by 25.9 percent as compared to 18.5 percent in the Atlanta MSA, 18.8 percent in the State, and 14.7 percent in the U.S.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis follows trends on three different categories of income: Net Earnings; Dividends, Interest and Rent; and Transfer Payments. The analysis of the distribution of income based on these three categories is an indicator of an area's wealth, primarily due to the Transfer Payments category that is a direct reflection of the number of retired people and other individuals living in poverty. The 2000 census provides data on the sources of income for the county's households. The following Table 13 identifies various sources of incomes for households in the county. Note that in many instances, a household may receive more than one type of income. As of 2000, 90 percent of the households in the county (both in the incorporated and unincorporated areas) had some kind of earnings, with 87 percent earning a wage or salary income. Over 16 percent of households with earnings received self-employment income as a source of income. Proportionately, a greater percentage of households had self-employment income in the unincorporated areas (17.0 percent) than in the incorporated areas (11.9 percent). Social Security income was cited as a resource by 18.6 percent of the households, with a slightly greater percentage in the incorporated areas than in the unincorporated areas, correlating to the somewhat higher representation of older persons in the cities. Only 1.1 percent of the total households in the county reported public assistance income as a source of income, with a greater proportion in the incorporated areas than in the unincorporated areas, again reflecting the slightly higher incidence of lower income households in the cities. This is interesting to note as the 2000 census reports 7,474 persons with incomes below the poverty level, which is 5.3 percent of the total population. However, almost one-half of the persons in poverty earn less than 50 percent of the poverty level. Of the population in poverty, over 88 percent are under the age of 65.

	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Households with earnings	44,660	188	2,252	1,021	74	3,500	7,035	37,625
With wage or salary income	43,101	186	2,191	966	72	3,433	6,848	36,253
With self-employment income	7,236	20	206	201	12	397	836	6,400
With interest, dividends or net rental income	18,576	65	696	291	26	1,122	2,200	16,376
With Social security income	8,291	62	629	133	35	543	1,402	6,889
With Supplemental Security income	1,019	18	144	-	-	101	263	756
With public assistance income	511	7	56	17	3	63	145	366
With retirement income	6,493	26	361	90	19	394	890	5,603
With other types of income	5,215	37	258	128	7	329	759	4,456
Households with no earnings	4,902	53	410	71	20	296	850	4,052
Total Households	49,562	241	2,662	1,092	94	3,796	7,885	4,1677

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.

When compared to the Atlanta MSA, the State and the U.S., Cherokee County reports only 7.3 percent of the income in 2001 based on Transfer Payments, as compared to 7.7 percent for the Atlanta region, 11.6 percent for the State and 13.5 percent for the U.S. The county's percentage of income derived solely from Dividends, Interest and Rent is also lower than comparison jurisdictions, at 13.1 percent as compared to 15.7 for the Atlanta MSA, 16.6 percent for the State and 18.9 percent for the U.S. (Note that the figure for persons entirely dependent on incomes from Dividends, Interest and Rent is much lower than the proportion that receive some portion of their income from these resources, in addition to other types of income as identified in the above table.) The comparatively low percentage is likely due to the lower percentage of retired persons represented in the population than in the State or U.S. as a whole.

During the decade from 1990 to 2000, the number of people who did not receive any earnings dropped by almost 10 percent, suggesting that the percentage of working individuals in the county is increasing at a dramatic rate. It is particularly noteworthy when compared against metro Atlanta, the State and the U.S., as these areas experienced relatively no change in the percentage of persons receiving no earnings during this time. Further evidence of Cherokee County's increasing percentage of working individuals is the fact that Social Security payments and public assistance payments dropped during the period. Not only is the population becoming wealthier, it is also not an aging population, as discussed in the Housing Chapter. However, there is an increase in the percentage of individuals receiving retirement income. The fact that Cherokee County's population has a declining proportion of individuals of retirement age indicates that the elderly are becoming less dependent on Social Security and more so on other income, suggesting a relatively comfortable retirement community in the county.

■ Racial/Ethnic Composition

As the county continues to urbanize along its primary corridors, yet housing prices remain moderate, the racial and ethnic composition of the county has begun to experience a slowly increasing representation, yet the county remains primarily Caucasian as young professionals, young families and established households seeking move-up housing opportunities continue to be attracted to the area.

The Hispanic population, making up the largest segment of minority growth to 2000, had increased twenty-two fold since 1980 (although this group represented a relatively lower proportion of the population, at 5.4 percent, than other areas in the region and the MSA at large, which was 8.1 percent Hispanic/Latino).

	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
White Alone	131,128	725	6,011	3,029	548	8,987	19,300	111,828
Black Alone	3,525	3	429	37	24	508	1,001	2,524
American Indian & Alaska Native	534	0	70	21	2	29	122	412
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,183	2	56	25	9	169	261	922
Other	5,533	0	1,143	83	33	357	1,616	3,917
Total:	141,903	730	7,709	3,195	616	10,050	22,300	119,603
Persons of Hispanic Origin	7,695	4	1,829	154	16	496	2,499	5,196

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated area includes portions of Mountain Park and Nelson

Analysis of populations with housing problems provided by Atlanta Regional Commission indicate that the vast majority of persons reporting one or more housing problems are White, with proportions closely relating to the distribution of ethnic communities in the county.

By 2000, the proportion of persons classified as “white” had dropped to 92.4 percent from 97.2 percent in 1990, and the black population had increased to 2.4 percent from less than 2 percent in 1990. The proportion of persons classified as Asian and Pacific Islander remained under 1 percent, although numerically had slightly increased by about 800 persons. The greatest increase was in persons reported as “other,” which rose to 3.9 percent of the population from less than 1 percent in 1990. The proportion of persons reporting themselves of Hispanic Origin quadrupled during the decade, from just over 1 percent to over 5 percent, yet remains well below most of the communities in the remainder of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
White alone	92.4%	92.0%	91.7%	91.5%	91.3%	91.2%
Black or African American alone	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Other Race	3.9%	4.2%	5.2%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%
Persons of Hispanic Origin	5.4%	5.8%	6.0%	6.3%	6.5%	6.6%

Source: DataViews, Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Projections of future racial and ethnic distributions indicate a stable population in terms of diversity mix. The white population will continue to decline slightly in terms of proportional representation, although the numeric increase will constitute the majority of future population growth. The proportion of persons reported of Hispanic heritage will represent the greatest increase in proportional representation, up to 6.6 percent of the population, continuing the trend over the past two decades. However, the proportion of persons of ethnic ori-

gin is, and is anticipated to remain, low in comparison with other counties in the metro Atlanta region, and special considerations do not appear warranted at this time.

The distribution of ethnic communities is most prevalent in the cities of Canton, Woodstock and Waleska, where 80.0, 89.4 and 89.0 percent of the population is reported as white, respectively. The cities of Holly Springs and Ball Ground are reported as predominantly white, at 94.5 percent and 99.3 percent respectively. The proportion of persons reported as Hispanic appears to be concentrated in Canton, at 23.7 percent. The remainder of the cities report slightly higher, but generally comparable proportions of Hispanic persons to the unincorporated areas at 4.8 percent, although 2.6 percent and less than one percent of the population in the cities of Waleska and Ball Ground are reported as Hispanic.

■ Educational Attainment

Education levels, skills, and the quality of the educational system and availability of workforce programs influence the perception that businesses have of an area’s labor force. Many businesses desire well-educated and experienced workers. To help ensure the economic and social success of a community, it must invest and nurture the quality of the workers it is producing from primary to adult education. There are 16 grades K-6 elementary schools, 5 grades K-4 elementary schools, 1 intermediate school (grades 5-6), 4 middle schools and 4 high schools in the public school system within the county, as well as 5 private facilities, 1 alternative middle/high school, 1 evening school and a special services center. To accommodate growth, five additional public schools were proposed as of 2003 and some are in the construction phase. However, shortfalls in tax proceeds may limit funding resources for new schools. Residents also have access to higher education and training opportunities close to home as discussed in following sections.

Cherokee County’s working age population is more educated than in many of the surrounding counties, the State and the nation. In 2000, the county not only has a higher percentage of individuals over 25 years old with at least a high school diploma, but also has higher percentages of individuals with some college, Associate Degree and Bachelor’s Degree categories than both Georgia and the U.S. While Cherokee County has a lower percentage of individuals in the high school diploma and graduate or professional degree categories, it is still overall a relatively well-educated place. The county has also illustrated improvement since 1990. As a percentage of the population, the county increased in four key areas: some college, Associate Degree, Bachelor’s Degree and graduate or professional degree.

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Less than 9th Grade	7,891	6,853	5,815	5,491	5,167	4,486	3,805	3,124	2,443	1,762
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	6,089	7,145	8,201	8,497	8,793	9,469	10,145	10,821	11,497	12,173
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	8,768	13,038	17,308	20,992	24,675	28,652	32,629	36,605	40,582	44,559
Some College (No Degree)	3,602	7,462	11,321	16,317	21,312	25,740	30,167	34,595	39,022	43,450
Associate Degree	NA	NA	3,454	4,630	5,805	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bachelor's Degree	1,901	4,824	7,747	12,762	17,777	21,746	25,715	29,684	33,653	37,622
Graduate or Professional Degree	927	1,785	2,643	4,643	6,643	8,072	9,501	10,930	12,359	13,788

Source: DataViews, Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

In 1990, 44.5 percent of the adult population had some college education and above and 19.8 percent of the population were college graduates with either a Bachelor’s or Associate’s Degree. By 2000, 57 percent of the population had completed some college and above, and 26 percent had a college degree. There was a significant decline—from 24.8 percent to 15.6 percent—in the percent of the population with no high school di-

ploma. The growth and relatively strong levels for Bachelor's, graduate, and professional degrees clearly indicate that the individuals moving to Cherokee County are a relatively well-educated group. However, it is likely that many of these individuals continue to work outside the county.

Table 17: Educational Completion and Dropout Rates		
	Cherokee County	State of Georgia
Completion Rate	85.6%	72.7%
Dropout Rate, 6-12	2.1%	3.4%
Dropout Rate, 9-12	3.9%	5.8%
Source: Georgia Department of Education		

High school dropout and completion rates provide additional insight into the success of a region's education system. Cherokee County is experiencing more success than the state as a whole with a completion rate 18 percent higher than Georgia's is. It also has lower dropout rates for students in grades 6-12 and 9-12, according to the Georgia Public Education Report Card published by the State's Department of Education.

A balanced inventory of housing in terms of unit type, cost, tenure and style promotes a range of housing options that are necessary to support an economically and socially diverse community. While the current Comprehensive Plan promotes managed growth within the county and its participating cities, it is not to occur at the expense of the unique quality of life and community character that Cherokee County embodies. It is not the intent to promote exclusivity in housing character, but to support a growing cultural, point in life, and economic diversity, as well as to maintain existing affordable housing stock and foster new lower and moderately priced housing opportunities in selected growth areas.

Goals and policies contained in the previously adopted 2017 Township Plan reference the need for alternative types of housing for the elderly, the need for expanded workforce housing opportunities, and the use of creative site plan development to target conservation of natural resources and maximize the potential for clustering certain higher density residential development in the vicinity of activity centers. These objectives are still applicable. The future mix of residential product types does appear to support these goals in a limited context. The county retains a great deal of vacant land for housing development and infill, and the County has begun to adopt planning practices that are designed to reduce sprawl and retain natural resources. The majority of residential development in the past 5 years, as well as proposed projects, are single-family detached units as either part of a planned community or a residential subdivision. A number of these developments, approximately 55, are Conservation Subdivisions, which retain a portion of the site for open space by clustering the units. Some are also incorporating elements of “new urban” design such as walkable streets, interspersed community parks, and offering retail and/or office within walking distance of residential.

However, the issue of providing workforce housing and other affordable housing options will require significant attention, perhaps with the added application of density bonus and incentives in exchange for inclusion of residential units within the cost limitations of the workforce community. The County’s PUD designation provided potential for multi-family products, primarily townhomes or condominiums, to be integrated into the planned unit developments to offer a wider selection of housing opportunities for a range of incomes. The PUD designation, however, is no longer used by the County, and the Traditional Neighborhood Development was designed to replace the PUD designation. It is to be noted, however, that the majority of workforce housing and higher density products are generally found in or near the incorporated areas, particularly Woodstock and Canton, and this trend is anticipated to continue.

Over 85 percent of all housing units countywide were single-family detached in 2000, almost 8 percent were manufactured homes, and almost 8 percent of all units within the county were single-family attached or multi-family units. In past years, the lack of sewer availability over many portions of the county has resulted in a low proportion of multi-family products and a preponderance of single-family units on large lots that are reliant on septic systems. As the county becomes more urbanized, and the infrastructure systems are extended along major transportation routes and capacity expanded, a more varied inventory of dwelling unit types is resulting.

The housing market continues to be strong in Cherokee County. A residential niche that is beginning to take hold in Cherokee County is the development of upscale master-planned communities. These are residential communities that are large in scale and feature a major amenity such as parks, the river, open space, and in some cases, golf. As north Fulton County, Cobb County and portions of Forsyth County become more developed, developers and builders are looking to Cherokee County for a more “pristine” setting and simply for land availability.

While there is a substantial amount of land available for a range of housing types in the county and its cities, focused attention on creative forms of residential development should be considered. These include, in addition to mixed-use and traditional townhome and multi-family projects, various types of small-lot single-family subdivisions, manufactured home parks that allow owner-occupied spaces, manufactured home park rehabilitation and conversion to manufactured or site built housing for rent, senior citizen housing developments offering varying degrees of care and assistance, detached and attached developments geared towards seniors, and live/work hous-

ing where appropriate. The segment of the market called “move up” or “executive” housing will show an increase through newly proposed developments. The inclusion of this housing type and price point will complete the availability of housing “lifestyle” choices within the county.

Market trends that are driving higher density development include:

- The cost of homebuilding is increasing significantly (land and construction costs) which is forcing higher density in order to deliver homes in line with market affordability.
- The market is demanding lower maintenance, higher density product. The rapid growth in one- and two-person households of all ages and the aging of the population is changing the types of homes the market demands.

The County and its cities share economic development goals of attracting more jobs and nonresidential tax base within the county. In order to accomplish these goals, the housing mix will have to be supportive of the job market. Simply put, this means a wider variety of housing products. Currently, most of the new product is mid-market. A focus on job expansion will require more executive housing as well as more workforce housing, both owner and renter-occupied.

In order to accommodate the expected growth, maintain affordability, accommodate jobs, respond to aging of the population and accommodate the growth in one- and two-person households, we also expect a shift to more attached product (townhomes and condominiums) and small-lot single-family. However, slightly more than half of all new growth will still be accommodated through single-family home construction. Analysis and projection of current market trends, and accounting for a larger employment base, suggest that the new growth may have higher densities and a higher concentration of rental apartments than the current make-up of the county. To accommodate jobs, a gradual shift to slightly higher percent rental is anticipated—from 17 percent of all households in 2005 to an estimated 23 percent of all households in 2030. This is still well below metro and national averages of 31 percent.

■ The Residential Market

Cherokee County is one of the fastest growing areas in the metropolitan Atlanta area. The housing market in the county is strong and exhibits a low vacancy rate. In 2000, the vacancy rate was only 4.7 percent as compared to 8.9 percent for the State and 8.3 percent in the region, with just two percent of the ownership units vacant. Preliminary analysis shows a good distribution of housing by price point to accommodate various income, lifestyle and age related housing choices. Housing prices in Cherokee County and its cities are considered affordable in the context of the Metro Atlanta Area region in which the county is located. The median sales price for new and existing homes sold in Cherokee County rose 7 percent from 2003, to \$188,900 in 2004. Sales volume was up 15 percent, with 5,933 homes sold. The county’s average median priced home is considered affordable when compared to the median priced for homes in adjacent Forsyth County in 2004 at \$235,700, Fulton County at \$206,850, Cobb County at \$190,000, and the metro Atlanta region as a whole at \$189,900.

New development permits issued for each city and the unincorporated county between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2004 indicate that overall, almost 19,000 new housing units have been permitted and presumably built. The amount of development within both the incorporated and unincorporated areas is comparable, at 46.7 and 53.3 percent respectively, although proportionately the incorporated areas constitute only a small percentage of the total county housing stock. Building permit data for the years 2000 through 2004 indicate that 1,351 permits were issued for multi-family housing units in structures of five units or more in the City of Canton, and 936 multi-family permits were issued the City of Woodstock, whereas only 544 such permits were issued during that same period within the unincorporated county.

	Cities						All Cities Total	Unincorporated
	Cherokee County	Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Single-family	15,787	18	2,465	810	0	2,891	6,184	9,603
Total Multi-Family	2,966	0	1,428	51	0	936	2,415	548
2 Unit Structures	32	0	30	2	0	0	32	0
3 & 4 Unit Structures	80	0	47	26	0	0	73	4
5+ Unit Structures	2,854	0	1,351	23	0	936	2,310	544
Total:	18,753	18	3,893	864	0	3,827	8,602	10,151

Source: Cherokee County Planning Department.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park

The majority of new multi-family housing in the incorporated areas has been occurring within the cities of Woodstock and Canton. Within Woodstock and its immediate surrounding areas, new multi-family is occurring primarily: off of Highway 92; Highway 5/Main Street; Trickum Road; Towne Lake Parkway; and Arnold Mill Road. The newest complex is the Alta Woods apartments on Highway 92, which provides 498 market rate units. The Ridgewalk mixed-use development located off Woodstock Parkway will ultimately include the 340-unit Alta Ridge Apartments; the Magnolias, a 252-unit upscale townhome complex; and Whitfield at Ridgewalk, a 220-unit single-family enclave. A mixed commercial project with townhomes at the rear is proposed for annexation into the city along Highway 92, with an average density of 6 to 7 du/ac. This surge of higher-density and creative product type development provides a much greater density and variety of housing types for the county as a whole. The City of Woodstock has adopted Downtown District planning guidelines following its LCI Downtown Study, which promotes future concentration of multi-family and higher-density development types in the downtown core area, fostering mixed-use development at up to 16 du/ac. A new mixed-use development is proposed along Main Street by Hedgewood Developers that will combine commercial/retail, lofts above ground floor commercial, a separate single-family unit enclave and townhomes. As well, a proposed mixed-use project, Madison Retail, will have a yet to be determined number of townhomes in the back of the commercial portion. This parcel, located on Highway 92, is proposed for annexation with a density of 6-7 housing units per acre.

Although the City of Ball Ground does not have any multi-family housing within its stock, it recently annexed 165 acres for a mixed-use development under its Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zoning. The project will incorporate over 400 residential units into the mix, with approximately 100 townhomes and the potential for residential units above commercial.

Areas within the unincorporated county where multi-family development is occurring include: the Towne Lake planned community outside of Woodstock city limits, consisting of single-family homes, townhomes, apartments and condominiums to potentially serve up to 7,500 households; the Bridge Mill planned community including the Preston Glen apartments and a proposed 150 attached unit senior living complex; generally the southwest portion of the county to the south and east of Bell's Ferry Rd. and Highway 92; and in the far southwest corner of the county where 141 attached units are proposed in conjunction with 527 single-family detached units in the Centennial Lakes community. Three zero lot line subdivisions accommodate up to 531 housing units and a senior apartment with over 100 units located northeast of Canton near I-575. As well, there are small concentrations of higher-density products near Lake Allatoona including two proposed townhome complexes that total 188 units, and Countryside Cottages, a 44-unit attached enclave. As part of the Bells Ferry Corridor study and supporting planned implementation plan, the County intends to focus development of higher-density products within the Bells Ferry Corridor, and near Highway 92.

The proportional mix of housing units by 2030 is expected to remain nearly constant with the distribution reported in 2000, with a slight increase in the proportion of single-family detached and multi-family units as the proportion of manufactured homes decreases.

	2000	2005	2015	2025
Single-Family Detached	85.4%	85.7%	86.0%	86.2%
Single-Family Attached	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%
Multi-family	5.3%	5.5%	5.8%	5.9%
Mobile Home or Trailer	7.8%	7.4%	6.8%	6.6%
All Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Source: DataViews, Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Note: Single attached units includes townhomes and duplex units.				

Data indicates that the market is changing in the Cherokee County area to include multiple selections of move-up and executive housing subdivisions, many with golf course amenities. However, it remains comprised (over 60 percent) of predominantly moderately priced single-family subdivisions and opportunities for entry-level housing. There is also a greater range of housing opportunities at the lower end of the price spectrum when compared to other metro Atlanta communities, particularly comprised of the older housing stock located near and in the incorporated areas.

There appears to be a limited supply of new medium-density for-sale projects, such as townhomes and patio/zero lot line homes. The majority of new townhome and patio home/zero lot line projects that provide housing between about \$100,000 and \$250,000 have been built since 2000, and hence are not reflected in the Census data, nor in the future housing type distribution. Projects either in the preliminary construction phases or the planning phases and recent pre-zones to Medium Density residential which can accommodate RTH or other attached products include: 141 attached units in Centennial Lakes; 53 attached units adjacent to the Peaks of Bells Ferry apartments; 186 units in the northwest quadrant of the Towne Lake planned community; 60 townhomes in the Laurel Canyon planned community in Canton; 150 senior living units on Bells Ferry Road to the southeast of the Bridge Mill planned community; a yet to be determined number of townhomes in the proposed Hedgewood mixed-use project in downtown Woodstock; an undetermined number of townhomes to the rear of the Madison Retail mixed-use project in downtown Woodstock; approximately 100 townhomes in the proposed TND in Ball Ground; and a 162 unit potential remaining in the Fox Creek Townhomes complex in Holly Springs). Based on these current projects, it is estimated that there is current development potential within the county as a whole, inclusive of cities, of between 700 and 800 attached units within the next five years, thereby exceeding the projections.

Further, the adoption of policies and establishment of future land use categories which support and promote mixed-use and attached products, particularly along the Bells Ferry and Highway 92 mixed-use corridors, at activity nodes along other thoroughfares, within Traditional Neighborhood Developments and within the downtown areas embodied by the LCI studies in Canton, Woodstock and Holly Springs may yield a larger number of attached products than forecast based on past trends to 2000.

As well, a large proportion of the higher priced move-up and executive housing has been built since 2000, and is not reflected in the statistics as reported by the Census. A residential niche that is beginning to take hold in Cherokee County is the development of upscale golf communities. As north Fulton County becomes more developed, builders are looking to Cherokee County for a more “pristine” setting. The newer products greatly expand the housing opportunities available in the county.

Within the Cities of Woodstock and Ball Ground, new approaches towards new development, redevelopment and infill are being implemented. For example, the City of Woodstock Downtown District Ordinance breaks

the downtown area, which follows the major corridors of Main Street (State Route 5), Arnold Mill Road, and Town Lake Parkway, into districts, each with a distinct character and use focus. Within all of the commercially based subareas, multi-family residential, including condominiums and lofts, as well as townhomes and residential above commercial in a mixed-use context is permitted. Only historic single-family homes are permitted in these districts. Ball Ground is processing a 165-acre Traditional Neighborhood Development, of which 130 acres are planned for 466 residential units, of which 100 are potentially townhomes. The County recently completed the Bells Ferry Corridor LCI study, which focuses on residential opportunities, appropriate densities and mixes as one of the major components. It is also recommended that the County review the TND regulations and standards and either modify them, or compose a new zone or overlay that can accommodate mixed-use communities.

The stock of manufactured homes is projected to continue its decline from 7.8 percent of the total stock to 6.6 percent of the stock by 2025, although numerically approximately 5,000 manufactured homes will be added to the stock. Although this seems like a large increase in the stock of manufactured homes, this projected increase in stock may actually be predicated on the use of site built pre-fabricated units on permanent foundations, which are a price effective alternative to attached or multi-family products towards the provision of workforce housing with ownership potential. The County should investigate the potential for such workforce accommodating housing product types where higher density attached or multi-family products may not be feasible or acceptable from an infrastructure or community character standpoint. Multi-family housing, inclusive of projects from 3 to over 50 units, is forecast to increase proportionately from 5.3 percent to almost 6 percent of the housing stock. It is anticipated that the majority of these units will be targeted for location near major transportation corridors and at high activity nodes within the county, such as the Bells Ferry Corridor, Highway 92, Highway 5, and the I-575; within the downtown redevelopment areas of cities; and within mixed-use planned communities.

In addition to younger, childless professionals (either single or couples), the “over 55” market also is a growing market of homeowners, many of whom prefer the ease of an attached unit and the lesser demands for yard work and maintenance associated with a townhome or condo, but are not yet ready for a retirement community. Projects such as The Courtyards at Towne Lake and Countryside Villas, as well as The Magnolias at Ridgewalk in the City of Woodstock, are targeting this market segment, as well as younger, childless professionals. In addition, a number of ownership “active adult” communities, where the basic home and landscape maintenance is handled by an association, are appearing throughout the county.

■ Housing Type

Single-Family Housing

The predominant housing type within Cherokee County, both in the 1990 census and the 2000 census was overwhelmingly single-family houses. The single-family house category includes stick built attached and detached single-family units in addition to manufactured housing. Stick built single-family housing predominated the housing market in both 1990 and 2000, capturing 82.6 percent of the market in 1990 and 86.0 percent in the 2000 census. In the year 2000, single-family housing comprised 93.8 percent of the total housing market, inclusive of manufactured homes, detached and attached single-family units. This is a slight decrease from 1980, where single-family units, inclusive of manufactured housings, constituted almost 96 percent of the housing stock. Numerically, there are 44,679 single-family detached and attached units as of the 2000 Census versus 27,959 in the 1990 Census, an increase of 16,720 units or 60 percent. Proportionally, the representation of stick built single-family attached and detached units within the total housing stock remained fairly constant between 1980 and 1990, but increased significantly between 1990 and 2000. Notable differences occur in the proportion of manufactured homes and an increase in multi-family units.

Table 20: Percent of Housing Units by Type—1990 & 2000

	Incorporated		Unincorporated		Total County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	5,045	8,236	28,795	43,701	33,840	51,937
Single-Family Detached	73.8%	75.0%	83.3%	87.5%	81.9%	85.4%
Single-Family Attached	1.7%	6.2%	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%	1.5%
Multi-family	20.4%	16.4%	1.4%	3.1%	4.2%	5.3%
Mobile Home or Trailer	3.4%	2.4%	14.3%	8.8%	12.7%	7.8%
All Other	0.7%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park
 Note: Single-Family Attached includes duplexes.

Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing, both in actual number and percentage, in Cherokee County is decreasing. Manufactured homes constituted a much greater proportion of the housing stock in the 1980's (13.3 percent) as compared to 2000 (7.8 percent). As the older manufactured housing stock is replaced or removed, stick built structures are proportionally increasing. Although the number of manufactured homes increased numerically between 1980 and 1990, the number of manufactured homes actually decreased between 1990 and 2000, from 4,284 to 4,165 units.

The most noticeable change occurred in the distribution of manufactured housing units within the incorporated and unincorporated areas. In 1990, manufactured homes constituted 3.4 percent of the housing stock within incorporated and 14.3 percent of the housing stock within unincorporated areas respectively. By 2000, these proportions had decreased to 2.4 percent of the housing stock within incorporated and 8.8 percent of the housing stock within unincorporated areas respectively. Statistics indicate that the majority of manufactured housing units are located within the unincorporated county, primarily in the southwestern portion of the county and outside of the city limits of Woodstock, where approximately 15 mobile home parks are located. Two additional mobile home parks are located north of Holly Springs. In the Bells Ferry corridor, two mobile home parks have recently been rezoned to accommodate the new 248 unit Peaks of Bells Ferry apartments, completed in 2004, and 53 townhomes in the future. It is anticipated that this trend will continue in the future, as indicated by the projections for type of unit mix, as older manufactured housing parks begin to show signs of disrepair and the land is recycled to other residential (typically) uses, or simply as a result of the increase in other types of residential units while the number of mobile home parks remains fairly static.

Multi-family Housing

Multi-family housing in 1990 accounted for 4.2 percent of the market and 6.2 percent of the market in 2000. Although the percentage remains small in the overall housing market context, this has been one of the fastest growing housing sectors in Cherokee County during the 1990's in numerical terms, reflecting a 90.7 percent increase in total number of multi-family units over the decade. In 2000, 19.3 percent of the housing stock in the incorporated area was multi-family, increasing slightly from 18.7 percent in 1990. Comparatively, the proportion of multi-family units in the two larger cities is greater than in the unincorporated portion of the county, at 28.2 percent of the housing stock in Canton and 21 percent in Woodstock. Within the unincorporated county, 1.4 percent of the housing stock was comprised of multi-family units in 1990, increasing to 3.1 percent by 2000.

Numerically a significant change has occurred between the incorporated and unincorporated areas in terms of multi-family units. In 1990, there were 1,029 multi-family units in the incorporated areas and only 403 in the unincorporated area. By 2000, there were still more multi-family units in the incorporated area than the unincorporated (at 1,738 and 1,442 respectively), yet numerically the multi-family units in the unincorporated areas increased much more significantly, with 1,039 new units as compared to 709 in the incorporated areas. This represents almost a three-fold numerical increase in the unincorporated area, as compared to a 68.9 percent increase in the incorporated area. By 2000, multifamily units in the incorporated area comprised 3.4 percent of the total county stock as compared to 2.8 percent in the unincorporated area, although almost 84 percent of all housing units in the county were located in the unincorporated area.

Housing by Jurisdiction

Data pertaining to type of unit can be tracked for both incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county, although slight discrepancies in the numerical counts for 1990 from STF 1 and STF 3 are noted. In 1990, there were 5,045 total units in the incorporated areas of the county, inclusive of Canton, Woodstock, Ball Ground, Holly Springs and Waleska, constituting 14.9 percent of the total county housing stock. Of this, almost 40.2 percent of the units were located in Canton and 32.7 percent of the units were located within Woodstock. In 2000, the number of housing units within the incorporated areas totaled 8,236, comprising 15.9 percent of the total housing stock in the county.

Table 21: Percent of Housing Units by Number of Units in Building

	Cities							All Cities Total	Unincorporated
	Cherokee County	Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock			
Total Housing Units	51,937	284	2,885	1,161	112	4,078	8,520	43,417	
1, Single-Family Detached	85.4%	93.3%	68.6%	85.2%	97.3%	74.8%	75.0%	87.5%	
1, Attached (townhome)	0.6%	0.0%	1.9%	2.2%	0.0%	2.2%	2.0%	0.3%	
2	0.9%	2.5%	7.1%	3.1%	1.8%	2.6%	4.2%	0.2%	
3 to 9	2.2%	0.0%	15.1%	0.9%	0.9%	10.2%	10.1%	0.7%	
10 to 19	1.40%	0.0%	1.9%	0.7%	0.0%	3.2%	2.3%	1.2%	
20 to 49	1.10%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	1.5%	1.0%	
50 or more	0.60%	0.0%	2.9%	0.9%	0.0%	2.8%	2.5%	0.2%	
Mobile Home	7.80%	4.2%	1.2%	6.9%	0.0%	2.0%	2.5%	8.8%	
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.

Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park

The proportion of single-family units (inclusive of single-family detached, single-family attached, and manufactured homes) to total units in the unincorporated county, inclusive of small portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park, in 1990 was 98.1 percent, decreasing to 96.6 percent in 2000. However, the decrease in single-family units is primarily attributed to the decrease in the number and proportion of manufactured homes over the decade, from 14.3 percent in 1990 to 8.8 percent in 2000. The number and proportion of single-family detached units actually increased by 16,641 units, or 60.0 percent over the decade, from 83.3 percent in 1990 to 87.5 percent in 2000. By 2000, the percentage of single-family units to the total units in the incorporated area was lower than in the remaining unincorporated county, at 77.0 percent (6,342 units) of the total (inclusive of single-family detached and attached units, and manufactured homes) in comparison to 93.8 percent of the total units for the unincorporated county. However, in the cities of Woodstock and Canton these proportions are much lower than in the unincorporated portion of the county, at 71.7 percent in Canton and 79.0 percent in Woodstock. This is partly due to the low numbers of manufactured housing units and a proportionally large increase in the number of multi-family units. In 2000, the unincorporated portions of the county retained 45.6 percent of the total multi-family housing stock in the county, with just over 54.4 percent in the incorporated areas, primarily located in Woodstock and Canton.

It should be noted that the 2000 Census figures do not adequately reflect the amount of growth that has been occurring in the county, both in the cities and unincorporated areas, which includes a number of significant multi-family and mixed-use housing developments. The following table reports new development permits issued for each city and the unincorporated county between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2004. Overall, almost 19,000 new units have been permitted and will be presumably built within the next few years. The amount of development within both the incorporated and unincorporated areas is comparable, at 46.7 and 53.3 percent respectively, although proportionately the incorporated areas constitute only a small percentage of the total county housing stock.

■ Housing Quality

Age and Condition of Housing

While the county's housing stock is relatively new and contains most modern conveniences, some older subdivisions exhibit early signs of deterioration and lack of maintenance. Age and condition of housing are primary indicators of neighborhood decline and potential housing intervention programs. It would be to the County's advantage to implement a proactive inspection program coupled with some form of maintenance incentives and perhaps targeted financial assistance. A number of housing programs at the State and Federal level could be utilized to assist in funding. The elderly would be a positive target group to begin with and programs could be later expanded to include low and moderate-income households.

Age of Housing

Housing age is a potential factor for determining the need for rehabilitation. Without proper maintenance, housing units deteriorate over time. In construction terms, 30 years generally serves as a standard for the initial life of a house. After 30 years, most housing units require some form of rehabilitation, such as roof repair or replacement, new plumbing, heating and cooling system upgrades and in some cases interior renovation (appliances primarily in kitchen and bath). In addition, older housing units may not be built to current housing standards for fire or other safety factors. Manufactured homes may require retrofit and rehabilitation at an earlier age than stick built units, particularly older units that may not have the fire and wind resistance factors that newer units possess.

	1990	2000
Built 1970 - 1979	8,597	7,617
Built 1960 - 1969	2,744	2,588
Built 1950 - 1959	1,800	1,707
Built 1940 - 1949	1,254	867
Built 1939 or earlier	1,462	1,195
Total	15,857	13,974
Source: 2000 Census STF-3.		

Cherokee County's residential growth has been relatively recent in nature, which is reflected in the age of its housing stock. A total of 37,963 housing units, or 73.1 percent of the total stock, were built in Cherokee County between 1980 and March 2000. Within the City of Woodstock, 77.4 percent of the units were constructed between 1980 and March 2000. This compares to only 50 percent for the State of Georgia. In comparison, only 46.9 percent of the housing stock in Canton has been constructed between 1980 and 2000. Although numerically the amount of growth experienced in the unincorporated county was greater than in Woodstock, the statistics reflect a higher rate of growth near Woodstock over the past two decades.

Table 23: Number of Housing Units in 2000 by Year Structure Built

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Housing Units	51,937	284	2,885	1,161	112	4,078	8,520	43,417
Built 1999 to March 2000	4,201	13	165	147	2	519	846	3,355
Built 1995 to 1998	10,276	16	581	104	8	1,099	1,808	8,468
Built 1990 to 1994	8,296	28	189	257	5	722	1,201	7,095
Built 1980 to 1989	15,190	54	418	373	9	818	1,672	13,518
Built 1970 to 1979	7,617	28	369	142	21	691	1,251	6,366
Built 1960 to 1969	2,588	29	245	47	11	96	428	2,160
Built 1950 to 1959	1,707	25	385	31	9	50	500	1,207
Built 1940 to 1949	867	17	236	18	9	41	321	546
Built 1939 or earlier	1,195	74	297	42	38	42	493	702

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park

Only 1,195 housing units currently exist in Cherokee County (or 2.3 percent) which were built before 1939, and 867 (1.7 percent) built between 1940 and 1949, bringing the total for homes over 50 years of age to 4.0 percent of the housing stock. However, homes over 30 years of age appear to be representative of the more affordable properties, constituting 12.2 percent of the total county stock. Proportionately, a greater number of older homes (pre-1950) are found within the incorporated area of Ball Ground, with 32 percent of the homes built before 1950, and over 51 percent of the units over 30 years of age. Numerically however, this constitutes only about 145 homes. In Waleska, almost 42 percent of the stock (47 homes) was built pre-1950, with 60 percent over 30 years in age. As well, a large concentration of older homes are found in Canton, with 18.5 percent of the units over 50 years in age as compared to 3.9 percent for the unincorporated county area, and 40.3 percent of the units 30 years and above. In contrast, Woodstock has a much younger housing stock, with only 5.6 percent of the stock over 30 years. As well, Woodstock lost a large proportion of their older homes over the past decade, most likely manufactured housing units or units located along the major thoroughfares that have been zoned commercial. In 1990, over 41 percent (151 units) of the total units were built prior to 1950. By 2000, the number had reduced to 83 units, or 2.0 percent of the total. The loss of those 60 units constituted almost the majority of the 78 total units lost over the decade. In Holly Springs, 11.9 percent of the stock is over 30 years of age. As of 2000, the State of Georgia had 192,972 housing units, or 5.9 percent, which were built before 1939, a reduction from 213,712 units reported in 1990. Even considering the demolition of units between 1950 and today, it is apparent that the bulk of residential development in all areas of the county has occurred only recently.

Condition

Housing is considered substandard when conditions are found to be below the minimum standards defined by Section 1001 of the Uniform Housing Code. Households living in substandard conditions are considered being in need of housing assistance even if they are not seeking alternative housing arrangements.

In addition to visible structural deficiency, the lack of certain infrastructure and utilities often serves as an indicator of substandard conditions. The lack of plumbing, the type of heat source used, and the presence (or

	1990	2000
Total housing units	33,840	51,937
Complete Plumbing Facilities	33,529	51,729
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	311	208
Complete kitchen facilities	33,602	51,780
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	238	157

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.

absence) of complete kitchen facilities are often used as indicators of housing condition. As of 2000, less than one-half of one percent (0.4 percent) of housing units in Cherokee County lack complete plumbing and less than one-half of one percent (0.3 percent) of housing units lack complete kitchen facilities. Within the incorporated cities, statistics vary. For example, the cities of Ball Ground, Canton and Woodstock reported lower than or equivalent proportions of units without plumbing. The cities of Waleska (2.7 percent) and Holly Springs (1.1

percent) reported higher percentages of units without plumbing. However, the total number of units without adequate plumbing in these two cities totaled only 21 units. All of the incorporated cities, with the exception of Woodstock at 0.7 percent of units, had no units without complete kitchen facilities. The State of Georgia had 0.9 percent of units lacking complete plumbing facilities and 1.0 percent of units lacking complete kitchen facilities as of 2000. Overall, the condition of units in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas is excellent.

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total housing units	51,937	284	2,885	1,161	112	4,078	8,520	43,417
Complete Plumbing Facilities	51,729	284	2,874	1,143	109	4,070	8,480	43,249
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	208	0	11	18	3	8	40	168
Complete kitchen facilities	51,780	284	2,885	1,161	112	4,047	8,489	43,291
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	157	0	0	0	0	31	31	126

Source: 2000 Census STF-3

The incidence of persons living in structures with no plumbing facilities may be partially attributed to the fact that persons are residing in structures that are not intended as housing units (for example the conversion of garages, basements or sheds to a residence). As well, such units may not incorporate heating mechanisms and may depend on space heaters, or have no source of heating. There appears to be a correlation between the number of units with no plumbing facilities and the number that do not utilize fuel. It is interesting to note that 14 percent of those units lacking complete plumbing facilities were built prior to 1960. The majority of units lacking plumbing facilities appear to have been built in the periods between 1995 and 1998, and 1970 to 1979, perhaps reflecting the conversion of garages or basements to apartments with no plumbing or cooking facilities.

Cherokee County's housing stock is relatively well maintained, yet there is a scattering of older, lower-cost houses and manufactured homes that exhibit signs of moderate to significant deterioration. There are a few

areas of concentration in the unincorporated county and its cities, the remainder are scattered individual units. One area is located in the northern region of the county near Ball Ground, in the area located on Old Canton Road, west side, between Strippling Street and Terrell Street, where land is slowly being acquired by the private sector for redevelopment. Three structures in the area have already been removed, and three critical properties remain. There are no concentrated areas in Waleska, only scattered units, although a number of units in disrepair are noted along State Route 140 north of the City of Canton.

■ Tenure and Vacancy

Overall, the attractive pricing of ownership homes is keeping the vacancy rate down among the units for sale. As well, the relatively affordable rental prices, combined with a limited amount of rental properties in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas as compared to other communities in the Atlanta metro region, appears to be maintaining a low vacancy rate among the rental properties in the county. The units held for seasonal use or not on the market tend to raise the overall vacancy rate, which otherwise is low and not considered an issue in the county.

Tenure by Occupancy

Within the county, 95.3 percent of the housing units were occupied in 2000. Owner-occupied units made up 83.9 percent of all occupied housing units in the county in 2000, which is 80 percent of total units, whereas renter-occupied units made up 16.1 percent of occupied units, which is 15.4 percent of total units county-wide. Owner-occupancy has slightly increased since 1990 when figures were 82.5 percent owner-occupied, and renter-occupied has decreased slightly from 17.5 percent. Following the above trend, the owner to renter ratio in the county in 2000 is 4.0, up from 3.2 in 1990. The owner to renter ratio in the State has been steadily increasing over the past two decades, yet still is well below the ratio in the county at 2.08.

In the incorporated county area in 2000, 93.9 percent of the total stock was occupied, as compared to 95.6 percent of the stock occupied in the unincorporated county. In the unincorporated areas, owner-occupied units constituted 83.4 percent of the total housing stock (87.3 percent of occupied units), and 12.1 percent of the total units were renter-occupied (16.6 percent of occupied units). In comparison, only 63.2 percent of the total units in the incorporated areas were owner-occupied (67.2 percent of occupied units), and 30.7 percent of the total units were renter occupied (32.8 percent of occupied units).

	Cherokee County		Incorporated Area		Unincorporated Area	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
TOTAL Housing Units Built	33,840	51,937	5,498	9,045	28,342	42,892
Housing Units Vacant	2,531	2,442	438	548	2,093	1,894
Total Occupied Housing Units	31,309	49,495	5,060	8,497	26,249	40,998
Housing Units Owner Occupied	25,828	41,503	3,305	5,714	22,523	35,789
Housing Units Renter Occupied	5,481	7,992	1,765	2,783	3,716	5,209
Percent of Total Units Built	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Housing Units Vacant	7.5%	4.7%	8.0%	6.1%	7.1%	4.4%
Total Occupied Housing Units	92.5%	95.3%	92.0%	93.9%	92.9%	95.6%
Housing Units Owner Occupied	76.3%	79.9%	60.1%	63.2%	79.5%	83.4%
Housing Units Renter Occupied	16.2%	15.4%	31.9%	30.7%	13.4%	12.1%

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of Nelson and Mountain Park

Cherokee County has developed primarily as an attractive place for people to live and in many cases, realize the benefits of home ownership, although over two-thirds of the working population commutes elsewhere for employment. The population mix is slowly changing and with it the tenure mix. However, the percentage of rental units to owner occupied units is generally lower than the State and the surrounding region. The majority of residents own their units, at 84 percent, with 16 percent renter occupied, as compared to a statewide distribution of 67.5 percent owner and 32.5 percent renter. The distribution of owner to renter is slightly higher in the unincorporated areas, where 87.3 percent of the households are owners as compared to 67.2 percent in the incorporated areas. The current mix of units in the unincorporated area for detached and attached single-family housing is 86 percent owner-occupied, as compared to 5.2 percent of the units considered multi-family and 7.8 percent of the manufactured homes. The housing unit mix tells us that a significant portion of the rental units is single-family housing, at 47 percent countywide. Within the unincorporated areas, this proportion is slightly higher at almost 52 percent of the rental properties being single-family units. However, some of the newer products constructed during the past 5 years, as well as those proposed, are attached ownership patio homes, zero lot line products and townhomes, as well as a number of apartment complexes offering a range of amenities and price points, which will help diversify the tenure mix.

Table 27: Tenure by Occupancy Status								
	Cities							
	Cherokee County	Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock	All Cities Total	Unincorporated
Owner occupied	41,503	188	1,390	877	72	2,789	5,316	35,789
Renter occupied	7,992	59	1,323	232	40	1,056	2,710	5,209
Total Occupied Units	49,495	247	2,713	1,109	112	3,845	8,026	40,998

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of Nelson and Mountain Park

This ownership/rental mix is potentially both an opportunity and an issue. First, it may be perceived that rental units do not offer the same stability and community investment that home ownership does. Rental units, especially single-family homes, may potentially not be maintained as well as owner occupied units. This does not appear to be a widespread issue in the county, with the highest incidences of condition problems occurring in the older mill housing in Canton and Ball Ground, where redevelopment and/or rehabilitation efforts are being addressed through the LCI study in the case of Canton and governmental participation in the case of Ball Ground. In addition, a few units have been noted along Highway 20 and SR 372 outside of Canton that exhibit signs of disrepair; however, whether they are rental units is unknown. However, the availability of single-family rental housing, as well as home ownership opportunities for lower income households within the existing housing stock, appears to have led to a stable community of strong family values countywide, and has contributed to the low incidence of overcrowding in the county, corresponding to a decreasing household size over the past decade which is anticipated to continue. In addition, available affordable rental and ownership housing (generally older single-family units) contributes to a favorable workforce housing mix and a slowly growing cultural and economic diversity within the community. Rental opportunities also provide housing opportunities for young, single persons and young couples, which is crucial if one of this Plan's objectives is to expand and diversify its commercial and business base.

In keeping with the lower proportion of owner-occupied units in the incorporated area, within the individual cities the following occupancy status is found, 76.1 percent of the occupied units in Ball Ground are owner-occupied; 79.1 percent of the occupied units in Holly Springs are owner-occupied; 64.3 percent of the occupied units in Waleska are owner-occupied; and 72.5 percent of the occupied units in Woodstock are owner-occupied.

Vacancy Rates

Of the 51,937 housing units in Cherokee County, 49,495 units or 95.3 percent are occupied units with only 2,442 units, or 4.7 percent unoccupied. This figure is down from the 1990 figure of 7.5 percent. Within the unincorporated area, the vacancy rate has also decreased from 7.1 percent in 1990 to 4.4 percent in 2000. An overall vacancy rate of 6.1 percent was reported in the incorporated areas, which is a significant drop from 8.0 percent in 1990. This trend corresponds to the higher incidence of multi-family type units in the incorporated areas, particularly in Canton (45.9 percent), and Woodstock (25.9 percent). In Waleska, 35.7 percent of the residents are renters. It is assumed that single-family units provide the rental options in Waleska, as only a very small proportion of units are actually duplexes and there are no multi-family products in the city. The presence of a transient student population is a prime factor for the rental levels in Waleska.

The 2000 Census reports that approximately 2.1 percent of the ownership units in the county are vacant, with 9.3 percent of the rental units vacant. This closely compares to vacancy rates in the state, at 2.2 and 8.5 percent respectively. Mirroring the occupancy factors within the county, 30.5 percent of the vacant units are for rent, compared to over 55 percent in the city of Canton and 42 percent in the City of Woodstock. An additional 34.9 percent of the units are for sale only, with approximately 8.8 percent of the units rented or sold, but not occupied. Of the vacant units in the county, 13.5 percent are held for vacation or seasonal use, the majority of which may be associated with the lake, comprising a notable percentage of the total housing stock.

Table 28: Vacancy Characteristics

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Vacant Housing Units	2,442	37	172	52	0	233	494	1,948
For rent	744	17	95	0	0	98	210	534
For sale only	852	15	28	31	0	92	166	686
Rented or sold, not occupied	216	0	22	0	0	0	22	194
Seasonal/recreation/occasional use	329	0	0	0	0	40	40	289
For migrant workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other vacant	301	5	27	21	0	3	56	245

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

Analysis of characteristics of vacant units on a countywide basis indicates that 67.2 percent of the vacant units are detached single-family units, 14.5 percent are manufactured homes, 13.7 percent are multi-family with 3 or more units, and 4.6 percent are single-family either attached or duplex units. When broken down between incorporated and unincorporated areas, the characteristics change. Of the vacant units in the incorporated area, 64.8 percent are single-family detached units, 15.7 percent are attached or duplex units, 17.5 percent were multi-family and less than one percent was manufactured homes. In comparison, in the unincorporated area, 67.9 percent of the vacant units were single-family detached, 1.4 percent were single-family attached or duplex, 13.0 percent were multi-family, and 18.7 percent were manufactured homes. The characteristic of vacant properties again reflects trends in types of units being built in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county, with higher density products near the cities and the concentration of manufactured housing stock in the unincorporated area.

When vacancy data is further analyzed by vacancy status, it is found that the proportions of for-sale units in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas are comparable, at about 33 percent in the incorporated area and 36 percent in the unincorporated area. However, almost 43 percent of the vacant units in the incorporated

areas are available for rent as compared to 27 percent in the unincorporated areas. In Holly Springs, all of the vacant units are for sale, or classified as “other,” meaning the unit is vacant or occupied on a part time basis but is not on the market or is held for seasonal use. In both Ball Ground and Woodstock the proportion of vacant properties for-rent and for-sale are almost equivalent, each generally around 40 percent of the total vacant stock in each jurisdiction, with a slightly higher percentage of vacant rentals than for-sale properties. However, a portion of the vacant units in Woodstock may represent new units on the market, whereas the units in Ball Ground are predominantly existing stock.

Further differences are found between units already rented or sold, at 10.1 percent in unincorporated areas compared to 4.6 percent in incorporated areas; and 17.1 percent as compared to 10.9 percent respectively for seasonal units. The majority of seasonal units would be found near Lake Allatoona both within the City of Woodstock and surrounding unincorporated county, as well as some homes in the northern portion of the county used as seasonal or vacation “cabins.”

Table 29 identifies the characteristics of the vacant units by type. Within both the incorporated and unincorporated areas, the majority of vacant units were single-family detached, at 61.5 percent and 68.6 percent respectively. All of the vacant manufactured housings were located in the unincorporated area. A higher proportion of attached units, such as duplexes or townhomes were found in the incorporated area, although a higher proportion of multi-family units were vacant in the unincorporated area. These statistics, however, may be reflective of new projects that were not yet occupied at the time of reporting.

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Vacant Units	2,442	37	172	52	0	233	494	1,948
1, detached	1,641	34	117	31	0	122	304	1,337
1, attached	46	0	0	0	0	25	25	21
2	66	3	17	21	0	20	61	5
3 or 4	43	0	19	0	0	8	27	16
5 to 9	31	0	10	0	0	21	31	0
10 to 19	77	0	0	0	0	16	16	61
20 to 49	174	0	0	0	0	21	21	153
50 or more	9	0	9	0	0	0	9	0
Mobile home	355	0	0	0	0	0	0	355
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of Nelson and Mountain Park

Concentration of Neighborhood Rentals

In the unincorporated county, older subdivisions and manufactured home parks located near the Bells Ferry Corridor and the southwestern corner of the county are most likely to contain pockets of single-family units and manufactured homes that have been converted to rental units. However, the review of available single rental properties provided by real estate agencies, from the AJC, and on-line internet listings indicated a wide range of single-family rental properties, from homes renting from over \$2,500 per month in Woodmont Golf and Country Club to \$800 per month for older and smaller 2 bedroom units and townhomes. Such units are scattered throughout the county and do not seem to be concentrated in any singular subdivision or townhome

complex, which correlates to the scarcity of entire neighborhoods in the unincorporated areas exhibiting signs of deterioration.

In the City of Canton, a pocket of rental conversions exists. Within the City of Canton’s River Mill District (renamed from LCI study), the residential zone is predominantly made up of renter-occupied properties. Originally, 90 to 100 units were built on Riverdale Circle, Waleska Street, Middle Street, Railroad Street, Academy Street, Thacker Street and Hill Street, to provide homes for mill workers in the early 1900’s. The styles of the dwellings date back over 50 years, and are generally of clapboard construction with 3 to 6 rooms and a front porch. Many of the units have been demolished, or burnt down. The residents of these units represent a diverse ethnic and cultural mix, with a large concentration of residents of Hispanic origin and seniors living on fixed incomes and occupying the same dwelling over many decades. Within this area, a low percentage of homes are owner-occupied, as the majority of new housing units are intended as rentals. As a result, there have been safety issues related to the number of occupants. In response, the City of Canton drafted a “Space and Occupancy Ordinance” which establishes minimum dwelling space and occupancy requirements for dwellings and structures on property leased or rented. Within the City of Ball Ground, Old Canton Road north of Georgia 372 is primarily a rental area. The dwellings were constructed pre-1950 and are commonly referred to as the “old mill houses.” As in Canton, the same type mix of residents is evident.

In the City of Waleska, rental units are scattered throughout the community and primarily house students or employees of Reinhardt College. There are no concentrations of rental units in a particular neighborhood. In Woodstock, there do not appear to be concentrated pockets of single-family rentals. However, there may be a number of single-family units converted to rentals in the older subdivisions north of the historic downtown area, where units are typically in the 25 to 45 year age range.

■ Cost of Housing

Existing Housing

Within the Atlanta region, surrounding counties and the state, Cherokee County is a comparably affordable place to live in terms of ownership units, although a relatively expensive place for renters. Average home values are slightly below that of the region in general, although rents are higher. Median home values are higher than those statewide, and rents are well above the statewide median, although costs in 2000 are becoming more consistent than those of 10 years ago.

The median purchase cost of a home in Cherokee County rose from \$86,700 in 1990 to \$138,300 in 2000, representing an increase of almost 60 percent. The average price of a home in Cherokee County rose from \$166,239 in 1999 to \$198,833 in 2002. Home prices have continued to appreciate even further, by about 6 percent per year, since 2002, although that trend may be slightly slowing by mid 2005.

	1990			2000		
	State	Region	County	State	Region	County
Median Value	\$71,200	\$92,300	\$86,700	\$100,500	\$144,504	\$138,300
Median Rent	\$344	\$422	\$534	\$505	\$661	\$740
Source: 2000 Census STF-3.						

Housing values in unincorporated Cherokee County were generally higher than housing values in the cities, with the exception of the City of Woodstock, which was comparable at \$135,000. Median housing values in other cities were significantly less, particularly the cities in the northern portion of the county, including Waleska at \$103,100 and Ball Ground at \$102,900. The lower home prices generally correlate with the presence of an older housing stock in these jurisdictions.

In comparison to the 10-county Atlanta regional median figure of \$144,000 in 2000, Cherokee County housing values are slightly lower representing a relatively affordable place to live in the metropolitan Atlanta

Area. For example, the median value in the neighboring Forsyth and Cobb counties was \$177,900 and \$142,790 respectively.

Table 31: Cherokee County Housing Values in 2000

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Housing Units	41,503	188	1,390	877	72	2,789	5,316	36,187
Less than \$10,000	273	0	11	8	0	0	19	254
\$10,000 to \$14,999	184	0	17	0	0	0	17	167
\$15,000 to \$19,999	200	0	0	12	0	0	12	188
\$20,000 to \$24,999	245	5	16	0	0	5	26	219
\$25,000 to \$29,999	149	6	0	9	0	10	25	124
\$30,000 to \$34,999	124	0	0	0	0	0	0	124
\$35,000 to \$39,999	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	120
\$40,000 to \$49,999	416	5	47	0	4	26	82	334
\$50,000 to \$59,999	571	5	84	0	6	21	116	455
\$60,000 to \$69,999	565	8	94	10	0	33	145	420
\$70,000 to \$79,999	894	8	52	33	6	43	142	752
\$80,000 to \$89,999	2,131	14	172	52	12	193	443	1,688
\$90,000 to \$99,999	2,815	34	149	120	7	284	594	2,221
\$100,000 to \$124,999	8,064	48	281	313	12	566	1,220	6,844
\$125,000 to \$149,999	7,500	33	291	158	12	592	1,086	6,414
\$150,000 to \$174,999	4,968	2	54	72	0	408	536	4,432
\$175,000 to \$199,999	3,155	6	8	67	0	204	285	2,870
\$200,000 to \$249,999	3,627	10	53	23	7	307	400	3,227
\$250,000 to \$299,999	2,585	4	27	0	0	83	114	2,471
\$300,000 to \$399,999	1,756	0	24	0	4	14	42	1,714
\$400,000 to \$499,999	466	0	0	0	0	0	0	466
\$500,000 to \$749,999	306	0	0	0	0	0	0	306
\$750,000 to \$999,999	183	0	0	0	0	0	0	183
\$1,000,000 or more	206	0	10	0	2	0	12	194

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

According to the 2000 Census, over 20 percent of the total Cherokee County housing stock was valued below \$100,000. Within the unincorporated area, the percentage of units under \$100,000 was slightly lower, at 19.4 percent. Only 3.1 percent of the units were valued below \$50,000, reflective primarily of the mobile home stock in the county, to which Census assigns a median value of \$45,400. Within the incorporated areas, the percentage of homes valued below \$100,000 was 30.6 percent. The City of Canton had the highest number of units valued under \$100,000, equivalent to 46.2 percent of its housing stock, and the City of Ball Ground had 42.6 percent of its stock valued below \$100,000, while most of the other cities also had higher proportions of units valued under \$100,000 than the unincorporated county, generally ranging around 27 percent.

In comparison, Cobb County had 21.4 percent of its housing stock below \$100,000, which is comparable to Cherokee County, whereas Forsyth County had just 15.4 percent of its housing stock valued under below \$100,000.

	Cherokee County	Cobb County	Dawson County	Forsyth County	Fulton County
Total Housing Units	41,503	155,075	4,941	30,436	167,111
Less than \$10,000	273	1,245	61	266	484
\$10,000 to \$14,999	184	692	42	222	229
\$15,000 to \$19,999	200	421	26	205	491
\$20,000 to \$24,999	245	329	49	97	398
\$25,000 to \$29,999	149	291	48	65	552
\$30,000 to \$34,999	124	211	48	155	663
\$35,000 to \$39,999	120	314	25	143	1,179
\$40,000 to \$49,999	416	777	114	308	3,716
\$50,000 to \$59,999	571	1,630	210	364	5,235
\$60,000 to \$69,999	565	2,897	216	463	7,143
\$70,000 to \$79,999	894	5,274	270	497	8,000
\$80,000 to \$89,999	2,131	8,517	240	924	9,896
\$90,000 to \$99,999	2,815	10,577	272	1,002	8,326
\$100,000 to \$124,999	8,064	23,333	634	2,923	12,176
\$125,000 to \$149,999	7,500	25,836	630	3,592	12,768
\$150,000 to \$174,999	4,968	18,896	352	3,606	11,964
\$175,000 to \$199,999	3,155	13,993	294	3,301	10,829
\$200,000 to \$249,999	3,627	16,510	444	4,610	16,241
\$250,000 to \$299,999	2,585	8,876	315	2,901	13,874
\$300,000 to \$399,999	1,756	8,140	330	2,636	17,782
\$400,000 to \$499,999	466	3,382	121	871	9,726
\$500,000 to \$749,999	306	2,204	125	849	9,284
\$750,000 to \$999,999	183	450	51	324	3,314
\$1,000,000 or more	206	280	24	112	2,841

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.

At the high range, homes valued over \$200,000 were equivalent to 22.0 percent of the housing stock in Cherokee County. Within the unincorporated area, 23.7 percent of the stock was valued over \$200,000. Comparatively, Cobb County had 25.7 percent of its housing stock valued over \$200,000, and neighboring Forsyth County had over 40 percent of its stock valued over \$200,000. Within the incorporated areas, only 11.1 percent of the stock was valued over \$200,000. However, the City of Woodstock had 34.8 percent of its housing stock valued over \$200,000, reflecting the new residential subdivisions targeted toward move-up and executive level housing within the City.

New and Resale Housing

Analysis of new home prices in the county and its cities reflect a number of new home communities at various price ranges. Data reported through the Multiple Listing Service tracking price listings of new homes, and listing price compared to sales price for existing homes for the first quarter of 2005 provides a picture of the current housing market. General findings are as follows:

- New housing prices generally range from the high 100,000's to the high 800,000's. Of a sample of 500 homes: 208 (41.6 percent) were priced at \$300,000 and above; 142 (28.4 percent) were priced between \$299,900 and \$250,000; and 138 (27.6 percent) between \$249,900 and \$125,000.
- A second sample of homes, primarily resale homes located in Canton, Ball Ground, Woodstock and Waleska, ranged from \$215,000 to a low just above \$60,000.

- The majority of higher priced homes, over \$300,000, but ranging from the high \$260,000's, are found in planned subdivisions, typically with a golf course, lake, tennis, equestrian, or other such amenities, as well as quality custom residential enclaves, typically with sizeable lots, including: Woodmont Golf and Country Club; Bridge Mill; Towne Lake Hills; Governor's Preserve; Lake Sovereign; the Falls of Cherokee; Bradshaw Farms; Laurel Brooke; Orange Shoals; Red Gate Lakes; Circa 1850; Estates at Towne Lake; the Estates at Equest; Old Liberty Woods; Victoria Cottages; Little River Farms; Estates at Brooke Park; Northhampton Falls; Eagle Watch; Eagle Watch; Savanna Estates at the Lake; Stephens Farm; River Green; Estates at Arnold Mill; White Oaks; Great Sky; Meadowbrook; Hardwood Manor; Shiloh Ridge; Heritage Ridge Park; and other scattered subdivisions.
- A third sample found 50 listings of homes priced below \$100,000, primarily located in Waleska, Ball Ground and Canton. In this sample, there were 24 listings between \$100,000 and \$79,000; 12 units listed between \$79,000 and \$50,000; and 9 units under \$50,000. Most of the units under \$79,000 were older homes built prior to 1970, many of which were built in the 1930's or older.
- A sample of 150 condominium projects identified a price range of \$247,300 to a low of \$59,900. Of the sample, 58 were priced between \$247,300 and \$150,000, located primarily in the Villas at Downing Creek, and Riverwalk complexes in Canton; and the Villas at Claremore Lake, Weatherstone, the Magnolias and Woodlands Views complexes in the city or vicinity of Woodstock. 53 units were priced between \$149,900 and 125,000, again located primarily in the Weatherstone, Magnolias, The Crossings, and the Commons at River Park in the Woodstock area; and Hidden Springs and Victoria Gardens complexes in the Canton area. Just over 16 percent of the units (25) placed within the \$125,000 to \$108,900 range, located in 3 complexes in Woodstock and Canton. With the exception of a few units, all of the condominium units in the \$125,000 to \$250,000 price range were constructed after 2001. The remaining 14 units were located in complexes in Woodstock and Waleska, and were built prior to 2000, mostly in the 1980's.

Rental Costs

According to the 2000 Census, there were 7,752 rental units in the county in 2000. Approximately 64 percent of rental units (4,985 units) were found in the unincorporated county areas. Of the total countywide rental stock, 4,738 units (61 percent) were single-family detached or attached units, with additional 17.9 percent manufactured homes. Of these, 70.3 percent of the single-family rentals and 88.5 percent of the manufactured home rentals were located in the unincorporated county. Within the unincorporated county areas, 3,652 of the rental units were single-family detached, with an additional 1,226 manufactured homes, comprising 76.1 percent of the total rental stock.

A summary of rent structures in the county, derived from Census information, is shown on the following table. The median contract rent in the county, including the cities of Woodstock, Ball Ground, Canton, Waleska and Holly Springs in 2000 was \$740 per month, as compared to \$534 in 1990. Median rents in the cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock were higher than in the county as a whole, at \$825 and \$794 respectively. This may reflect the rental of single-family detached or attached units in these areas as compared to multi-family units in other jurisdictions or the county as a whole.

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total—All Rental Units	7,752	59	1,319	232	39	1,045	2,694	5,058
Total With Cash Rent:	7,259	59	1,286	222	31	1,038	2,636	4,623
Less than \$100	30	0	14	0	0	0	14	16

Table 33: Rental Rates in Cherokee County—2000

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
\$100 to \$149	78	3	29	0	0	33	65	13
\$150 to \$199	53	7	21	0	0	0	28	25
\$200 to \$249	52	5	27	0	0	0	32	20
\$250 to \$299	53	4	0	0	0	16	20	33
\$300 to \$349	114	9	16	0	0	0	25	89
\$350 to \$399	158	2	41	0	0	25	68	90
\$400 to \$449	329	0	77	8	4	44	133	196
\$500 to \$549	520	6	132	24	4	96	262	258
\$550 to \$599	495	13	190	0	2	8	213	282
\$600 to \$649	547	6	67	31	3	87	194	353
\$650 to \$699	585	0	109	22	6	53	190	395
\$700 to \$749	345	0	35	11	4	47	97	248
\$750 to \$799	552	4	61	10	0	116	191	361
\$800 to \$899	802	0	128	20	3	143	294	508
\$900 to \$999	845	0	109	25	5	189	328	517
\$1,000 to \$1,249	947	0	55	63	0	125	243	704
\$1,250 to \$1,499	224	0	0	0	0	39	39	185
\$1,500 to \$1,999	169	0	0	8	0	9	17	152
\$2,000 or more	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
Total With No Cash Rent	493	0	33	10	8	7	58	435

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park

Countywide, only 5.3 percent of the total rental units were available for rents below \$350 per month. In comparison, 6.9 percent of the rentals in the incorporated areas were available for rents below \$350, whereas 4.3 percent of the rental units in the unincorporated county were available for rents below \$350. A larger proportion of the countywide stock, 25.3 percent, was available for rents between \$350 and \$600 per month. Proportionately, the incorporated areas offered more rental units in the lower rental range than the unincorporated county, at 39.1 percent of the total rental stock (asking cash rent), as compared to 25.6 percent of the unincorporated county rental stock. Numerically, the number of units renting for below \$600 per month are close, at 1,056 units in the incorporated areas, and 1,164 units in the unincorporated areas, although 62.8 percent of all of the rental stock with cash rent is located within the unincorporated portions of the county. The largest proportion of units (50.6 percent) fell within the \$600 to \$999 per month range, with only 18.9 percent renting for over \$1,000 per month. Almost two-thirds of the rentals in the \$600-\$999 price range are located in the unincorporated area, with over one-third of the total county rental stock in the incorporated areas. Proportionately however, rentals at this price point are evenly represented at both the incorporated and unincorporated area level; with almost 50 percent of the incorporated area's rental housing stock is at this price point and 51.4 percent of the unincorporated area rental stock at this price point. The greatest proportion of the higher rent units (over \$1,000 per month) are located within the unincorporated area, at 22.5 percent of the unincorporated area rental stock as compared to 12.5 percent of the incorporated area rental stock. The greater proportion of units may reflect rentals of homes in the move-up, executive, and golf course communities.

- Of a sample of 742 vacant-for-rent rental units throughout the county in 1999 per the 2000 Census, approximately 12.5 percent of the total vacant rental units asked rents below \$400 per month. Of these units, over 47 percent were located in the incorporated areas, which is 5.9 percent of the total available vacant rentals.

- Approximately 28 percent of the vacant units were asking rents below \$600 per month, of which 7.7 percent were located in the incorporated areas.
- Over one-third of the available vacant rental units (35.7 percent) rented for between \$600 and \$1,000 per month. Of the vacant-for-rent units, 108 were located in the incorporated areas and 157 in the incorporated area. While this was equivalent to almost one-half of the vacant units in the incorporated area, it comprised only 30.8 percent of the units in the unincorporated area.
- Only 3.5 percent of the vacant units rented for more than \$1,000 per month, of which 14 were located in Canton—the only vacant units at this price point in the incorporated areas.

Table 34: Rent by Number of Bedrooms in Cherokee County—2000

	Total County		All Cities Total		Unincorporated Area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Rental Units*	7,752	100.0%	2,694	34.8%	5,058	65.2%
No bedrooms	170	2.2%	124	72.90%	46	0.9%
Up to \$499	55	0.7%	34	1.3%	21	0.4%
\$500 - \$999	115	1.5%	90	3.3%	25	0.5%
\$1,000 or more	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0.0%
One Bedroom	1,055	13.6%	584	21.8%	471	9.3%
Up to \$499	348	4.5%	301	11.2%	47	0.9%
\$500 - \$999	686	8.8%	283	10.5%	403	8.0%
\$1,000 or more	21	0.3%	0	0.0%	21	0.4%
No Cash Rent	35	0.5%	3	0.1%	32	0.6%
Two Bedrooms	3,198	41.3%	1,157	42.9%	2,041	40.4%
Up to \$499	489	6.3%	123	4.6%	366	7.2%
\$500 - \$999	2,469	31.8%	941	34.9%	1,528	30.2%
\$1,000 or more	240	3.1%	93	3.5%	139	2.8%
No Cash Rent	157	2.0%	10	0.4%	147	2.9%
Three Bedrooms	2,836	36.6%	771	28.6%	2,065	40.8%
Up to \$499	313	4.0%	110	4.1%	203	4.0%
\$500 - \$999	1,421	18.3%	455	16.9%	966	19.1%
\$1,000 or more	1,102	14.2%	206	7.6%	896	17.7%
No Cash Rent	301	3.9%	45	1.7%	256	5.1%

*Total includes units with cash rent and no cash rent.
Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

According to the Census, of the rental units available in the total county, 2.2 percent were studios; 14.1 percent were 1-bedroom units; 43.3 percent were two-bedroom units; and 30.5 percent were 3-bedroom units and larger. Over 94 percent of the studios rented for less than \$750 per month; 69.5 percent of the one-bedroom units rented for less than \$750 per month; 60.2 percent of the two-bedroom units rented for less than \$750 per month; and 31.0 percent of the three bedroom units rented for less than \$750 per month. Only 2.2 percent of the rental stock available for very-low rents (below \$300 per month) were larger units with at least 2 or more bedrooms, although the number of larger 2 or more bedroom units significantly increases to 11 percent when the price range of rents up to \$500 per month is considered.

The majority of units (60 percent) renting at the lower end of the price range for all size units (less than \$300 per month) were located in the incorporated areas. In the incorporated areas, single-family detached and attached units (inclusive of manufactured homes) comprised 43.5 percent of the rental units, which may relate to the high proportion of two- and three-bedroom rental units in the incorporated county. There were approximately 1,469 two- and three-bedroom units in the incorporated areas that rented for over \$750 per month. Comparably, there were 4,046 two- and three-bedroom rental units in the unincorporated areas, of which 1,953 rented for over \$750 per month. Proportionally, 39.2 percent of the county's rental stock was comprised of 2- and 3-bedroom units renting for over \$750 per month, as compared to 54.4 percent of the incorporated area's rentals.

In May 2005, a sample of 19 rentals available through real estate agency internet listings were all single-family units, with one townhome unit, with generally higher asking rents than reflected by the Census, ranging from \$850 to \$1,595 per month. The average rent asked was \$1,193 per month. There were no units asking rents below \$850 per month. The 2-bedroom units ranged from \$850 to \$895 per month, the 3-bedroom units ranged from \$900 to \$1,250 per month, and the 4-bedroom units ranged from \$1,200 to \$1,595 per month. It was not discernable as to the location of the units within incorporated or unincorporated areas as only the post office station in which the home was located was cited. A second inventory of 65 single-family detached unit and townhome rentals yielded the following information:

- Rents asked ranged from a low of \$800 per month to a high of \$4,000 per month for an estate on Lake Allatoona.
- The average rent asked was \$1,185.
- Prices at the lower end of the rental range were primarily townhome units.

A survey of representative apartment complexes in the county, including complexes in the cities of Canton, Woodstock, Holly Springs, reveals a range of rental options at various sizes and price points. Out of 32 surveyed complexes, 18 complexes (over half) offered rental units with some kind of income restriction, primarily associated with tax credit financing. There were also a number of complexes which, although the units were not income restricted, offered units generally within the financial realm of the workforce population. Rents ranged from:

- \$379 to \$515 for studio apartments;
- \$450 to \$825 for a one-bedroom apartment;
- \$550 to \$1,000 for two-bedroom apartments; and
- \$685 to \$1,245 for three-bedroom apartments.

Complex	Number of Units	Bedrooms	Rent Range	Income Limits
Laurelwood Apts	48	1 & 2	388 - 605	Yes
Lake View Apartments	40	1 & 2	\$340 - \$610	Yes
Moss Apartments	8	2	N/A	Yes
Columbia Creek Apts	172	2 & 3	\$675 - \$890	Yes
Alta Ridge at Ridgewalk	340	1, 2, & 3	\$595 - \$935	No
Alta Woods	498	1, 2, & 3	\$825 - \$1,245	No
Walden Chase Apts	60	1 & 2	\$595 - \$700	Yes
Eagle Ridge Apts	25	1 & 2	\$450 - \$550	Yes
Sky Ridge Apts	120	Studio, 1 & 2	\$379 - \$726	Yes
Heights at Towne Lake	194	1, 2, & 3	\$675 - \$1,150	No

Table 35: Representative Rents in Cherokee County 2005

Complex	Number of Units	Bedrooms	Rent Range	Income Limits
Paces at Towne Lake	242	1, 2, & 3	\$775 - \$1,200	No
Peaks at Bells Ferry	248	1, 2, & 3	\$625 - \$845	Yes
Terraces at Towne Lake	502	1, 2, & 3	\$704 - \$1,119	No
Alexander Ridge Apts	272	1, 2, & 3	\$575 - \$775	75% Yes
Heritage at Riverstone	240	1, 2, & 3	\$550-\$1,019	No
Canton Mill Lofts	315	Studio, 1 & 2	\$515 - \$779	Yes
River Ridge at Canton	356	1, 2, & 3	\$520 - \$720	80% Low
Canterbury Ridge	212	1, 2, & 3	\$605 - \$805	Yes
Laurels at Greenwood	174	2 & 3	\$599 - \$685	Yes
Mountainside Manor	N/A	1, 2, & 3	\$635 - \$785	Yes
Preston Glen at Bridgemill	236	1, 2, & 3	\$710 - \$1,140	No
Harbor Creek Apts	268	1, 2, & 3	\$646 - \$995	No
Walden Crossing	N/A	1, 2, & 3	\$670 - \$930	No
Hickory Knoll	144	1, 2, & 3	\$550 - \$750	60% VL, 40% L
Summerhill Apts	319	1 & 2	\$723 - \$913	No
Walden Pond Apts	124	1 & 2	\$605 - \$710	Yes
Avonlea at Towne Lake	247	1, 2, & 3	\$730 - \$1,135	No
Brooke Mill	319	1, 2, & 3	\$700 - \$1,083	No
Gregory Lane Apts	112	2 & 3	\$600 - \$800	Yes
Whispering Trace TH	40	2 & 3	\$568 - \$720	Yes
Blue Ridge Apts	73	Studio, 1 & 2	\$384 - \$625	No
Fox Creek Townhomes	30	2 & 3	up to \$1,200	No

Source: Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC

With 100 percent financing available, and the low interest rates of the early 2000's, home ownership is becoming a more attainable goal, particularly in the first time homebuyers housing market. Although statistics for 2005 are not available, it is possible that the rental vacancy rate is increasing as it becomes more feasible for households that traditionally would be limited to rental housing are able to purchase entry-level units. However, in Cherokee County this may not be the case as those rental opportunities are being taken by job market entry and workforce households as they relocate to the county to take advantage of the types of more prevalent employment opportunities (construction, retail services). As well, the favorable interest rates and 0 percent financing options are allowing a greater number of households to enter the move-up and executive housing market, particularly in Cherokee County where home prices are still reasonable in comparison to other counties in the region.

The following table provides 2000 Census statistics on the range of housing units at different price points, for Cherokee County, two of its larger cities, and adjacent Counties.

Table 36: Comparable Home Values in Cherokee County and Adjacent Counties/Cities

Price Range	Cherokee County		Cobb County		Forsyth County		Fulton County		Bartow County		Woodstock		Canton	
	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent
Up to \$125,000	16,751	40%	56,508	36%	7,634	25%	58,488	35%	14,794	72%	614	22%	642	46%

Price Range	Cherokee County		Cobb County		Forsyth County		Fulton County		Bartow County		Woodstock		Canton	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
125,000 to 199,000	15,623	36%	58,725	38%	10,499	34%	35,561	21%	3,911	19%	1,770	64%	634	46%
200,000 to 299,000	6,212	15%	25,386	16%	7,511	25%	30,115	18%	1,230	0%	390	14%	80	6%
300,000+	2,917	7%	14,456	9%	4,792	16%	42,947	26%	509	3%	14	0.00%	34	2%
Total	41,503	100	155,075	100	30,436	100	167,111	100	20,444	100	2,789	100	1,390	100

Source: 2000 Census STF-3

Based on the Census data, Cherokee County, inclusive of the cities, provides the highest proportion of lower priced homes (under \$125,000—affordable to households with incomes of 50 percent of the county median and below) in the surrounding counties of the Atlanta metropolitan area, with the exception of Bartow County which has a significantly higher proportion of lower priced homes, at 72.4 percent of the total housing stock. However, Bartow County, which is northeast of Cherokee County, is not included within the 10-county ARC region, is a much more rural area, and therefore not a directly comparable jurisdiction. The City of Canton alone also has a higher proportion of homes at this price point. The proportion of units reported at the \$125,000 to \$199,999 range (which is considered within the means of households with incomes of 50 percent to 80 percent of the county median), is comparable to Cobb and Forsyth County, at 37.9 percent and 34.5 percent respectively, and significantly higher than Fulton County at 21.3 percent. The larger cities in the county, Woodstock and Canton, contained the highest proportion of homes in this price range, at 64.5 percent and 45.6 percent respectively of their own housing stock, although numerically they comprise only 5.8 percent of the total county stock. In 2000, the county did not have a significant stock of move-up and executive level housing in comparison to other counties in the vicinity, with 15 percent of the homes valued between \$200,000 and \$299,000 as compared to 16.4 percent in Cobb County, 24.7 percent in Forsyth County, and 18 percent in Fulton County. Only 7.0 percent of the homes were valued at over \$300,000, compared to 9.3 percent in Cobb County, 15.7 percent in Forsyth County, and 25.7 percent in Fulton County. This proportion has significantly increased since 2000 with the construction of several new housing projects, primarily high-end subdivisions and golf course communities, as discussed later.

Overall, preliminary analysis shows a good distribution of housing by price point to accommodate various income, lifestyle and age related housing choices. The only segment that is below that of adjacent areas, according to the 2000 Census and therefore not reflective of current housing development trends and housing prices, is executive or “move up” housing. The need has been, and continues to be, satisfied by the numerous new subdivisions and golf course, tennis and swim communities that have been constructed or are in the process of development since 2000. However, there are also numerous subdivisions located within the City limits of Woodstock, Canton, Holly Springs and a proposed new TND subdivision in Ball Ground that augment the county resources and are applicable toward meeting the overall countywide need for move-up and executive housing.

The price ranges reported in the 2000 Census no longer accurately reflect recent appreciation in the housing market, but may be correlated to the proportion of households in each income group, as reported in 2000 (which roughly correspond to the HUD Median Family income—see Table 37 for HUD MFI breakdowns).

The HUD median family income for Cherokee County was \$63,100 in 2000 and in 2005 was \$69,300. (HUD uses an Atlanta metropolitan income figure for several of the larger counties in the area, and does not break out Cherokee County individually).

Table 37: HUD Income Classifications

	Annual Income (2005)	Percent of Population (2000)*	Maximum Affordable Rent (2005)	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price (2005)
Very Low	0 to \$34,650	18.80%	\$866	\$126,500
Low	\$34,650 to \$55,440	19.80%	\$1,386	\$202,500
Moderate	\$55,441 to \$83,160	25.20%	\$2,079	\$303,500
Above Moderate	Above \$83,160	46.20%	\$2,080+	\$304,000
Median	\$69,300		\$1,732	\$253,100

* Percent of Population is based on 2000 HUD median income classifications applied to 2000 Census income categories.
Source: HUD Median Family Income Limits

Table 37 identifies the income ranges, based on the HUD MFI guidelines, and the rent or home purchase price affordable to each income group in 2005. The proportion of persons in each income category, for comparison with the previous table reporting housing cost ranges, is based on the 2000 Census income breakdowns and the 2000 HUD MFI. This table assumes a 10 percent down payment, 1 percent property tax and P&I.

Based on the distribution of housing prices in 2000, it appears that there is adequate stock in the income range affordable to Very Low income households; a notable proportion of those units (al-

though numerically small) are located within the incorporated areas. According to the Census, the county also has a great wealth of homes in the range affordable to persons in the low-income classifications and a rapidly growing inventory of homes affordable to moderate- and above moderate-income households. However, the incidence of households reporting overpayment problems indicates that not all needs of the population are being met through the present market.

In terms of new housing opportunities, Table 38 summarizes a representative sample of new housing community opportunities as advertised on the internet and through The New Home Magazine publication. However, the matrix only reflects representative new home communities developed by a single builder (or builders) and does not specify individual builder spec homes scattered throughout subdivisions or communities that offer semi-custom products by numerous builders.

Table 38: Representative New Housing Subdivisions and Townhomes

Subdivision	Nearest Community	Price Range
Hidden Springs Townhomes	Holly Springs	\$100,000's
Holly Mill, The Enclave	Canton	\$120,000 - \$150,000's
Ridge Mill Townhomes	Acworth	\$120,000's-\$140,000's
Riverstone Commons Townhomes	Canton	\$122,900 - \$153,960
River's Edge	Woodstock	\$130,000 - \$150,000's
River Park Townhomes	Woodstock	\$132,000 - \$190,000
Creekside at Prominence	Canton	\$140,000's
Prominence Court	Canton (within City)	\$140,000-\$163,000
Canton Heights	Canton (within City)	\$130,000-\$150,000
Preserve at Woodlands Creek TH	Woodstock	\$143,990 - \$145,990
Diamond Ridge	Canton	\$160,000'-\$195,000
Lakeside at Allatoona	Holly Springs	\$160,000's
Forest Creek	Canton	\$190,000's
Harmony, North Village	Canton	\$150,000-\$250,000's
Harmony, The Reserve	Canton	\$180,000-\$240,000's
Harmony, West Grove	Canton	\$190,000's

Table 38: Representative New Housing Subdivisions and Townhomes

Subdivision	Nearest Community	Price Range
Mill Creek	Canton	\$160,000-\$200,000's
The Views at Woodlands TH	Woodstock	\$168,400 - \$185,990
Preserve at Holly Springs	Canton	\$160,000-\$200,000's
The Magnolias	Canton	\$180,000-\$230,000's
Whitfield at Ridgewalk	Woodstock	\$160,000's
The Parc at Woodlands	Woodstock	\$187,900 - \$204,900
Forest Creek	Canton	\$207,900 - \$338,035
The Manor at Arbor View	Woodstock	\$209,000-\$260,000's
Bradshaw Park	Woodstock	\$200,000's-\$300,000's
Bradshaw Estates	Canton	\$240,000-\$300,000's
The Glen at Woodlands	Woodstock	\$217,900 - \$222,900
Crestmont	Holly Springs	\$200,000's - \$300,000's
Great Sky	Canton	\$240,000's-\$300,000's
Daybreak at Great Sky	Canton	\$210,000's-\$290,000's
Horizon Peaks at Great Sky	Canton	\$250,000's-\$360,000's
Morning Mist at Great Sky	Canton	\$210,000's-\$290,000's
Grand Overlook at Great Sky	Canton	\$290,000's-\$350,000's
Thundering Hills at Great Sky	Canton	\$230,000's-\$350,000's
Harmony, Grandview	Canton	\$230,000's-\$290,000's
Enclave at Woodlands	Woodstock	\$258,900 - \$278,900
Holly Trace	Ballground	\$200,000's
Northbrooke	Woodstock	\$250,000's
River Green	Canton	\$200,000's-\$300,000's
Woodstock Downtown	Woodstock	\$190,000 - \$600,000
Woodmont Golf and Country Club	Canton	\$250,000's-\$600,000's
Falling Water	Canton	\$300,000's
Glenbrooke	Woodstock	\$300,000's
Southern Lights at Great Sky	Canton	\$300,000's-\$400,000's
Starlight Climb at Great Sky	Canton	\$300,000's-\$400,000's
Wolf Creek Park	Cumming	\$300,000's - \$500,000s
Harmony, the Palisades	Holly Springs	\$350,000's
Rosebury	Canton	\$389,900's
Savanna Estates	Canton	From \$402,900
Harmony, The Peninsula	Holly Springs	\$450,000's
Laurelbrooke	Woodstock	\$300,000's - \$400,000's
Meadowbrooke	Woodstock	\$350,000 - \$429,000
The Shoals at Arborhill	Canton	\$700,000-\$1,200,000
Blackberry Farm	Alpharetta	\$600,000's
The Estates at Woodmont	Canton	\$500,000's
Source: Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC		

Out of the 54 new home community sample, four new communities offered housing products affordable to the upper ranges of the very low-income household category. Although this is only a small proportion of the total representative new ownership homes in the county, it does indicate that there are ownership market rate new home opportunities available to workforce households at the lower end of the income spectrum. Together with the large stock of existing units with price points affordable to persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the county median, particularly the mobile homes in the unincorporated area and the older,

typically smaller units in the incorporated cities, new stock provides a good base stock of ownership units to meet the current and future needs of the county. Although the development community may be able to provide some housing affordable to households in the lower income ranges, it would not be reasonable to expect that the needs of persons in the workforce income category of less than 50 percent of county median could be economically met through the private sector. Government intervention in some form would be necessary to provide for this need. Although the City of Canton has entered into agreements with developers and non-profits to provide rental housing with some lower-income restricted units, the County has not yet entered into agreements with local non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity, or other organizations or developers to provide assistance for housing accommodating lower-income households. However, there are a number of rental communities in the county and the cities that offer varying proportions of income restricted rents, primarily as a condition of Tax Credit Financing or use of other federal or state funding incentives. Although rental information is not available on all of the apartments in the county and cities, it is possible, based on the sample presented by the previous Table 35, that over 50 percent of the apartment complexes have set aside a portion or all of their units for workforce households and other persons with limited incomes, typically 50 to 60 percent of the county median.

■ Households Reporting Problems

The State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has compiled information on households reporting some kind of housing problem. These include persons with AIDS, persons having sustained family violence, the elderly, persons with a disability, and persons encountering substance abuse. The characteristics of persons with housing problems are further evaluated by size of household, tenure, income, household type, age and race.

According to the DCA information, 9,266 households, or 18.7 percent of all households in the county in 2000 reported a housing problem of some kind. Of those households reporting a housing problem, 71.1 percent were homeowners and 28.9 percent were renters, somewhat mirroring the distribution of owners/renters countywide, although the proportion of renters with problems exceeded the proportional representation by tenure countywide. Of those reporting a problem, 94.7 percent (17.7 percent of total households) reported a cost burden (overpayment for housing): 15.2 percent of the total owners reported a cost burden, and 30.6 percent of total renters in the county reported a cost burden. Of those reporting a cost burden, 4.8 percent of all owners and 13.8 percent of all renters in the county reported a severe cost burden (payment of over 50 percent of income for housing). Almost one-half of the renters reporting a cost burden were severely cost burdened. A smaller proportion of the population reported overcrowding or lack of facilities as a housing problem. Only 1.5 percent of the population reported an overcrowding problem, with over two-thirds of those reporting such a problem being renters. Less than one percent of the population reported inadequate facilities, the majority of which were homeowners, perhaps relating to persons living in older structures.

The majority of persons reporting problems countywide (87.1 percent) resided in the unincorporated portions of the county. Of those persons reporting a housing problem in the unincorporated areas, 71.8 percent were homeowners and 29.2 percent were renters, mirroring the distribution of owners/renters with problems countywide. In contrast, the proportion of owners and renters in the incorporated areas reporting problems was almost identical, with 51.3 percent of the persons reporting problems being renters and 48.7 percent of the persons reporting problems being owners. Although over 87 percent of the persons reporting problems resided in the unincorporated county, 82.6 percent of the persons reporting cost burden and severe cost burden problems resided in the unincorporated areas, and 65.6 percent of the persons reporting overcrowded conditions lived in unincorporated areas. The proportion of renters experiencing overcrowded housing problems was double that of owners in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas. Again, owners reported more housing problems related to lack of facilities in both portions of the county.

Table 39: Housing Problems in Cherokee County—2000					
	Total Cost Burdened	Severely Cost Burdened	Total Over-crowded	Total Lacking Facilities	Total Problems
County Owner	6,318	1,973	249	271	6,586
County Renter	2,453	1,099	517	72	2,680
Total County	8,771	3,072	766	343	9,266
Unincorporated Area Owner	5,558	1,750	165	227	5,797
Unincorporated Area Renter	1,690	787	337	63	2,277
Total Unincorporated	7,248	2,537	502	290	8,074
Incorporated Area Owner	760	223	84	44	789
Incorporated Area Renter	763	312	180	9	830
Total Incorporated*	1,523	535	264	53	1,619
*All cities, including Canton and Holly Springs. Source: Atlanta Regional Commission					

Overall, persons with housing problems were overwhelmingly white, and non-Hispanic in origin, correlating closely with the racial distribution within the county, indicating that housing problems in Cherokee County are not particularly attributed to a changing ethnic population. Among persons over the age of 16 reporting housing problems, over 96 percent in each tenure category was employed (calculated out of the number of persons in the labor force). This constitutes 71.9 percent of the owners reporting one or more housing needs and 74.9 percent of the renters reporting one or more housing needs.

In terms of income, there is a significant difference in the distribution of needs by tenure. Among owners, over 30 percent of the households reporting problems had incomes over \$35,000 per year, as compared to 16.2 percent of the renters. In contrast, 31.7 percent of the owners had incomes of less than \$19,999 (corresponding roughly to the HUD classification of very, very-low income at 25 percent of median) as compared to 48.2 percent of renters. This may be partially attributed to the finding that a greater proportion of lower income households rent rather than own.

The majority of persons reporting housing needs were in the 25 to 59 year range, comprised of 83.4 percent of owners and 77.5 percent of renters. Among owners reporting housing needs, a large proportion are seniors, at 15.3 percent of owners reporting problems, as compared to renters at 7.6 percent. This may reflect the aging of the population already owning their home who transition into a fixed income upon retirement, and subsequent payment of more than 30 percent of their income, or other housing related problems. However, the elderly in the county and the individual cities do not comprise the majority of the households reporting a housing problem. A larger proportion of renters reporting housing problems are young, less than 24 years of age, at 14.9 percent, as compared to only 1.3 percent of owners. This may reflect a number of newly employed persons entering the job market at starting salaries and living on their own, while few younger persons have undertaken homeownership and the associated cost burdens.

Housing problems associated with household size also varies with tenure. Among the renters reporting a housing problem, 22.1 percent were living in households with 5 or more persons, as compared to 11 percent of the owners. This may be partially attributed to overcrowded conditions in units with an inadequate number of bedrooms to house the number of persons in the household. Conversely, the proportion of two-person owner households with housing needs is 24.4 percent, as compared to 13.3 percent of renters. It appears that two person renter households may generally be able to find units with an appropriate number of rooms within their price range than owners. Alternatively, the high ownership rate may be a result of first time homebuyers or young couples overextending themselves for the benefits of home ownership. The proportion of three- and four-person households experiencing housing problems is comparable between owners and renters, at 22.6

and 23.8 percent for owners and 21.6 and 21.1 percent for renters respectively. A slightly higher proportion of one-person renter households experience problems than owner households, at 21.9 percent as compared to 18.3 percent.

The household type also influences the distribution of households reporting problems. Family households constitute 78.9 percent of the owner households reporting housing problems, as compared to 71.8 percent of renters. Of these, 69.1 percent of the owners are married, while 47.0 percent of renters are married. Over 17 percent of the renters reporting problems are female householders, as compared to only 6.2 percent owners. Among non-family households, at 21.2 percent owner and 28.2 percent renter, a higher proportion of female householders report problems in both tenure situations.

Over 94 percent of owners, reporting a housing problem lived in single-family detached units, with 5.3 percent in manufactured housing. In comparison, almost 50 percent of renters experiencing housing problems resided in a single-family detached unit, with 33.2 percent living in multi-family housing and 11.6 percent in manufactured housing. The remaining 5.3 percent of renters lived in attached single-family or duplex units.

Cost Burdened Households

Although essential to meeting housing needs, the provision of a sufficient number of housing units will not in itself ensure that the entire population will be adequately housed. For example, households with insufficient income to purchase or rent quality housing may be denied a choice of housing location, adequate size or type because appropriate housing at acceptable cost is not adequately dispersed throughout the county. Historically, the private sector generally responds to the majority of a community's housing needs through provision of market rate housing. However, due to economic conditions and trends within the State, the affordability of market rate housing is declining.

Overpayment refers to renters and owners who must pay more than 30 percent of their gross income for shelter. A high cost of housing eventually causes fixed income, elderly and lower-income families to use a disproportionate share of their income for housing. This may cause a series of related financial problems which may result in deterioration of housing stock, because costs associated with maintenance must be sacrificed for more immediate expenses (e.g. food, medical care, clothing and utilities), or inappropriate housing types or sizes to suit the needs of the households.

Using income guidelines as provided by the Department of Community Affairs, households paying between 30 percent and 49 percent of their income are considered "cost-burdened" and households paying over 50 percent are "severely cost-burdened." Approximately 18.7 percent of the households are considered cost burdened within the total county and 6.9 percent of the county is considered severely cost burdened. (Refer to Table 39 in an earlier Section.) While the severely overburdened includes approximately 3,072 households, of which 64.2 percent are homeowners and 35.7 percent are renters, (2.2 percent of total county households) it is still relatively low. From the 2000 Census, cost burden can be broken down further into the incorporated cities and the remaining unincorporated county. Of the 8,771 total households reporting a cost burden, 1,523 (3.4 percent of the total county households) are located within the incorporated areas, with 7,248 (16.3 percent of the total county households) residing in the remainder of the county. Within the incorporated areas, 19.0 percent of the households reported a cost burden of 30 percent or more, with 28.2 percent of the renters reporting a cost burden, as compared to 14.2 percent of the owners. In the remainder of the county, 15.5 percent of the owners experienced a cost burden, as compared to 32.4 percent of the renters. In numerical terms, however, the number of owners experiencing a cost burden exceeds the number of renters in the unincorporated county, although in the incorporated areas the number of cost burdened renters and owners is almost identical.

According to the Census, in the unincorporated county 22.4 percent of the owners experienced a cost burden, as compared to 32.5 percent of the renters. In numerical terms, however, the number of owners experiencing a cost burden exceeds the number of renters, at 7,000 owners compared to 1,623 renters. Approximately 47.8 percent (776) of the cost burdened renters had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 30 percent of the median

county income), and 40.6 percent of the renters had incomes of between \$20,000 and \$35,000 (between 30 percent and 50 percent of the county median), which indicates that almost 90 percent of cost burdened renters had incomes of less than 50 percent of the median, comparable to the county-wide statistics. Comparatively, 19.5 percent (1,366) of the cost burdened owners had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 30 percent of the median county income), 26.8 percent (1,878) of the owners had incomes of between \$20,000 and \$35,000 (between 30 percent and 50 percent of the county median), and 29.4 percent had incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (between 50 percent and 80 percent of county median).

Cost Burdened Renters

Although the proportions differ slightly from the DCA data, the Census also reports the number of households, by tenure and income category, which paid over 30 percent of their income for housing costs. The Census reports 2,576 rental households paying over 30 percent of their incomes for housing (which is the definition of cost burdened) which constitutes 33 percent of the renter households in the county.

	Total County		Incorporated Area		Unincorporated Area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Renter Households	7,752		2,767		4,985	
Income Less than \$10,000	716		336		380	
30% or more	471	6.1%	229	8.3%	242	4.9%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	1,083		387		696	
30% or more	868	11.2%	335	12.1%	533	10.7%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	1,875		724		1,151	
30% or more	968	12.5%	309	11.2%	659	13.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,411		451		960	
30% or more	232	3.0%	80	2.9%	152	3.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,736		609		1,127	
30% or more	37	0.5%	0	0.0%	37	0.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	485		168		317	
30% or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	446		92		354	
30% or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Paying over 30%	2,576	33.3%	953	34.5%	1,623	32.5%

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

Approximately 52 percent of the cost burdened renters (1,340 households or 17.3 percent of the total renters in the county) had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 30 percent of the median county income), and 37.6 percent of the cost burdened renters had incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000, which is less than 50 percent of the county median. In sum, 90 percent of the cost-burdened renters (2,307 households) had incomes of less than \$35,000, which is 30 percent of all renters and constitutes 4.7 percent of all households in the county.

When comparing the need of 2,307 total households requiring rents of \$866 or less per month (for households with incomes up to 50 percent of county median), with the findings of the representative rental unit survey of apartment complexes only, there were 3,015 apartment units reporting rents of less than \$866 per month. Although the exact numerical distribution of the units with the lowest rents is not available, nor was this an all-inclusive survey of the rental units in the county, it can be deduced that there are sufficient rental units to meet the needs of the workforce households with incomes at or near 50 percent of the county median. However, with 1,304 of those households requiring rents of \$520 or lower per month (households with

incomes up to 30 percent of county median) there is likely a shortfall of units that offer rents affordable to households with annual incomes below \$20,000. As well, the units available at the rents affordable to households within the lower-income range may not provide the sufficient number of bedrooms to accommodate the household, thus creating an overcrowded condition. However, the rent limits used for analysis purposes represent a family of four, which can be accommodated in a two-bedroom unit. The supply of three bedroom rental units at rents not exceeding 30 percent of the household income may not be adequate to accommodate the needs of larger households.

Cost-Burdened Owners

Comparatively, 19.7 percent of the cost burdened owners had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 30 percent of the median county income), 27.2 percent of the cost burdened owners had incomes of less than \$35,000 (up to 50 percent of the county median), and 29.2 percent had incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (between 50 percent and 80 percent of the county median).

	Total County		Incorporated Area		Unincorporated Area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL with a Mortgage	36,754		5,453		31,301	
Income Less than \$10,000	1,011		135		876	
30% or more	712	1.9%	91	1.7%	621	2.0%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	1,462		280		1,182	
30% or more	898	2.4%	153	2.8%	745	2.4%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	3,721		646		3,075	
30% or more	2,214	6.0%	336	6.2%	1,878	6.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,414		971		4,443	
30% or more	2,380	6.5%	317	5.8%	2,063	6.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	9,492		1,503		7,989	
30% or more	1,529	4.2%	201	3.7%	1,328	4.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,940		1,024		5,916	
30% or more	294	0.8%	46	0.9%	248	7.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,989		602		5,387	
30% or more	104	0.3%	0	0.0%	104	0.3%
\$150,000 and above	2,725		292		2,433	
30% or more	22	0.0%	0	0.0%	22	0.1%
Total Paying over 30%	8,153	22.1%	1,144	21.0%	7,009	22.4%

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park

A distinction between renter and owner overpayment (paying 30 percent or more of income for housing) is important because, while homeowners may overextend themselves financially to afford a home purchase, the owner maintains the option of selling the home and may realize tax benefits and appreciation in value. Renters, on the other hand, are limited to the rental market, and are generally required to pay the rent established by that market. The discrepancy between owner and renter households is largely reflective of the tendency for year round renter households to have lower incomes compared to owner households. While efforts to reduce the cost burden of ownership housing should be considered, particularly lower-income households (which number 3,824), this is not among the county's most pressing problems, as this segment of the population represents less than 6 percent of the total households in the county.

Income Gap Analysis

The correlation between income deficiencies and housing problems (affordability and maintenance) indicates the need to develop the means to assist those households with incomes below 50 percent of the median county income, which is 4.7 percent of the total county households, and also between 50 and 80 percent of the county median income, with both attaining and improving their existing housing. Housing resources within the incorporated areas must be considered in the analysis of the needs of the unincorporated area cost burdened households as well as incorporated areas, as the majority of the lower priced single-family and townhome rentals and apartments, with the exception of mobile homes, are located in the incorporated areas. Although government subsidized housing programs will continue to be instrumental in improving the living conditions in the county, the units associated with these resources are very limited. Although there are a number of rental properties, particularly older and smaller mobile homes and single-family unit rentals, older duplex, townhome and income restricted or low market rate apartment units, as well as the 152 public housing units and the 99 income restricted apartment units built with Farmers Home Administration Rural Development Assistance low income loan program funds a number of years ago, the available rental stock for persons with incomes below 50 percent of the median income, particularly those at the entry level of the workforce with incomes at 30 percent or less of the county median, does not appear to be adequate, particularly as the size of the lower priced units may not be suitable to meet the needs of larger households. There are 127 Housing Choice Vouchers currently being utilized in the county. In addition, through the conduct of a "mini" apartment rental inventory of rental properties located within the cities and the unincorporated area, between 18 and 22 apartment complexes (18 are confirmed and 4 are listed by the state but confirmation could not be made) with some percentage of income restricted units have been identified, primarily associated with tax credit financing. As well, a senior apartment complex, Bethany Manor with potential rent restricted units is proposed northeast of Canton. Although these resources exist, the reporting of overpayment problems indicates that other actions will also be needed to deal with the needs of the income challenged, as well as other special needs populations.

In addition, those market-rate rental properties without income restrictions, but with rents generally affordable to workforce households, may be inhabited by households with higher incomes, thereby edging out the lower income households. As well, it reflects the need for additional homes for purchase for workforce households at the lower ends of the income scale, particularly as the inventory of manufactured housing, generally the lowest price ownership option in the county, is shrinking due to obsolescence, conversion of mobile home park land to other uses, and deterioration and replacement with other forms of housing. Representatively, a large number of mobile home parks throughout the county are showing signs of deferred maintenance and structural integrity problems associated with aging, particularly in reference to changing design codes and structural improvements in manufactured housing over the past several years. Overpayment among the households with incomes of 80 percent and above the median income is not as prevalent. Some owner households may choose to allocate a higher percentage of their disposable income on housing costs because this allocation is justified in light of investment qualities of ownership.

Table 42 identifies the affordable rents and purchase prices by income category for a family of four based on 30 percent of income expended. In the case of rent, the 30 percent does not include allowance for utilities which may impose additional costs to the renter between \$50 and \$100 per month, depending on what utilities the renter is responsible for paying, and make rental of a unit which otherwise might be affordable to become a condition of overpayment.

The HUD median family income for Cherokee County was \$63,100 in 2000 and in 2004 was \$69,300. The following table identifies the income ranges, based on the HUD MFI guidelines, and the rent or home purchase price affordable to each income group in 2005. The proportion of persons in each income category, for comparison with the previous table reporting housing cost ranges, is based on the 2000 HUD MFI applied to the Census income categories. It may be assumed that this proportional distribution is relevant to the household population in Cherokee County in 2005. This table assumes a 10 percent down payment, 1 percent property tax and P&I.

Table 42: HUD Affordable Rents and Purchase Price by Income Category

	Annual Income (2005)	% of Population (2000)*	Maximum Affordable Rent (2005)	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price 2005)
Very Low	0 to \$34,650	18.80%	\$866	\$126,500
Low	\$34,650 to \$55,440	19.80%	\$1,386	\$202,500
Moderate	\$55,441 to \$83,160	25.20%	\$2,079	\$303,500
Above Moderate	Above \$83,160	46.20%	\$2,080+	\$304,000
Median	\$69,300		\$1,732	\$253,100

* Percent of Population is based on 2000 HUD median income classifications applied to 2000 Census income categories.
Source: HUD Median Family Income Limits.

Affordability of Home Ownership

A summary of home prices in the county, derived from the Census, a sample of real estate sales during May 2005, and internet-marketing websites reflects the following information, as previously presented in detail:

- According to the Census, a variety of housing types at a range of prices are offered in the unincorporated county, from homes with values less than \$10,000 to over \$1,000,000 or more.
- According to the Census, slightly over 20 percent of the units were valued at \$100,000 or less, with 40.4 percent valued at less than \$125,000. This indicates that there appears to be adequate stock of existing homes to accommodate the 18.8 percent of the county households with incomes less than 50 percent of the county median, which can afford a monthly payment not exceeding \$866 in 2005. The majority of housing stock at this price point consists of existing homes, primarily older and smaller units, existing older townhomes, and manufactured housing. There may be limited new home opportunities at this price point, however, in the mixed use communities, within the Woodstock LCI area, within the Bells Ferry LCI study area, within the Highway 92 Mixed-Use Overlay Zone, within the Canton LCI study area, and the lower priced units within such townhome communities as Hidden Springs Townhomes, Fox Creek Townhomes, Riverside Commons Townhomes, Riverpark Townhomes, The Enclave at Holly Mill, and the Ridge Mill Townhomes, as well as scattered small unit subdivisions. Attached units such as Rivers Edge in Woodstock and Canton Heights both begin in the \$130,000s.
- According to the Census, an additional 37.6 percent of the existing units in the county were valued between \$125,000 and \$200,000. It appears as if adequate stock is available to house the 19.8 percent of the total county households that are considered lower income (at 50 percent to 80 percent of county median income), and can theoretically afford a payment, which does not exceed \$1,386 per month. There is a sizeable inventory of new housing stock affordable to that income category as well, inclusive of single-family detached units and townhomes. There have been some recent rezones for townhomes and patio home/zero lot line products in the county which will most likely fall within this price range, including three sites northeast of Canton near the I-575, for townhomes as part of the Centennial Lakes project, townhomes on Bells Ferry Road adjacent to the Peaks of Bells Ferry apartments, and a senior living attached project near Bridge Mill on Bells Ferry Road, Countryside Cottages on Bells Ferry northwest of the Towne Lake community, and 188 townhomes on Bells Ferry east of the lake, to the north of the Wyngate subdivision. As well, the proposed Traditional Neighborhood Development in Ball Ground is anticipated to have approximately 100 townhome units.
- The Census reports 15.0 percent of the housing units with values between \$200,000 and \$300,000, although over 25 percent of the households could theoretically afford to purchase a home at that price point. In 2000, the Census reported only 7.0 percent of the homes over \$300,000, although almost one-half of the households could afford a home at the lower end of the highest price point range. Although in the past five years between 30 and 40 new move-up and executive level housing communities have been constructed or are in the build-out phase which is not reflected in the Census counts, it is clear that there

is a continued need for more expensive housing catering to households with incomes over 120 percent of the county median. The golf course, country club and swim/tennis communities such as Woodmont Golf and Country Club, Bridge Mill, Bradshaw Farm, Bradshaw Estates, Governor's Preserve, the Falls of Cherokee, Towne Lake Hills, Georgia Tech Club (under construction) as well as numerous other move-up and executive housing subdivisions located throughout the county, as previously cited, appear to be fulfilling that need.

- Approximately 19.9 percent of the units had a mortgage and/or monthly cost that was less than \$899 per month, which is comparable to the \$866 monthly amount a household with an income of 50 percent of the county median can afford based on expenditure of 30 percent of monthly income. Of those units without a mortgage (units which may have their mortgages already paid off or other circumstances), 99.2 percent of the units had a monthly cost of less than \$900.
- Almost 53 percent of the housing stock with a mortgage was reported to have a monthly payment of less than \$1,500, which is slightly more than the amount affordable to lower income households with incomes between 50 percent and 80 percent of the county median (\$1,386).

Affordability of Rental Units

A summary of rent structures in the county, derived from Census information, May 2005 real estate company internet listing surveys, as previously discussed, and a phone/internet survey of representative apartment complexes in the county and its cities, reflects the following information for renters:

- According to the Census, within the unincorporated area, only 5.6 percent of the total rental units were available for rents below \$399 per month, which is affordable to households with very, very low incomes (earning 25 percent of the county median at \$15,775 in 2000)), which comprise under 15 percent of the 2000 rental households, indicating a shortfall in the number of units with rents affordable to the lowest income households in the unincorporated county.
- The largest proportion, 56.3 percent, rented between \$400 and \$900 per month, which is affordable to households at the upper ranges of the very low-income category (50 percent of the county median income), which constitutes over 20 percent of the renter households in the unincorporated county.
- A large proportion of units (30.3 percent) fell within the \$900 to \$1,500 per month range, which is affordable to households within the low-income range (50-80 percent of county median income), which constitute almost 20 percent of the renter households.
- Only 4.0 percent rented for over \$1,500 per month, which is generally affordable to households earning over 80 percent of the median income, which constitute almost 14 percent of the rental households in 2000. This indicates that there is a wide range of choices for moderate-income households, some of which may be considered extremely affordable within the associated price range.
- Recent 2005 rental surveys of primarily single-family detached units and townhomes showed a different picture. The average rental price of all surveyed units was just less than \$1,000 per month, with numerous move-up and executive level housing opportunities ranging from \$1,000 per month to well over \$1,600 per month and above for golf course and lake front properties.
- A review of rent structures in 2005 at apartment complexes throughout the county indicates a range of prices and unit sizes (see Table 35), as well as a number of income-restricted apartments that utilized tax credit financing or other federal or state financing incentives. Over half of the complexes surveyed (33) offered units at rents affordable to lower-income households. Studios ranged from \$379 to \$515 per month, with the majority under \$400 monthly. The lowest priced one-bedroom apartments begin in the low \$500's, with one complex with an asking rent of \$685 for a three-bedroom unit, and a number of three-bedroom units in the high 700's to low 800's, which is well within the rent range of households with incomes below 50 percent of the county median. For households with higher income levels, there are a number of new luxury apartment complexes with apartments of sizeable square footage and club-

like amenities, with starting rents for a one-bedroom unit above \$700 per month, ranging above \$1,200 per month for a three-bedroom unit.

- A review of the rental units by number of bedrooms and rents asked in previous analysis indicates that the rental stock in the unincorporated county is primarily comprised of two- and three-bedroom units in equivalent proportions, where 40.3 percent of the rental units were two bedroom and 40.8 percent of the rental units were three bedrooms. As well, just slightly over 10 percent of the units were studio or one-bedroom units. Just over 10 percent of the stock was comprised of two- and three-bedroom units with rents below \$500 per month, which is affordable to very, very low income households with incomes below 25 percent of the county median. However, over 30 percent of the two-bedroom units, and almost 20 percent of the three-bedroom units fell within the \$500 to \$999 range, which is considered to be affordable within the upper means of the 50 percent of the county median income category and the lower end of the 50 percent to 80 percent of the median income category. Three bedroom rentals over \$1,000 per month, primarily single-family detached units, constituted 17.7 percent of the total rental stock in the unincorporated county.

As discussed in previous sections, a summary of rent structures in the county, derived from Census information and Internet real estate listings, reflects the following information. The median contract rent in the county, including the cities of Woodstock, Ball Ground, Canton, Waleska and Holly Springs was \$740 per month in 2000, as compared to \$534 in 1990. Median rents in the cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock were higher than in the county as a whole, at \$825 and \$794 respectively. This may reflect the rental of single-family detached or attached units in these areas as compared to multi-family units in other jurisdictions or the county as a whole, or newer, more upscale apartment complexes geared towards the established professional.

The analysis of current market conditions suggests that while there may be an adequate number of rental units available for much of the workforce households, there may not be quite an adequate number for the extremely low income renter household population (with incomes below 30 percent of the county median), which, although numerically small, constitutes almost 15 percent of the renter population. The shortfall is closing however. Based on the Census information, almost 13 percent of the rental stock was priced at rents affordable to households earning 25 percent of the county median income, and the majority of those were two- and three-bedroom units. As well, it appears as though there may be an adequate stock of units available for the upper income limits of the very low and low-income household categories, and that the available rental stock may accommodate the sizes needed by the lower income households, as the majority of rental stock is comprised of two- and three-bedroom units. Newer products offer either luxury, club-like atmospheres at market rates, or income restricted units that generally are affordable to households with incomes up to 80 percent of the county median. The income-restricted units financed with tax credit incentives generally maintain a proportion of units affordable to households with incomes at or around 60 percent of the county median.

Special Needs Populations

Individuals and households with “special needs” are those whose housing requirements go beyond just a safe and sanitary dwelling at an affordable price and include either unique physical or sociological requirements, or both. The special needs of the elderly and handicapped, who have particular physical needs as well as sociological needs unique to their group; large families, who need four, five or more bedrooms in a dwelling; families with female heads of households, who may be faced with economic and family support issues; and the homeless, who cannot find adequate permanent housing, are among “special needs” populations that require additional attention in the provision of housing. Not all persons and households in the county with “special needs” are faced with economic challenges, and it is assumed that where sufficient income is available, these special needs can be satisfied. Special needs groups with limited incomes should be targeted by the Comprehensive Plan.

Disabilities and Housing Needs

A variety of people within Cherokee County has special housing needs. Within the county as a whole, 24,437 persons, or 18.8 percent of the population over age five were reported as having a disability. Proportionally, 76.5 percent of all disabled persons are between age 21 and 65. Persons over 65 constituted 22.8 percent of all persons reporting a disability in the unincorporated area, although persons over 65 represent 6.1 percent of the population over age five. In other terms, over 84 percent of seniors reported some kind of a disability.

Table 43 includes an inventory of some disabilities accounted for by the Census Bureau. According to the Census, there were 32,247 disabilities reported in the county, of which 9.1 percent (2,917) disabilities were reported within the incorporated areas. It should be noted that the reporting of a disability does not equate to the actual number of persons reporting disabilities. A single person may have reported more than one kind of disability. For example, a person may report a physical disability that in turn results in a self-care disability and an inability to work, resulting in being counted in three categories. Within the unincorporated county area, seniors accounted for 22.9 percent of the disabilities, persons between 16 and 65 accounted for 72.2 percent of the disabilities and persons under 15 represented the remaining 4.9 percent. Over 39 percent of all disabilities reported in the workforce age (16 to 65) were an employment disability.

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total disabilities tallied:	32,247	210	2,094	478	205	2,024	5,011	26,913
Total disabilities age 5 to 15 years:	1,538	2	9	32	11	138	192	1,341
Sensory disability	138	0	0	0	0	7	7	127
Physical disability	190	0	0	16	3	19	38	152
Mental disability	1,088	2	9	8	7	98	124	963
Self-care disability	122	0	0	8	1	14	23	99
Total disabilities age 16 to 64 years:	22,899	146	1,336	335	164	1,315	3,296	19,428
Sensory disability	1,786	15	113	18	14	93	253	1,508
Physical disability	4,727	35	256	50	21	263	625	4,050
Mental disability	2,356	20	125	40	30	156	371	1,960
Self-care disability	1,068	13	77	12	1	63	166	899
Go-outside-home disability	3,981	12	306	81	49	154	602	3,355
Employment disability	8,981	51	459	134	49	586	1,279	7,656
Total disabilities age 65 years and over:	7,810	62	749	111	30	571	1,523	6,144
Sensory disability	1,219	7	125	20	7	73	232	7,548
Physical disability	2,610	29	219	30	8	237	523	2,023
Mental disability	1,076	5	87	6	5	48	151	918
Self-care disability	854	7	96	0	3	62	168	675
Go-outside-home disability	2,051	14	222	55	7	151	449	1,571

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

Many of these disabilities simply require design modification to existing residences. Other populations, such as individuals with extreme mental disabilities, or self-care limitations, require long-term residential care.

Within the Atlanta metropolitan area, specialty housing such as residential group homes and shelters exist to meet the needs of this group. There are shelters for victims of domestic violence and their families, rehabilitation centers for individuals recovering from drug addiction or mental illness, and transitional housing for homeless families. However, facilities assisting these populations are limited or non-existent in the county, so the needs of this population must take advantage of the services offered through organizations outside of Cherokee County.

Homeless Housing Needs

A less visible component of special needs populations are the homeless. Based on a 2001 study conducted by the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, less than 30 calls were received for placement in shelters of individuals from Cherokee County. There are no homeless shelters in Cherokee County, although there is a distribution facility for meals, food, clothing and utilities assistance (when funds are available) located on Marietta Road, which is run by Ministries United for Service and Training (MUST). This organization also runs the closest emergency shelter in Marietta, called the Elizabeth Inn, which is available for homeless residents of Cherokee County. The Elizabeth Inn has a 32-bed capacity for men and 10-bed capacity for women or women with children, funded through a non-profit organization, donations, volunteers and supplemented by occasional limited grants through DCA. Residents may stay for a period up to 6 weeks, and must be drug free. Other organizations and facilities nearby that accommodate homeless persons from Cherokee County include, but are not limited to the following:

- Covenant Life Center in Marietta;
- Timothy's Cupboard in Woodstock;
- United Way of Cherokee County – resource referral;
- Merismos Ministries – Bethany Home;
- North Georgia Community Action – Pickens County Office;

Elderly

Many retired persons may be on fixed incomes. Besides affordability issues, the elderly maintain special needs regarding housing construction and location. However, the elderly in the county and the individual cities do not comprise the majority of the households reporting a housing problem. Among seniors reporting housing needs, a greater proportion are owners, at 15.3 percent of owners reporting problems, as compared to renters at 7.6 percent. This may reflect the aging of the population already owning their home who transition into a fixed income upon retirement, and subsequent housing payment of more than 30 percent of their income, or other housing related problems. It may also reflect a lack of rental units catering to the needs of the elderly or complexes designed exclusively for seniors, whereas a number of adult ownership communities are available, and senior owners may choose to pay more for the benefits of ownership.

It appears that the majority of persons aged 65 and above in the county are on limited or fixed incomes. Approximately 35 percent of the senior population reported incomes of \$20,000 and below, which is less than 30 percent of the county median. An additional 24 percent of the senior population reported incomes between 30 and 50 percent of the county median, for a total of 59 percent of persons considered in a very low-income category, according to HUD. Housing choices for seniors at this price point are limited in the county. Approximately 20 percent of the senior population reported incomes between 50 and 80 percent of the county median, and 13 percent of the seniors had incomes above 80 percent of the median, where a greater range of housing options are available at this income level, particularly some of the newer active adult communities.

As of 2000, almost 6.6 percent of the total county population was over the age of 65, with less than 1 percent over 85 years. However, over 14 percent of the population was between the ages of 50 and 65. It is primarily the needs of this population, in addition to the percent of the population already over 65, which will require planning for during the 20-year future. Currently, almost 90 percent of the senior population owns their own home, with just over 10 percent renting. Approximately 28 percent of the senior population has lived in the

county for 30 or more years, and 8 percent of the upcoming senior population (age 50-65) has lived in the same residence for over 30 years, which indicates a potential need for rehabilitation of these older homes as these households move into retirement and potentially fixed and lower incomes. Statistics on the proportion of seniors and “near seniors” residing in homes over 50 years of age provides an indication of further potential for the need for rehabilitation and maintenance assistance programs, with almost 16 percent of the seniors and 8.6 percent of the age 50-64 group living in homes built prior to 1950. This representation of persons in the older age groups residing in older homes supports the link between affordability and age of the older homes, as shown in previous analysis.

With regard to housing construction needs, the elderly often require ramps, handrails, lower counter and cupboard heights, etc., to allow for greater mobility and access. They also typically need to have access to public facilities, such as medical and shopping, and public transit facilities. In most instances, the elderly prefer to remain in their own dwellings rather than relocate to a retirement community, and may require assistance to make home repairs. There are a number of programs available for seniors through the Senior Services Division of the Cherokee County government. The Cherokee County Senior Center, located on Univer Road, offers many of these programs, including:

- **Information and Assistance:** Information on programs and resources for seniors in the community. This service provides connections to such issues as housing, employment, Medicare, Medicaid, social security, adult day care, transportation, health care, nursing homes, legal services, in-home services and financial assistance. Either a direct phone call or internet requests are accommodated. The center offers a brochure describing its services and provides contact information for each program.
- **Caregiver Assistance Program:** Quarterly meetings for caregivers to identify available resources in the community, receive information for specialists in the field, meet other caregivers for support;
- **Congregate Meal Program:** Lunch provided weekdays, in addition to programs and activities (bingo, arts and crafts, legal aid, parties, shopping trips, blood pressure checks).
- **Meals on Wheels:** Meals delivered to homebound seniors aged 60+ on weekdays. Donations accepted but ability to pay not a requirement.
- **Home Maker Services:** Program designed to assist functionally impaired seniors live independently in their own homes as long as possible. Homemaker aides provide in-home assistance to clients aged 60+ who need light housekeeping tasks.
- **Transportation Services:** The Cherokee County Senior Center will provide transportation to and from the center’s morning programs, scheduled field trips, shopping and medical appointments. This service is provided through a contract with Mountain Area Transportation Systems (MATS) five days a week, and is wheelchair accommodating. All residents of the county can utilize MATS; however, only seniors aged 60+ can receive a reduced fare to the center (\$1.00 contribution round trip). Higher fares apply to other destinations.

The majority of seniors own their own home, with only 10 percent requiring rental housing. However, this translates to over 900 persons as of 2000, which has increased by 2005, many of whom may subsist on incomes below \$15,000 per year (25.1 percent of seniors report incomes below this figure). There are some resources available for persons with lower incomes, particularly the three federally-assisted apartments in Canton and Woodstock, public housing, the 18 plus income-restricted apartment complexes identified by the rental survey, market rate apartments with rents affordable to lower income households, and older single-family, duplexes and townhomes located throughout the county and the cities. However, these resources are also the only available properties to fulfill the needs of the remainder of the lower-income households requiring housing with payments below \$866 per month for a family of four. An age restricted apartment project, Bethany Manor, is under consideration on Highway 5 near I-575, northeast of Canton, where a zoning change was recently approved from LI to a RM-16 multi-family designation. However, federal funding assistance sought through the USDA Rural Rental Development Assistance Program was not approved; therefore,

the potential for these units to be offered as rent or income restricted is diminished unless the developer chooses to seek Tax Credits. Also proposed in that vicinity are three zero lot line projects that might be adult ownership communities. Two other senior projects have been proposed and recently rezoned—a 150-unit senior living complex that is part of a mixed-use development adjacent to the Bridge Mill planned community and a patio home/multi-family unit project (units undetermined) on Towne Lake Parkway just outside of the city limits of Woodstock. Although age restricted, these projects are not anticipated to be income restricted, however. A number of ownership resources exist for seniors with incomes above 50 percent of the median (\$34,650), including existing resale homes and mobile home units, limited new single-family detached homes, selected new townhomes and patio homes, and “active adult” communities, which were discussed previously. Rental housing designed specifically for seniors to meet their mobility and accessibility needs, with income restricted units, and should be highly considered as a residential use within mixed-use developments, particularly within the Downtown Master Plan areas in Canton, Woodstock and Holly Springs, and the Bells Ferry and Highway 92 Corridors. The County and cities should work with project proponents in identifying federal and state funding assistance programs.

Overcrowding

In response to higher housing prices, lower income households must often be satisfied with smaller, less adequate housing for available money. This may result in overcrowding, defined by the Census Bureau as “housing units in excess of one person per room average.” Overcrowding places a strain on physical facilities, does not provide a satisfying environment, and eventually may cause conditions which contribute both to deterioration of the housing stock and neighborhoods in general.

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Housing Units	49,495	247	2,713	1,109	112	3,845	8,026	41,469
Owner occupied:	41,503	188	1,390	877	72	2,789	5,316	36,187
0.50 or fewer occupants per room	31,395	143	961	485	62	2,304	3,955	27,440
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	9,533	40	371	368	10	470	1,259	8,274
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	433	3	14	24	0	4	45	388
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	97	2	23	0	0	11	36	61
2.01 or more occupants per room	45	0	21	0	0	0	21	24
Renter occupied:	7,992	59	1,323	232	40	1,056	2,710	5,282
0.50 or fewer occupants per room	4,192	43	723	121	24	505	1,416	2,776
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	3,131	16	429	100	15	491	1,051	2,080
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	353	0	98	0	1	42	141	212
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	209	0	65	11	0	18	94	115
2.01 or more occupants per room	107	0	8	0	0	0	8	99

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
 Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

Information provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs relating to persons or households reporting housing problems indicates that 766 households experienced overcrowding conditions, including 249 owner households and 517 renter households. Data from the Census differs notably, with 1,244 total households—575 owner-occupied and 669 renter-occupied. According to the Census, approximately 2.2 percent of all households (899) in the unincorporated county area reported overcrowded housing conditions, of

which 473 were owner-occupied units and 426 were renter occupied units. These numbers indicate that proportionately, renters experienced overcrowding at a higher rate compared to owners at 1.8 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively. In the incorporated areas, the majority of persons reporting overcrowding were renters, at almost 70 percent. This may be an indication that renters are not finding suitable housing with adequate number of rooms with rents affordable to their incomes, or that some renters may choose to share rooms, such as in the college town of Waleska where students may share a one- or two-bedroom housing unit.

Even though overcrowding does exist, the county's incidence of overcrowding is considered low in the region, particularly within the incorporated portions of the county. The Census reports the average household size at 2.85 persons per household. By 2030, the overall person per household rate is forecast to be low in comparison to other urbanizing areas in the Metro region at 2.75. However, the stock of larger rental units in the county, inclusive of units within the cities, may not be adequate to accommodate the needs of larger households at the lower price point. A number of new rental projects proposed in the county, the City of Woodstock, as well as Canton, should help to alleviate the overcrowding experienced in the cities and throughout the county. In addition, the increasing transition of owner-occupied single-family and townhome units to rentals provides some additional options for larger rental stock, as the majority of the single-family rentals are 2- and 3-bedroom units, with a number of the more expensive rentals providing 4 and 5 bedrooms. However, the County and individual cities should strive to promote and approve new multi-family rental projects with 3 or more bedrooms, as well as workforce income ownership products with three or more bedrooms. Habitat for Humanity has been working within the county, primarily within individual cities, in the completion of a number of units suited for average and larger sized families.

Table 45: Household Size by Tenure

	Cherokee County	Cities					All Cities Total	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Occupied Housing Units	49,495	247	2,713	1,109	112	3,845	8,026	41,469
Owner occupied:	41,503	188	1,390	877	72	2,789	5,316	36,187
1-person household	6,010	36	277	134	13	653	1,113	4,897
2-person household	14,158	68	502	267	42	988	1,867	12,291
3-person household	8,516	32	233	147	4	462	878	7,638
4-person household	8,333	26	248	232	11	491	1,008	7,325
5-person household	3,117	17	43	74	2	166	302	2,815
6-person household	914	9	25	16	0	10	60	854
7-or-more-person household	455	0	62	7	0	19	88	367
Renter occupied:	7,992	59	1,323	232	40	1,056	2,710	5,282
1-person household	1,913	26	480	41	11	355	913	1,000
2-person household	2,163	17	283	69	10	259	638	1,525
3-person household	1,367	0	143	62	8	197	410	957
4-person household	1,289	3	156	40	5	129	333	956
5-person household	747	13	158	20	6	44	241	506
6-person household	228	0	25	0	0	47	72	156
7-or-more-person household	285	0	78	0		25	103	182

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: Unincorporated Area includes portions of the cities of Nelson and Mountain Park.

Based on the rental complex survey, there were no apartment complexes with four or more bedrooms, although 22 complexes, more than 60 percent of those surveyed, offered three bedroom units. Single-family units that have been converted to rentals apparently are the only resource for 4 or more bedroom rental options, although the majority of such rentals were found to be at the higher ranges of the rental prices.

Housing problems associated with tenure also varies with household size. Among the renters reporting a housing problem, 22.1 percent were living in households with five or more persons, as compared to 11 percent of the owners. This may be partially attributed to overcrowded conditions in units with an inadequate number of bedrooms to house the number of persons in the household. Conversely, the proportion of two-person owner households with housing needs is 24.4 percent, as compared to 13.3 percent of renters. It appears that two-person renter households may generally be able to find units with an appropriate number of rooms within their price range compared to owners. The proportion of three- and four-person households experiencing housing problems is comparable between owners and renters, at 22.6 and 23.8 percent for owners and 21.6 and 21.1 percent for renters respectively. A slightly higher proportion of one-person renter households experience problems than owner households, at 21.9 percent as compared to 18.3 percent. This may be that there are a lower proportion of single homeowners compared to renters.

Within the unincorporated county areas, 3- and 4-person households comprised 40.7 percent of the total, with two-person households comprising 33.3 percent of the total. Larger households with five or more persons constituted 11.8 percent of the total households, and single-person households comprised 14.2 percent of the households. Distribution in the incorporated areas was comparable with one difference—the proportion of single-person households constituted 25.2 percent of total households with a slightly lower representation of 3- and 4-person households at 32.8 percent of the total.

**Table 46: Number of Units by Number of Bedrooms by Tenure
1990 and 2000**

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner occupied:	25,828	82.5%	41,503	83.9%
No bedroom	17	0.1%	55	0.1%
1 bedroom	302	1.2%	397	1.0%
2 bedrooms	3,721	14.4%	3,948	9.5%
3 bedrooms	17,577	68.1%	23,203	55.9%
4 bedrooms	3,615	14.0%	11,151	26.9%
5 or more bedrooms	596	2.2%	2,749	6.6%
Renter occupied:	5,481	17.5%	7,992	16.1%
No bedroom	31	0.6%	170	2.1%
1 bedroom	585	10.7%	1,097	13.7%
2 bedrooms	2,186	39.9%	3,429	42.9%
3 bedrooms	2,315	42.2%	2,766	34.6%
4 bedrooms	341	6.2%	441	5.5%
5 or more bedrooms	23	0.4%	89	1.1%
Total Occupied Units	31,309		49,495	

Source: 2000 Census STF-3.
Note: % of number of bedrooms are calculated on total of tenure category as baseline.
Percent by tenure is based on total number of units as baseline

Representation within the tenure type however, varies significantly between the unincorporated and incorporated areas. The largest proportion of renters in the incorporated areas are comprised of single-person households, at 33.7 percent, with 23.5 percent being two-person households; whereas in the unincorporated area single-person households comprised only 18.9 percent of rental households, and two-person households comprised 28.9 percent of rental households. The size of rental households in the unincorporated area was generally larger than in the incorporated area for all other size households as well. Among ownership households, the unincorporated area also supports higher proportions of larger households. Approximately 20.9 percent of owner households in the incorporated area were comprised of single persons, whereas

only 13.5 percent were single-person households in the unincorporated area. Two person households were comparable at 35 percent and 34 percent respectively. Slightly over 42 percent of the owner households in the unincorporated county were comprised of 3 and 4 persons, whereas in the incorporated areas 3- and 4-

person households represented 35.8 percent of owners. Large households of five or more persons comprised 11.1 percent of unincorporated owners, as compared to 8.5 percent of owners in the incorporated areas.

Although the 1990 Census does not provide comparable data to the 2000 Census on the size of units, the number of bedrooms by tenure can also provide similar conclusions. The proportion of homes with 4 or more bedrooms, comparable to units with 7 or more rooms, has significantly increased from 14.6 percent in 1990 to 29.1 percent in 2000, particularly the number of units with 4 bedrooms. Conversely, the proportion of units with smaller number of bedrooms (none, one and two) which correlates to homes with fewer than four rooms decreased from 21.8 percent in 1990 to 18.4 percent in 2000, although numerically there was an increase in stock of smaller units, particularly among the two-bedroom rental unit stock which increased by over 50 percent. The relatively small growth in larger size rental units is a potential concern, as renter households may not be able to find a unit within their financial means to accommodate their household size. In addition, the proportion of total 3-bedroom units has reduced from 63.5 percent in 1990 to 52.7 percent in 2000, while the predominant unit size has shifted from 3-bedroom units to 2-bedroom units in 2000.

The number of rooms available in a residence, and the proportion of larger or smaller units in a jurisdiction, influences the incidence of overcrowding. Since 1990, based on the bedrooms by tenure analysis, housing units have been getting larger on a countywide basis. The proportion of large units (7, 8, and 9 rooms) has increased to almost 46 percent of the total housing stock. Conversely, the proportion of smaller units (1, 2, 3 and 4 rooms) has decreased to 12.8 percent, as well as the proportion of average sized homes with 5 and 6 rooms, to 41.7 percent in 2000.

The table above shows the number of rooms per unit, by tenure. Generally, owner-occupied housing tends to be larger. Almost 52 percent of the units in the county are owner-occupied with 5, 6 and 7 rooms, which would generally correspond to 2-, 3- and some 4-bedroom units. These size units constitute almost 60 percent of the owner-occupied housing stock, with 6-room units comprising the largest proportion. Among renter-occupied housing, the majority of units, 69.2 percent of the rental stock, are comprised of 4-, 5- and 6-room units, with 5 room units as the largest proportion. The number of small rental units (1, 2, and 3 rooms) exceeds the number of small owner-occupied units of the same size, at 14.1 percent of the total stock for renters as compared to less than 2 percent for owner-occupied units.

As indicated in previous discussions, even though overcrowding does exist, the county's incidence of overcrowding is considered low in the region, particularly within the incorporated portions of the county. The Census reports the average household size at 2.85 persons per household; ARC reports a comparable figure at 2.82 persons per household. The 2000 Census reports the average household size of owner-occupied units at 2.88 persons, and the average size of renter-occupied units at 2.67 persons per unit. Projections of household size indicate that the size of households in general is anticipated to drop slightly by 2030, with an overall persons-per-household rate of 2.75. However, within the unincorporated county area the rate is forecast to remain at about 2.85 persons per household, with the rate dropping in the incorporated areas to 2.57 by 2030, thereby bringing the overall rate down. Regardless, the overall persons-per-household rate will be low in comparison to other urbanizing areas in the Metro region.

■ Housing Programs

The primary barriers to new affordable housing in Cherokee County are current market prices and the costs of development and land improvement, which are steadily increasing due to limited availability, public facility capacity and regional pressures. It is evident that new market rate housing does not adequately fulfill the housing needs in terms of affordability of very low-income households, except for a few new units that may be affordable to the very upper reaches of the very low-income range. It is clear that cooperative participation of the public and private sectors is necessary to expand housing opportunities to the lower income economic segments of the community.

However, according to an Atlanta Journal-Constitution article (August 21, 2003), lack of affordable land is causing Cherokee County's Habitat for Humanity chapter to have a difficult time building new homes. Land acquisition is delaying the construction of Habitat homes in the county. Whereas a decade ago an acre of land might cost \$10,000, that same acre of land may now cost up to \$40,000, particularly if sewer and water is readily available. Habitat's goal is to produce a home for approximately \$45,000, inclusive of land, but is extremely constricted in the current market. The various jurisdictions in Cherokee County may choose to offer incentives to Habitat for Humanity, or other non-profits in the acquisition and improvement of land, such as backbone infrastructure support for example, or negotiate the sale of publicly owned land, if available, at below market rates.

There is not a large pool of funds available at the city or county level for financial incentives or assistance to developers to develop housing with affordability components, and therefore reliance on state and federal housing programs is important, although funding is limited and often competitive. In addition, being largely a newly urbanizing area, the County has not undertaken an aggressive redevelopment strategy, although Canton, Woodstock and Holly Springs have focused attention on redevelopment and revitalization in their downtown areas and primary commercial corridors. Higher density, multi-family or mixed-use development with a residential component fills an economic need for affordable accommodations, as well as for special residential population groups such as the elderly or single-person households. Such housing also offers an opportunity for transitions in land use intensities between commercial uses and lower-density residential areas. It is also easily integrated into the more intensive urban fabric envisioned for the county's activity centers. A wide-range of housing types and sizes is promoted as a policy of the 2005 Land Use Update and by the ordinances that implement it.

Maintenance, Enhancement and Rehabilitation Programs

Cherokee County does not offer its own housing programs for rehabilitation, maintenance or enhancement. However, as a member of the Georgia Urban County Consortium (GUCC,) the County receives an annual allocation of HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which are administered through the Cobb County Community Block Grant Program Division. The GUCC was formed in 1992 to administer funds received from the Home Investment Partnerships Act (HOME), a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Cobb County serves as the lead agency for the consortium which includes Cobb County, Clayton County, Cherokee County (and its cities) and the City of Marietta. Residents of the county, its cities, developers and non-profit organizations rely on the assistance programs of the GUCC and the State Department of Community Affairs. The majority of the programs offered by the GUCC and State are funded by HUD resources.

In 2004, GUCC members expended more than \$2.8 million to improve deteriorating physical conditions in low-income neighborhoods and increase the supply of affordable housing by funding programs aimed at assisting individuals with low to moderate incomes. Cherokee County's entitlement portion in 2004, however, was less than \$30,000.

Upon being designated a GUCC member in 1999, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners voted to direct its HOME funds to the City of Canton for single-family owner-occupied housing rehabilitation and reconstruction. As there was a higher concentration of both old and dilapidated single-family housing and lower-income residents in the city, it was agreed that HOME funds would have the greatest impact on the housing situation by focusing the efforts within Canton. The City focused its efforts to improve the existing housing stock in older neighborhoods with the greatest need, and reconstructed two homes by 2003, utilizing \$91,353 in HUD funds. Three City neighborhoods were canvassed and offered the Single-family Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation information. Many of the older homes in the city have been purchased as rental properties and would not qualify for the program. The City received and processed five applications. Two applications were approved for deferred payment loans for reconstruction.

While Cherokee County as a whole, with a median income of almost \$69,000, generally reflects the affluence associated with the greater Atlanta metro area, lower income populations tend to be associated with the

existing older portions of the cities. With the mill closings years ago, the local economy was devastated, particularly in the cities reliant on the mills for their economic stability. Affected households, many of which are now elderly on fixed incomes, have not seen an increase in prosperity that is now occurring throughout the county. Many of these older residents still reside in the homes purchased decades ago. Older homes are generally more expensive to repair and maintain than newer homes, and the older owner-occupied and single-family rental properties tend to be occupied by individuals who are least able economically to afford repairs.

The Cherokee County Home Repair Program provides 5-year forgivable grants of up to \$25,000 for housing rehabilitation repairs and improvements to qualified homeowners. The program is income-restricted to persons aged 62 and above with 80 percent or below the county median. Funds must be used to fix dangerous health and safety problems around the house as required by current HUD standards. The recipient must agree to live in the home for 5 years after the repair is made, unless the recipient passes away or is relocated to an assisted care facility.

HUD regulations require that 15 percent of the HOME grant funds be set aside for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) activities. Cherokee County elected to use Cobb Housing, Inc. (CHI), with the capacity of serving the City of Canton program through 2003. Funds were allocated for the renovation of two single-family homes, which CHI purchased, renovated, and made available for sale to low income purchasers.

In 2004, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners voted to redirect its HOME funds to all the cities and residents of the county. HOME funds would continue to be used for the Single-Family Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation program and would specifically target the elderly population. Applications were submitted by 27 elderly citizens, and 14 were accepted. In 2004, three homes were completed, and two additional homes are slated for rehabilitation in 2005.

In addition, Cherokee County has elected to use CHI to carry out initial CHDO activities in 2004. Funds have been allocated to offset the cost of land acquisition, which has a significant impact upon the cost of housing. CHI will then act as a sponsor by transferring the property to Cherokee County Habitat for Humanity for the construction of new homes. In 2004, the GUCC reimbursed Cobb Housing, Inc. a total of \$29,145 for the acquisition of three lots in the Land O'Lakes subdivision. Habitat for Humanity will construct a home on each lot, and sell each property—along with HOME Program grant obligations, to a qualified Habitat homebuyer.

Vacant and Underutilized Housing Units

The County's Building and Permit Department maintains a map, which identifies vacant parcels. The County maintains records of all tax-delinquent properties, which may be accessed to identify potential property for development of an affordable housing project in concert with a nonprofit agency or developer. The County also maintains a numerical inventory by acre based on existing zoning distribution. As part of the Bells Ferry Corridor LCI study, an inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels was undertaken within the study area, which is where higher density development and infill can be targeted.

The City of Woodstock also keeps records on vacant and underutilized properties. Most of the available land in the city, approximately 200 acres, is not actually vacant, but zoned for rural development and agriculture. Most of the "underutilized" land was previously used for agriculture or grazing, consisting typically of a combination of undisturbed land with a small area of cleared land around an older home, or the whole property may have been cleared to accommodate farming at one time, with only a residence and supporting out-buildings. There are also small vacant infill properties and underutilized properties in the downtown area extending from 1-575, east to the intersection of Arnold Mill Road and Arnold Mill Way, north along Main Street, and south along Main Street just past Serenade Lane. The cities of Ball Ground and Waleska, being smaller, keep an inventory of vacant land per their zoning map.

■ Outlook for Housing Opportunities

As stated earlier, higher-density, multi-family or mixed-use with a residential component type development fills an economic need for affordable accommodations, as well as special residential population groups such as seniors, or single person households. Such housing is easily integrated into the more intensive urban fabric envisioned for the county's primary activity centers and mixed-use, traditional neighborhood developments (TND), or master planned developments, particularly within: the Bells Ferry Corridor LCI study area; the Towne Lake planned community; the future Laurel Canyon planned community in Canton; Bridge Mill; and other PUDs in the county as well as the downtown core areas encompassed by the City of Canton River Mill District, the City of Woodstock Town Center and the Holly Springs Downtown Master Plan, and contributes toward the revitalized, pedestrian oriented, transit accessible mixed-use image to be attained.

The majority of the housing stock in the county and its cities are single-family detached units, as shown on Table 20. Of the 51,937 housing units in 2000, approximately 85.4 percent of the housing stock was comprised of single-family detached units, and another 0.6 percent is attached single-family units. Mobile homes comprise 7.8 percent of the stock. The remaining 5.2 percent of the units include duplexes and townhomes, loft or apartment complexes. However, a large proportion of the single-family stock is rentals that may cater to the needs of the workforce population, particularly the older units with rents averaging between \$800 and \$1,000 per month for two- and three-bedroom homes. The higher-density products in the county are located primarily south and east of, and along the Bells Ferry Corridor and near Highway 92, as well as a few outside of the western City limits of Woodstock. Zero-lot line units are proposed northeast of Canton with the potential for 531 units. A senior apartment complex with approximately 100 units is also proposed at this location. Redevelopment and new development opportunities for higher density and workforce housing were reviewed extensively in the Bells Ferry Corridor study. As well, mixed-use and higher density products are accommodated under the SR-92 Mixed-Use Corridor overlay. In Woodstock, the majority of higher density products are found just off or along Main Street/State Route 5, Arnold Mill Road, Highway 92/Trickum Rd., and Towne Lake Parkway. Two newer high-density products in Woodstock are: the Hedgewood mixed-use development within the Downtown LCI study area with lofts above commercial, townhomes, and single-family; and a mixed commercial with townhomes at a density of 6 to 7 housing units per acre, located at the rear of the commercial use on Highway 92, which is proposed for annexation.

In 2000, only 2.5 percent of Holly Spring's housing stock was multi-family, although 51 new units have been added since 2000, including a duplex, 29 apartment units and a 20-unit townhome development. The City of Canton is a valuable resource of workforce housing, with a number of rentals available in the River Mill District, as well as lower market-rate rental apartments and income restricted apartment complexes, many located near the downtown area. The Canton Mills Lofts apartments were recently constructed in the Old Mill #2 building through adaptive reuse of the structure, which offer 315 income-restricted units. The cities of Waleska and Ball Ground do not have any concentrations of higher-density residential products. There is a concentration of single-family mill housing in Ball Ground off Old Canton Road, which is primarily lower cost rental, although it is not well maintained, and the units are being removed and the land redeveloped. Although this represents the loss of a few presently affordable units, the safety and well-being of the residents is also crucial.

The majority of vacant or underutilized land (as zoned for agricultural and predominantly undisturbed or cleared for agriculture with typically a single residence and supporting outbuildings, or zoned for rural residential with a large lot and a single residence) is being developed as single-family detached subdivisions, swim and tennis subdivisions, and upscale golf course communities, either individually or part of a master planned community; or higher density products such as townhomes, adult communities (patio homes or cluster homes on small lots with condominium amenities), and apartments offered at market rate or restricted income prices either as a stand alone complex, part of a master planned community or a mixed-use project. Revitalization of the downtown areas of Holly Springs, Canton and Woodstock, as well as the Bells Ferry LCI area in the southwest portion of the county, including the clearance and assembly of parcels for new,

higher-density residential and mixed-use construction will become increasingly feasible as pressure in the local land market builds. However, the lands used for market rate new construction may be the site of currently affordable units, such as mobile homes, or scattered single-family units that are typically older and may possibly be poorly maintained. They will likely diminish in number and proportion and push less financially solvent individuals and families out of these resources in search of more affordable housing. Ultimately, although the proportion of lower income households, particularly those experiencing overpayment problems, is relatively low in the county and its cities, and a stock of housing exists with rents and sale prices which are generally within the means of the upper ranges of very low and low income households, (50 to 80 percent of the county median, often referred to as the “workforce” population) the availability of housing within the financial realm of households with incomes below 50 percent of the county median, particularly those with incomes less than \$20,000 annually, will continue to diminish, and not be replaced unless cooperative participation between the public and private sectors is expanded to include development of housing opportunities for the lower economic sectors of the community.

Housing prices in Cherokee County and its cities are considered affordable in the context of the Metro Atlanta Area region in which the county is located. The median sales price for new and existing homes sold in Cherokee County rose 7 percent, to \$188,900 in 2004. Sales volume was up 15 percent, with 5,933 homes sold. The county’s average medium priced home is considered affordable to persons in the Low-income category. The medium priced home in adjacent Forsyth County in 2004 was \$235,700, Fulton County at \$206,850, Cobb County at \$190,000, and the metro Atlanta region as a whole at \$189,900. The following table provides comparisons of median housing prices in counties near Cherokee County.

Table 47: Comparison of Median Price and Rents in 2004		
	Median Price	Median Rent
Cherokee County	\$ 188,900	\$ 652
Cobb County	\$ 190,000	\$ 714
Fulton County	\$ 206,850	\$ 698
Forsyth County	\$ 235,700	\$ 745
Source: Robert Charles Lesser & Co., P.C.		

As outlined earlier, Cherokee County does provide housing opportunities to all segments of the market, although, as in other communities, the very lowest income and special needs populations may not be not adequately served. Between the resources in the county and the individual cities, opportunities for workforce residents with incomes below 50 percent of the county median are provided primarily in rental communities with income limitations and associated reduced rents, and mobile homes. However, manufactured housing and older affordable housing units may fall to economic pressures of growth, and new resources should be developed in concert with the region and surrounding jurisdictions.

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Economic Development

Overall, the factors of high home ownership rates, a young to middle age distribution, relatively strong educational attainment levels, a middle-income base and the type and quality of employment opportunities, indicate that the County is an attractive place for persons to commute outside the county for employment. Only 35.4 percent of the county's working population is employed within the county. Cherokee County's high labor force participation rate at 84.3 percent suggests a healthy economic environment for the residents. The key attributes analyzed—significant population growth, the middle-income nature of the population, the dominance of local services in the economy and the high percentage of persons working outside of the county—suggest two concerns regarding the balance of jobs and economic opportunities. The first is the apparent imbalance between the number of employment opportunities in the county and the size of the population. The second is the discrepancy between the quality of their jobs and the income levels of those working outside the county and within.

This trend could lead to potential shortfalls in the adequate funding for educational and governmental services due to a tax base dependent primarily on residential property taxes. From 1990 to 2001, Cherokee County's population increased by 66 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. When this is compared to the 95.1 percent growth in total employment in the same period, it is clear that the employment opportunities in the county are growing at a remarkable pace in order to alleviate the problems associated with what was likely an underserved population in the early 1990's. However, with total employment representing only 34.6 percent of the population, and 67.8 percent of the population within the potential workforce age group (18 to 69), there is a remaining gap between Cherokee County's availability to match employment opportunities with potential employees. Statistics indicate that while still increasing annually, a decline in the total annual employment change has occurred since 1998. This trend needs to reverse if the County would like employment opportunity to match the pace of the current population growth.

As a bedroom community, Cherokee County faces the challenge of not having a sufficient supply of jobs that complement the residents of the community. As discussed in the Demographics chapter, Cherokee County's working age population is more educated than in many of the surrounding counties, the State and the nation. In 2000, the county not only has a higher percentage of individuals over 25 years old with at least a high school diploma, but also has higher percentages of individuals with some college, Associate Degree and Bachelor's Degree categories than both Georgia and the U.S. In 2000, 57 percent of the population had completed some college and above, and 26 percent had a college degree. There was a significant decline—from 24.8 percent in 1990 to 15.6 percent in 2000—in the percent of the population with no high school diploma. The growth and relatively strong levels for bachelor's, graduate, and professional degrees clearly indicate that the individuals moving to Cherokee County are a relatively well-educated group.

While Cherokee County residents are well educated, the majority of jobs in the community are low paying. There are significant payroll disparities in almost all business sectors between Cherokee County and nearby jurisdictions. The relatively low payroll statistics for the county suggest it does not have a strong economic base, which will need to be a fundamental part of the county's economic development plan. Analysis of per capita income and average annual wage also indicates that there may not be enough jobs or economic opportunities for local residents within the county. While per capita income in the county is roughly comparable to that of the MSA and State, a lower annual wage indicates that those Cherokee County residents earning a higher income are generally those that are working outside of Cherokee County. The low average annual wage statistics suggest that salaries for jobs within the county are relatively uncompetitive.

In response to the low paying jobs in the county, many residents commute. This mismatch of jobs and residents contributes to traffic congestion as a large proportion of higher educated and higher income residents leave the county to work at higher paying, typically "white collar" professions, while lower income individuals enter the county to fill jobs that are available in the county, but may be lower paying, service oriented, or require less skills.

It also contributes to the “pull” factor, which indicates that sales dollars are flowing out of the county, creating an underserved business environment.

Bedroom communities such as Cherokee County often develop an imbalance between employment opportunities and housing that evolves due to earnings trends and housing prices. Wealthier individuals moving into the county can push housing prices upward. Another outcome of the job mismatch issue is that the persons commuting into the county to fill the jobs may be restricted in the Cherokee County housing market, resulting in a jobs/housing imbalance. Although the county does have a stock of lower priced housing, primarily older homes

Table 48: Place of Work for Cherokee County Residents in 2000

County of Residence	Place of work	Number	Percent
Cherokee County	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	74,075	100.0%
Cherokee County	Cherokee County	26,239	35.4%
Cherokee County	Cobb County	18,911	25.5%
Cherokee County	Fulton County	17,494	23.6%
Cherokee County	DeKalb County	2,898	3.9%
Cherokee County	Gwinnett County	2,037	2.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

and manufactured housing units, which may be affordable to the workforce population (persons with incomes below 50 percent of the county median up to 80 percent of the county median income), the median cost of housing, particularly new products, is generally equivalent, and as the cost of land and infrastructure provision increases, new market rate housing affordable to persons of lower incomes is not possible without government assistance. Current residents of the county in lower paying, service-oriented occupations, such as many of the current economic opportunities in Cherokee County, are pushed out of the housing market and eventually may be forced to live outside of the county. Therefore, many of the employees of the county that would want to live near their employment must live elsewhere and commute in. In 2000, for instance, over one-third of the jobs in the county were filled by non-county residents with over one-third (35.6 percent) of those coming from Cobb County.

The County is working to identify and capitalize on its strongest economic attributes to ensure continued recovery from the national economic downturn, align its economy around the national shift from manufacturing to a much more service oriented community, and increase dependence on technology in all sectors. The County has acknowledged this situation, formed the Economic Alliance, and developed an Economic Development Strategy supported by established goals and actions to attract strong, revenue generating employment base.

As more residential is in place, we are seeing more retail (lower paying jobs) as well as professional services (middle to upper income jobs) to support that base. The higher paying jobs include doctors, accountants, real estate professionals, and other professional services that county residents will support near their home. As more executive housing is introduced in Cherokee, we are beginning to see some executives moving their jobs closer to their homes. We would expect this trend to continue to play out over the next 25 years, creating a larger and higher-end employment base within the county. This, coupled with the growing demand for regional retail and higher-density housing, suggests a very strong market opportunity to lay the groundwork for an activity center that, in turn, could help attract more higher-end employment.

The fact that Cherokee County is within an hour of Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Airport is key to the county’s economic development. Many businesses need to be on a major interstate and within an hour of a major city and international airport, therefore the county has a constant prospect flow. Cherokee County’s selling points are similar to other North Atlanta metro communities, but the County has developed its own identity and slogan “Choose Cherokee...Where Metro Meets the Mountains.” The Development Authority believes that this sales tool reflects the atmosphere of the county, and intends to maximize on the belief that businesses and residents want to be close to a major city but have a true feel of a quality community. Housing and commute analysis support the conclusion that the county is attractive as a residential choice. The goals and strategy actions as set forth in the Economic Strategic Plan are intended to promote the county as an attractive place for business location as well.

■ Nonresidential Market

Currently, Commercial development in Cherokee County is primarily local-serving.

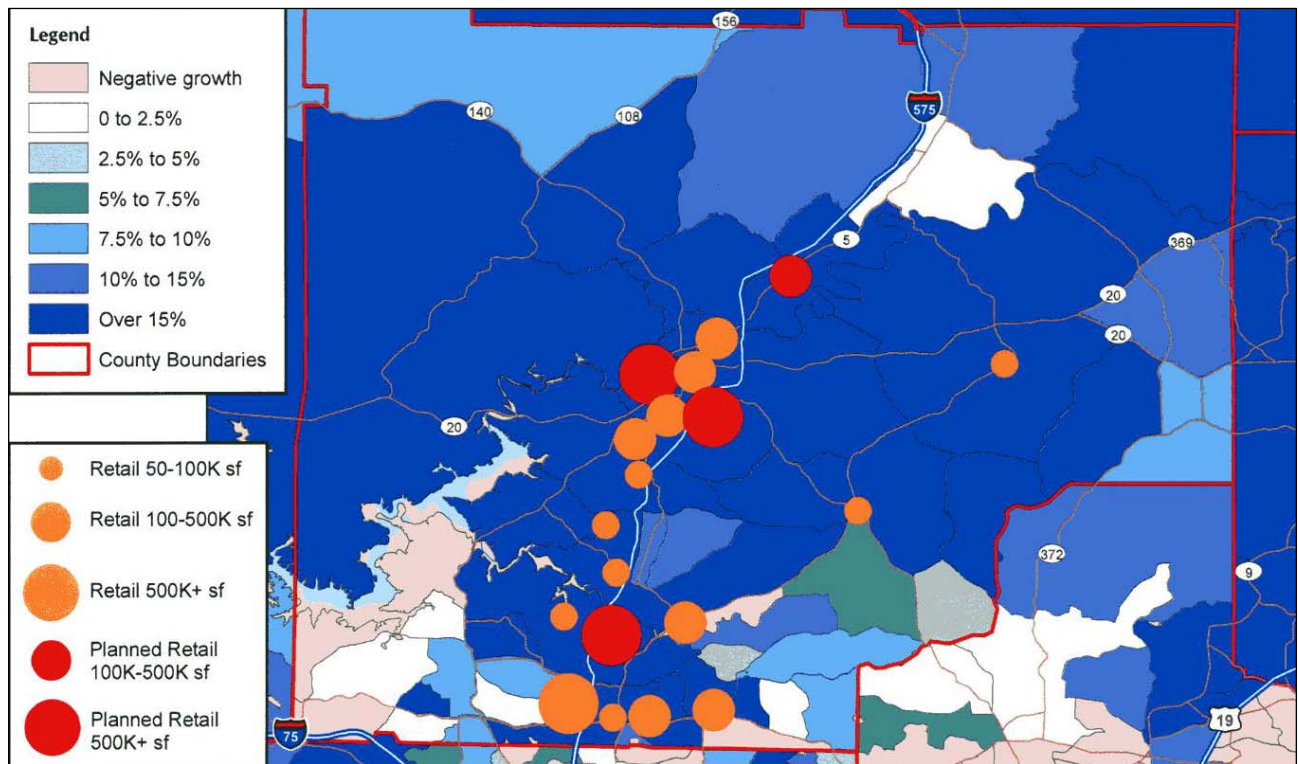
- Retail serves existing residents, although many travel out of the county to regional shopping destinations such as the Town Center Mall area;
- Local-serving office uses such as medical and real estate services support the local population; and
- Industrial parks include a range of local businesses including some manufacturing businesses.

The most recent U.S. Census report indicates that 63.5 percent of those who live in Cherokee County commute out of the county for work. As more growth that is residential occurs in the county, additional business will be supported. However, current market conditions and locations for employment suggest that the county will not emerge as a regional employment core, with significant export industry, if the market is left to its own devices.

Retail Follows Residential Growth

With robust residential growth, there will be significant demand for additional retail in Cherokee County. The level of household growth will create a critical mass that will support larger-scale, regional retail formats as well as a variety of local and community-serving retail centers throughout the county.

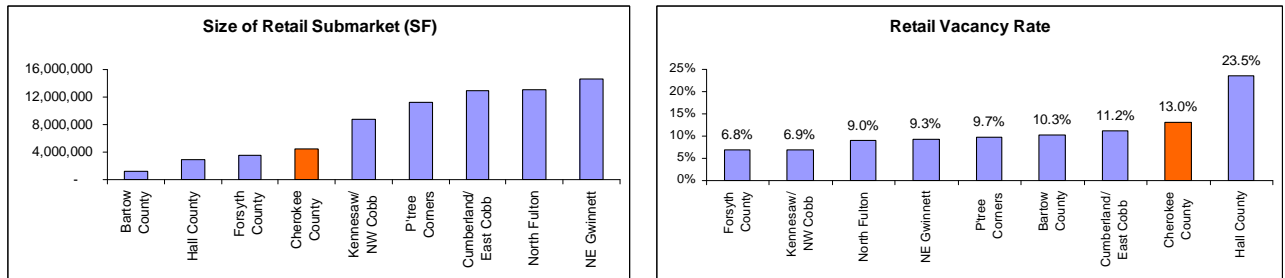
Household Growth 2005-2010—Retail Current and Proposed
Cherokee County November 2005



As illustrated in the map above, the existing and planned retail shopping centers are all clustered along I-575 in locations with excellent visibility and significant residential growth. Most of the planned and proposed

centers are larger in scale—indicating a regional-serving use—with the large-scale centers (those larger than 500,000 square feet) clustered around Canton. By way of contrast, most of the newer shopping centers have averaged approximately 80,000 square feet.

As illustrated in the following charts, as of Winter 2005 Cherokee had average retail rents, is fairly average in size (total square feet), and had above average vacancy when compared to other submarkets on the north side of Atlanta. The higher vacancy is likely due to new space being brought to market that is still in the process of leasing up. In the summer of 2005, vacancy was in line with other submarkets, at 9%.



Unlike many suburban areas of Atlanta, the current snapshot of the Cherokee retail market is one that is under-supplied with retail relative to the population base and incomes. Although there is more than 4.5 million square feet of shopping center space, Cherokee County residents are driving south to Town Center Mall area in Cobb County and North Point Mall area in Fulton County for much of their regional shopping needs.

In order to quantify retail demand, Cherokee County residents’ retail expenditures were assessed by store type and translated into supportable square feet of retail using averages in the southeast.¹ The amount that is supportable (5.7 million square feet) was then compared to the current amount of space in the market (4.7 million square feet including that which is under construction), which suggests that the market is currently under-supplied by almost 1 million square feet of retail space.

This retail demand “leakage” to the south is likely appropriate today given a population base of just under 200,000. However, as the population continues to grow and a critical mass is established, there will be a significant opportunity to recapture that leakage through developing additional regional-serving retail formats. Ideally these would be in the form of a mixed-use “county town center” that could be both a focal point and large source of tax revenue.

The statistical demand analysis suggests that Cherokee County will be able to support 7 to 8 million square feet of additional retail space over the next twenty-five years. Based on current shopping trends, a significant portion of this space (estimated to be 5 to 5.5 million square feet) will be in some form of regional shopping centers. This would include “big box” retail centers, lifestyle centers, and likely a “town center.” Conventional regional malls are on the decline while “town centers” or outdoor malls that add residential and office components are on the rise. Most of the centers will be smaller scale neighborhood and community centers. These will be located proximate to the residential bases and will be in the form of grocery or drugstore-anchored centers, village centers, and non-anchored retail.

Specifically, when applying current shopper and retail development trends to the estimated demand of 7 to 8 million net new square feet, the result is over 70 new retail centers in the county. The breakdown by center type will likely be something like the following:

¹ *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers*, Urban Land Institute.

Center Size	Potential Format	Estimated # of Centers
Less than 100,000 square feet	Neighborhood/ village center	50+
100,000 – 200,000 square feet	Community center	12
200,000 – 400,000 square feet	Regional/ "big box" center	5
400,000 – 800,000 square feet	"Big box" or lifestyle center	1
More than 800,000 square feet	Regional town center (mall alternative)	1

Source: Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC, 2006.

Office and Business Park are Growing Opportunity

Office and business park development opportunities in Cherokee County can generally be grouped in three categories:

1. Local-serving office. These are typically smaller users who locate in office condominiums, mixed-use developments, and in the existing downtowns and follow the residential growth.
2. Regional-serving office and business park space. This is low-rise office and flex space that serves a variety of businesses including some distribution. In the near term, the opportunity for this space is primarily as a price alternative to Cobb County.
3. Inter-regional/export space. Multi-story office and/or large-scale business park development would require a unique economic development strategy by the County by recruiting a major regional headquarters or business sector.

Local-Serving Office: a Significant Opportunity

As with retail, residential growth creates the market for local-serving office development. As more middle- and upper-income households move to Cherokee County, there is growing demand for medical professionals, real estate services, and other professional services that residents seek near their homes.

As with retail, Cherokee residents currently drive outside of the county for some of these types of services, a trend that we are beginning to see reverse with the introduction of significant local-serving office development near the residential bases, particularly in the southern portions of the county.

Demand for local-serving and smaller scale office development is also generated from growth in executive housing. As Cherokee offers more upscale housing—in the master-planned communities as well as in rural estates—more of the executives will seek to have their offices near their homes. Office development following executive housing is a phenomenon we see in nearly all metropolitan areas. In Atlanta, this trend is fairly pronounced as jobs have followed the executive housing up the GA 400 corridor.

In order to assess how much local-serving office development Cherokee County could likely accommodate over the coming 25 years, the ratio of population to employment within the county was determined for the following employment categories:

- Banking—commercial, mortgage brokers, other financial investors.
- Professional services—insurance agencies, law services, accounting services, tax preparation services, advertising, business support services.
- Real estate services—agencies, architectural/engineering services, design services.
- Personal services—veterinary services, travel agency, and child day care.
- Medical services—physicians, dental services, chiropractic services, optometric services.

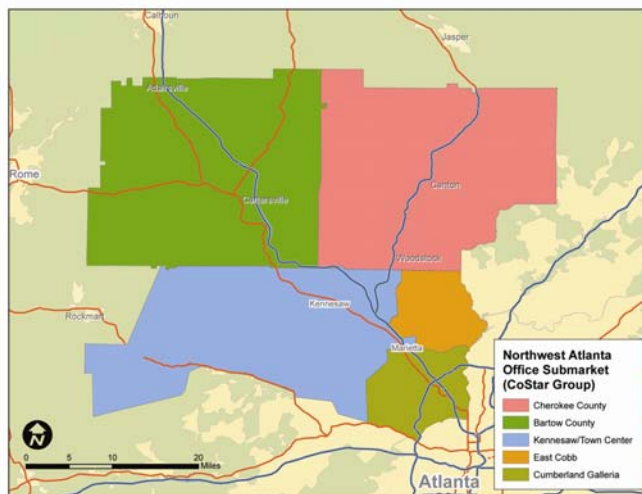
The ratios were then compared to neighboring counties, including Cobb and Forsyth today, and to counties when they were similar in size to what Cherokee is projected to be in 2030. For instance, in 1994, Cobb County's population was approximately 511,000 and in 1995 Gwinnett County's population was approximately 438,000 against projections for Cherokee in 2030 of nearly 418,000. Looking at the ratios in these counties over time provides insight into the level of local-serving office space supported by varying levels of critical mass. These ratios were analyzed and then applied accordingly to Cherokee County. The result of this analysis is support for approximately 3 million net new square feet of local-serving office space over the next 25 years.

As with retail, the market demand for this space is inevitable and this local-serving office space can be a key component to invigorating the existing downtowns, help create new village centers in the county, and help establish a regional activity center, which will, in turn, help draw more office and other commercial development.

The estimated demand for 3 million net new square feet does not account for potential upside potential associated with major economic development strategies. Should the county be able to draw a major headquarters or a specific industry cluster to concentrate in the county, there would be significant additional demand for office space beyond 3 million square feet. Further, a major concentration of executive housing above a beyond current projections may facilitate additional upside potential.

Regional-Serving Office and Business Park: an Alternative to Cobb

The greatest opportunity for regional-serving office development is to draw from the overall growth in the northwest corridor and provide a price alternative to Cobb County. Cobb has office and business park development throughout the I-75 corridor, which over this planning period will become increasingly expensive and begin to build out. With 13.3 percent (over 22 million square feet) of the region's office space, the Cumberland-Galleria area has evolved into one of the region's major office cores and is aggressively trying to become a 24-hour activity center with residents and upscale shopping in addition to office. However, traffic congestion and price have driven growth farther out I-75. Town Center has benefited from this trend and has evolved from a mall to a forth-generation activity center with residential, low-rise office and business park space in addition to major regional retail. We expect this trend of outward migration to continue, benefiting areas along I-575 in Cherokee County.



In order to understand the likely magnitude of development opportunity, the following analyses was conducted:

- Cherokee County was placed in a regional context of overall projected job growth;
- Job growth was converted into supportable square feet of office, business park and industrial space by employment sector;
- The northwest corridor's likely capture of job growth was assessed by land use based on historic trends and an understanding of competing areas;² and

² Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC, the County's market consultant, drew on their extensive direct experience with development and market trends throughout the Atlanta metro area, Georgia and the nation.

- Cherokee County's likely capture of the northwest corridor was estimated based on an understanding of the build-out of Cobb and the overall levels of residential and retail growth projected for Cherokee.

Over the next 25 years, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is projecting over 1.3 million net new jobs in the 13-county planning region. Many of these jobs will be retail and personal services but a significant portion of them will be regional-serving office uses. Overall, the economy is shifting away from manufacturing and toward more office and knowledge-based jobs, which will affect the types of space businesses require. Nevertheless, there will still be significant demand for business park and industrial space throughout the Atlanta region.

Bulk Distribution and Manufacturing Space

The large majority of Atlanta's bulk distribution and manufacturing space is located along the I-85 corridor, the major distribution corridor for the Southeast. The northwest corridor, on the other hand, accounts for only 8.6% of the bulk/manufacturing space in the market and has accounted for approximately 8.4% of the absorption of this space over the previous 15-year period. Over the past five years, the northwest corridor has captured a mere 3.3% of new bulk/manufacturing demand. Regional dynamics and historic trends do not suggest there will be a major departure from this trend so, for modeling purposes, it is assumed that the northwest corridor will be able to capture 5% to 6% of bulk/manufacturing demand.

Currently, Cherokee County accounts for approximately 2.5% of the bulk/manufacturing space in the northwest corridor. Over time, as Cobb County builds out, significant upside to this figure is expected. However, the transportation network and more specifically the fact that I-575 does not connect to any other major markets suggests that Cherokee will not be able to capture significant distribution space, thereby limiting the amount of industrial space the county can capture. In the coming 10-year period, it appears that Cherokee County will be able to capture 10% of bulk/manufacturing space demand in the corridor, a figure that could grow to 25% by 2030.

In addition to demand for speculative space, there may be significant demand for owner-occupied space. The region overall averages approximately one-third owner-occupied space which, when applied to Cherokee County, suggests demand for approximately 3.1 million square feet of bulk/manufacturing space. Interviews with economic development officials suggest the county could attract more manufacturing businesses, which would likely represent upside potential to the 3 million square feet. However, that is not consistent with the county's current economic development trends.

R&D Office and Flex Space

The greater opportunity for Cherokee County is to attract businesses looking for low-rise office space that would include some flex space (a small percentage dedicated to distribution or manufacturing) as well as research and development type space.

The northwest corridor currently accounts for approximately 18% of the flex space in the Atlanta region but has been able to capture 27% of new demand over the past 15 years. Again, only a small portion of this space is located in Cherokee County today, estimated to be approximately 8%, but this appears to represent a significant growth opportunity as Cobb builds out and demand moves north. Assuming the northwest corridor is only able to capture its "fair share" of flex space demand (18% - 19%) and of that Cherokee is able to capture a growing share (20% in the near term and up to one-third by 2030) that would translate to demand for almost 7.6 million square feet of low-rise R&D office and flex space (including that which is owner-occupied).

Together, regional-serving office and business park demand, including owner-occupied space, is expected to support 10.7 million square feet in net new space to 2030.

	Timeframe	Est. Capture Rate	R&D / Flex Space Demand	Est. Capture Rate	Bulk / Warehouse / Manufacturing / Distribution	TOTAL
13-County Atlanta Area Total	2000-2010		33,817,363		52,684,350	86,501,713
	2010-2020		48,016,588		79,492,238	127,508,825
	2020-2030		44,093,438		70,393,688	114,487,125
	TOTAL		125,927,388		202,570,275	328,497,663
NW Submarket Capture	2000-2010	18.4%	6,222,395	5.0%	2,634,218	8,856,612
	2010-2020	19.0%	9,123,152	6.0%	4,769,534	13,892,686
	2020-2030	19.0%	8,377,753	6.0%	4,223,621	12,601,374
	TOTAL		23,723,299		11,627,373	35,350,672
GROWTH Cherokee County	2000-2010	20.0%	1,244,479	10.0%	263,422	1,507,901
	2010-2020	25.0%	2,280,788	20.0%	953,907	3,234,695
	2020-2030	33.0%	2,764,659	25.0%	1,055,905	3,820,564
	TOTAL		5,667,686		2,141,523	
	Including Owner-Occupied		7,556,915		3,149,299	10,706,213
	ANNUAL		302,277		125,972	

Source: Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC, 2006.

Again, this estimated growth represents a continuation of the current market trajectory. Should major economic development initiatives come to fruition, there will likely be upside potential, particularly for the low-rise office space.

Office and Business Park Summary

In summary, there is growing demand for a variety of office and business park space over the planning horizon. The greatest near-term opportunity is for local-serving office. The greatest opportunity in terms of amount of space and the segment that likely has the greatest upside potential is low-rise office/flex business park space that will serve as a price alternative to Cobb County.

	Estimated Square Feet	Estimated Jobs
Local-Serving Office Space	3.0 million	12,000
Region-Serving Business Park Space	10.7 million	21,000

■ Employment Trends

Labor Force Participation

In 1990, the county had a labor force of 50,361 persons, with 74.8 percent of persons 16 years and over in the labor force. Almost 85 percent of males 16 years and over were in the labor force in 1990, while a majority of females (64.9 percent) 16 years and over were in the labor force in 1990. Given the population characteris-

tics of the county, this suggests a large proportion of families with second wage-earners in the household in 1990, which is also evident in 2000.

Table 52: Labor Force Characteristics of Cherokee County and Cities in 2000

	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total:	105,713	502	5,911	2,270	528	7,442	16,653	89,060
Male:	52,864	231	2,992	1,166	210	3,684	8,283	44,581
In Civilian Labor Force	43,580	163	2,390	1,002	126	3,197	6,878	36,702
Employed	42,513	161	2,328	995	115	3,147	6,746	35,767
Unemployed	1,067	2	62	7	11	50	132	935
Not in labor force	9,172	68	593	164	82	480	1,387	7,785
Female:	52,849	271	2,919	1,104	318	3,758	8,370	44,479
In Civilian Labor Force	33,835	152	1,636	726	172	2,466	5,152	28,683
Employed	32,803	145	1,565	718	165	2,408	5,001	27,802
Unemployed	1,032	7	71	8	7	58	151	881
Not in Labor Force	19,007	119	1,283	378	146	1,292	3,218	15,789

Source: 2000 Census STF 3

By 2000, the civilian labor force had increased to 77,415 persons. A majority (73.2 percent) of the county's residents ages 16 years and over were in the civilian labor force in 2000. While the proportion of males in the labor force has decreased slightly since 1990, the majority, 82.4 percent of the county's males aged 16 years and over, was in the civilian labor force in 2000, while 64.0 percent of females were in the civilian labor force in 2000, comparable to 1990. Males comprised just over one-half (56.3 percent) of the labor force in 2000. The labor force participation rate for the county's population (73.2 percent) is higher than that of the State (66 percent) and the nation (64 percent) as of 2000. The county has a comparatively younger population than the state or nation as a whole, which helps to explain the higher labor force participation in 2000. As of 2004, the labor force had risen to 87,845 persons, of which 84,710 were employed.

Unemployment

Cherokee County's high labor force participation rates suggest a healthy economic environment for the residents. This rate is based on the percentage of the working age population that is currently employed or unemployed and actively seeking employment. Statistics, however, do not indicate whether the residents who have a job are part of the labor force are working in Cherokee County or elsewhere. From 1990 to 2004, Cherokee County's unemployment rate more or less followed the fluctuations of the Atlanta metropolitan area, the State (5.2 percent), and the U.S. (5.5 percent). However, the county has been at an economic advantage in comparison to these areas because it has a lower unemployment rate (3.6 percent in 2004). The following table provides comparison statistics for counties surrounding Cherokee County from 2000 to 2004. Cherokee County has one of the lower unemployment rates in the region, higher only than Forsyth County and equal to Dawson County and Pickens County.

Table 53: County Comparison of Unemployment 2000-2004

County	Average Annual Unemployment Rate (Percent)				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Bartow	3.7	4.3	5.3	5.1	5.0
Cherokee	2.6	2.8	3.8	3.9	3.6
Cobb	2.8	3.3	4.5	4.3	4.2
Dawson	2.7	3.0	4.3	3.7	3.6
Forsyth	2.4	2.7	3.8	3.5	3.1
Pickens	3.0	3.2	3.9	4.1	3.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
Note: Data for all years revised as of 9/1/05.

The following table provides comparison statistics for counties surrounding Cherokee County from 2000 to 2004. Cherokee County has one of the lower unemployment rates in the region, higher only than Forsyth County and equal to Dawson County and Pickens County.

Unemployment for females was comparable to males in 1990. Almost 3.8 percent of the males experienced unemployment, whereas almost 4.0 percent of the females experienced unemployment. Unemployment was not a significant problem or issue in 1990. As of 2000, the gap had widened a bit

pertaining to unemployment rates between males and females, although the rate had declined significantly for both. The unemployment rate for females was 3.0 percent as compared to 2.4 percent for males. These employment figures indicate that virtually everyone in the county's civilian resident labor force is able to find employment. Given the improving economy in metropolitan Atlanta, the county and its cities are well positioned with regard to attracting future job opportunities. The economy has recessed some since the 2000 figures, and unemployment rates have increased slightly since the 2000 Census to 3.6 percent in 2004, with more dramatic increases (which have for the most part corrected) between 2001 and 2002 due to the economic downturn following 9/11. The numbers reflect strong economic conditions, and one can conclude that the county's resident workers (including those of the cities) have been able to find employment. Therefore, unemployment is not considered an important public policy issue in the county for which special programs would be needed. However, when labor force participation rates are compared to the discrepancies between total employment and population growth, it becomes evident that many residents are working outside of the county.

Employment Industries of Labor Force

Over the past ten years employment of Cherokee County's workforce (the employed persons in the labor force residing in the county but not necessarily working in the county) has shifted from Manufacturing and Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities to employment in: the Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management economic sector; the Educational, Health and Social Services sector; and the Arts, Recreation and Entertainment Services sector, combined with Other Services sector. Shifts from the commercial goods sectors have occurred over the past 10 years, with decreases in both Wholesale Trade and Retail Trade. Possibly these industries were overbuilt in the 1990's and the population demand has now caught up with the facilities. As well, although representing a small proportion of the county's workforce, Agriculture and Mining have decreased to less than one percent. Construction and FIRE (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate) have remained constant. The nationally emerging shift in industry from a more blue collar workforce type to more highly skilled and education dependent industries indicates that the county has

been attracting such types of households with its expanding move-up and executive level housing. However, the majority of the workforce, over 64 percent, works outside of the county.

The distribution of the county's employed labor force is projected to almost double from 75,316 in 2000 to 140,292 by 2025, in correlation to the anticipated population increase. It is anticipated that the county's share of the workforce employed in Manufacturing; Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities; and Agriculture sectors will continue their declining trend while the proportion of the labor force employed in Professional and Management Services; Educational, Health and Social Services; Information Services; Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services; and Other Services continue to increase. Small decreases in the proportion of the workforce employed in Public Administration are projected. Employment in the Retail and Construction industries is forecast to remain roughly the same proportionately.

Sector	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025
Total Employed Civilian Population	23,335	48,237	75,316	101,307	127,297	140,292
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	3.20%	2.80%	0.80%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Construction	10.80%	11.70%	11.20%	11.2%	11.3%	11.3%
Manufacturing	27.80%	15.80%	11.30%	9.4%	8.3%	7.9%
Wholesale Trade	5.90%	6.70%	5.10%	5.0%	5.0%	4.9%
Retail Trade	13.90%	17.10%	14.30%	14.4%	14.4%	14.4%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	8.00%	9.20%	4.30%	3.9%	3.6%	3.5%
Information	NA	NA	4.50%	5.0%	5.2%	5.6%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	5.90%	7.90%	7.90%	8.2%	8.3%	8.3%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	4.70%	6.00%	11.20%	11.9%	12.4%	12.6%
Educational, Health and Social Services	10.40%	10.30%	15.00%	15.5%	15.8%	15.9%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	2.80%	1.30%	6.10%	6.5%	6.8%	6.8%
Other Services	2.40%	7.60%	5.20%	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%
Public Administration	4.10%	3.50%	3.10%	2.9%	2.9%	2.8%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, STF-3 and DataViews Forecasts by Woods and Poole.
 Note: Universe includes employed persons residing in Cherokee County.

The employed population in the incorporated areas comprises 15.6 percent of the county total, with the remaining 84.4 percent in the unincorporated county. The distribution of the working force by industry within the jurisdictions varies slightly, where there is a slightly higher proportional representation of workforce employed in the more skilled and potentially higher paying type industries in the unincorporated areas, although the proportions are very closely correlated in all industries between incorporated and unincorporated areas. This may relate to the higher incidence proportionately of older single-family units and multi-family type products in the larger cities which could provide a greater number of workforce (blue collar, minimum wage and unskilled labor) housing opportunities than in the county, where large tracts of vacant land are available for the establishment of golf course communities, move-up and executive subdivisions which cater to the income capabilities associated with the technological and professional industries.

Table 55: 2000 Employment by Industry in Cherokee County and Cities

Sector	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Total Employed Civilian Population	75,316	306	3,893	1,713	280	5,555	11,747	63,569
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	572	7	13	0	1	12	33	539
Construction	8,432	32	682	173	18	609	1,514	6,918
Manufacturing	8,515	77	539	162	12	600	1,390	7,125
Wholesale Trade	3,844	14	178	66	0	300	558	3,286
Retail Trade	10,797	43	525	327	71	820	1,786	9,011
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	3,226	16	125	80	1	236	458	2,768
Information	3,382	5	75	99	7	318	504	2,878
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	5,969	21	201	124	1	481	828	5,141
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	8,431	12	340	205	20	692	1,269	7,162
Educational, Health and Social Services	11,281	38	582	181	113	789	1,703	9,578
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	4,624	15	319	116	11	334	795	3,829
Other Services	3,943	8	185	102	17	215	527	3,416
Public Administration	2,300	18	129	78	8	149	382	1,918

Source: 2000 Census, STF-3

Employment Sectors

Projections have been generated for employment within the county, utilizing a medium growth methodology based on past trend regressions. Over the next 25 to 30 years, the county’s employment base is forecast to more than double from 63,162 in 2005 to almost 145,000 in 2030.

Table 56: 2005 and 2030 Employment Projections for Cherokee County and Cities

	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
2005								
Farm Employment	708	0	65	10	0	10	85	623
Construction Employment	7,687	103	1,237	232	186	1,227	2,985	4,702
Manufacturing Employment	4,170	117	1,628	294	27	938	3,004	1,166
TCU Employment	1,851	33	333	124	0	256	746	1,105
Wholesale Employment	2,867	60	250	131	18	276	735	2,132
Retail Employment	12,779	42	2,134	124	50	2,323	4,673	8,106
FIRE Employment	6,036	26	763	39	9	860	1,697	4,339
Service Employment	19,432	39	3,061	494	276	3,778	7,648	11,784
Total Private Employment	55,530	420	9,471	1,448	566	3,778	15,683	33,957
Government Employment	7,632	98	2,355	128	116	1,001	3,698	3,934
Total Employment—2005	63,162	518	11,826	1,576	682	10,669	25,271	37,891
2030								
Farm Employment	709	0	0	0	0	0	0	709
Construction Employment	20,599	509	2,920	929	326	2,983	7,667	12,932

	Cherokee County	Cities					Total All Cities	Unincorporated
		Ball Ground	Canton	Holly Springs	Waleska	Woodstock		
Manufacturing Employment	6,523	183	2,547	460	42	1,467	4,699	1,824
TCU Employment	5,337	161	787	495	0	622	2,065	3,272
Wholesale Employment	6,777	295	590	526	32	670	2,113	4,664
Retail Employment	26,169	209	5,038	495	88	5,646	11,476	14,693
FIRE Employment	12,838	129	1,800	155	12	2,089	4,185	8,650
Service Employment	48,384	589	8,673	2,740	488	10,024	22,514	25,870
Total Private Employment	127,336	2,075	22,355	5,800	992	23,501	54,723	72,614
Government Employment	17,635	483	5,558	514	202	2,434	9,191	8,444
Total Employment—2030	144,971	2,558	27,913	6,314	1,194	25,935	63,914	81,058

Source: ROSS+associates.

As of 2005, the mainstays of the county’s economy were Retail and Services, followed by Government and Construction. As contributors to the county’s economy, the Retail Trade and Services sectors, as forecast based on past trends, will remain comparable in importance, although it will increase significantly in numerical terms, with a slight drop in the Retail base from 20 percent to 18 percent in 2030. Smaller proportions of the county’s employment base: Construction; Communications and Private Utilities (TCU); and Wholesale sector employment will also increase; and Government sector employment will remain proportionally unchanged, while proportional reductions will be seen in the FIRE, and Manufacturing sectors. Although the proportional representation of the employment sectors is forecast to change, there are no actual losses in the number of jobs in each sector – only a slowing or escalation in the numerical growth.

The county currently is not a major employment center, as its proximity to major employment opportunities in Cobb and Fulton Counties have made the county an attractive residential location. However, its projected three-fold growth over the next 25 to 30 years is anticipated to reduce the current status as a bedroom “commuter” county. Employment growth within major employment corridors along Highway 92, I-575, Bells Ferry Rd., Highway 20 and Highway 5 is projected to increase over the next 30 years creating demand for housing proximate to these new jobs. As well, the county will continue to be positioned to benefit from projected future employment growth in the 28-county Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), particularly as it represents an opportunity for convenient, price-alternative housing. This opportunity and residential market conditions are discussed below.

Population Characteristics

Between 1990 and 2000, three-quarters of Cherokee County’s growth was due to net in-migration, a phenomenal amount as compared to the national average of 32 percent, and even the State at 59.4 percent. As

Income of Out-migrants	Income of In-Migrants	Income of Current Residents	Difference Out- vs. In-migrants	Difference In-Migrants vs. Current
\$29,856	\$35,863	\$46,840	(\$6,007)	(\$10,997)

Source: Internal Revenue Service.

well, the percentage of persons migrating to Cherokee County from outside of the United States increased from 1.8 percent in 1990 to 8.5 percent in 2002. The income levels of individuals moving in and out of the county are an important determinant of the county’s wealth patterns. Based on IRS data, the income of current residents is more than \$10,000 higher than that of in-migrants, indicating that the in-migration may be pulling the level of wealth down.

However, the income of the in-migrants is about \$6,000 higher than the income of the out-migrants.

A portion of the in-migrants may be responding to the availability of jobs in the county, which on average are lower paying and may require a less skilled and educated employee. As well, a large proportion of in-migrants may be young persons and households at job market entry levels who have not reached their earning potential and therefore have lower incomes than current residents who may be older and more established in the job market. This data indicates that while in-migration is diversifying the economic level of the populace, it is still a relatively wealthy area and will remain so as in-migrants continue to have a higher average income than the out-migrants.

Wages

The average annual wage of Cherokee County residents working in the county is less than that of Atlanta, the State and the U.S. by a significant margin. In 2001, Cherokee County's real average annual wage at \$27,415 was roughly \$7,000 less than the State, \$8,000 less than the U.S. and almost \$13,000 less than the Atlanta MSA. However, real average annual wages have grown from 1990 to 2001, with Cherokee County's the strongest comparatively, at 22.1 percent as compared to the Atlanta MSA at 19.7 percent, the State at 17.1 percent and the U.S. at only 12.5 percent.

It is important to keep in mind that the average annual wage is calculated based strictly on the jobs located in the county, and therefore does not take into account the wages of individuals living in the county but working elsewhere, as the per capita income figure does. The fact that the per capita income compared more favorably to Atlanta, the State and the U.S. than the average annual wage indicates that those residents earning a higher income in the county are generally those that are working outside Cherokee County. Based on this, the low average annual wage statistics suggest just how uncompetitive the salaries are for jobs in the county.

Employment and Commuting Patterns

A strong and diverse economy is important because it creates jobs, increases income and provides a more stable tax base, and thereby provides a better quality of life. Although the county continues to grow economically, it continues to remain primarily a bedroom community for the Atlanta Metro area, based on analyses of commuting patterns. (For Cherokee County to provide for the necessary services to meet the needs of its population, the county will have to continue to diversify its economic base.) According to the latest commuting patterns data, the number of persons living and working within Cherokee County has increased from 31.5 percent in 1990 to 35.4 percent in 2000. Almost two-thirds still commute to employment outside of the county as of 2000, down slightly from 1990. This statistic stands out even more when compared to the percentage of individuals working in their county of residence in the Atlanta MSA (50.8 percent), Georgia (58.5 percent) and the United States (73.3 percent). The rural nature of much of Georgia, and the fact that most of the states have much larger counties, greatly skews the statewide and national statistics.

Previous tables of employment by sectors indicate that, in terms of the number of jobs, Cherokee County is most heavily reliant on the Educational and Health Services, Retail Trade and Manufacturing sectors. This is different from the Atlanta MSA in which Professional and Business Services is the largest sector, followed by Government and Retail trade. The Educational and Health Services sector comprises 18.8 percent of the economy, followed by Retail at 17.3 percent, and Manufacturing at 12.5 percent. Leisure and Hospitality Services follow at 11.7 percent. It is important to note that the Construction sector is almost twice as big in Cherokee County as in the region, state and nation. The comparatively large size of the Construction sector is primarily due to the county's recent expansive population and housing growth. Professional and Business Services constitute only 9.9 percent of the economy. The county's three largest sectors by total employment, which represent 48.5 percent of total employment, do not appear to have high average annual earnings. The highest paying sectors in the county are Wholesale Trade, Financial Activities and Construction, which represent only 18.7 percent of the county's total employment. These statistics indicate that the largest employ-

ment sectors are not wealth generators, and those seeking greater income potential would generally have to seek those opportunities elsewhere.

■ **Economic Recruitment**

The economic development programs in place, and the goals and strategic actions established by the Economic Development Strategy Report, combined with state and federal financial incentives and assistance support existing businesses and the recruitment and establishment of new businesses, both those within the five identified target industry clusters as proposed by the Economic Development Strategy Report, and other businesses which diversify the business climate.

Recruitment Strategies

The Economic Strategic Plan developed by the Economic Alliance in 2003-2004 conducted analysis of the population, demographic, infrastructure support and economic conditions in the county, resulting in the conclusion that as a priority, the county must diversify its economy in a way that produces well paying, quality, sustainable jobs. The recruitment of new businesses, the expansion of existing businesses, and supporting new businesses and entrepreneurial ideas are all components of attaining this goal. The Strategic Plan proposes goals to accomplish the ultimate goal of diversifying the economy, including: supporting the expansion of identified target business sectors; expansion of tourism opportunities throughout the county, promotion and support of local entrepreneurs and small business and minority business owners; and tying local incentives to the creation of quality jobs.

The Development Authority of Cherokee County progressively oversees the county's economic development, including overseeing policies of business recruitment, business expansion, the offering of incentives, community revitalization and supervision of the Authority's two high quality industrial parks: the 125-acre Airport 575 Industrial Park and the 125-acre Cherokee Canton Industrial Park. It is also spearheading development of several other exciting new business-industrial parks and community projects. Cherokee County is home to such corporate titans as Timken, a division of English giant Ingersol Rand and aerospace leader Universal Alloy Corporation. Cherokee County's strong business economy ("15th nationally in potential business growth" according to the American Business Chronicle) makes this an ideal location for companies desiring to combine sound business investment with excellent accessibility and quality work and living environments.

Because of limited funding, the Development Authority chooses to do mostly "relationship marketing," dependent on good relationships with the people bringing the projects into Georgia. If prospective industries have a good opinion of Cherokee County, they will think of Cherokee County as a potential location. The Development Authority is constantly updating properties on their website as well as that of the Georgia Dept. of Economic Development. The Development Authority sends an e-newsletter once a month with a feature article and three featured properties, which is very inexpensive and has been very well received. The Development Authority of Cherokee County stays in constant contact with statewide project managers from the Georgia Dept. of Economic Development and project managers of the utilities (GA Power, Georgia EMC, MEAG Power) and Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. The Development Authority also depends on the Atlanta commercial/industrial brokerage community.

The first step in recruitment is getting a visit from a prospect. The Development Authority sends in responses to requests for information from the above-mentioned contacts in anticipation of an actual visit. From there, the Development Authority sells the community while trying to sell the property and/or building. The availability of buildings (32 as of November 2005) and properties (25 sites as of November 2005) with all utilities is also a key factor. Under the Development Authority leadership, the County has been very progressive in the area of infrastructure availability for industrial and business park properties.

The Development Authority of Cherokee County has had much interest from industries in their target areas. Business recruitment efforts are meeting the needs of many of the residents and those in surrounding counties. However, the Development Authority is constantly trying to recruit additional high-end job opportunities. The Authority also engages in appropriate business recruitment in niche marketing. Biotech is being pursued as a major target market in conjunction with the development of The Bluffs. Recruitment efforts focus on growth industries, businesses that have a good survival rate, and contribute to the quality of life. Such growth industries were considered when the strategic plan was being developed by the Economic Alliance.

Existing industry expansion is a top priority as they are already employing residents and paying taxes. Recruitment is always important as the County wishes to continue to diversify the employment opportunities in hopes of reaching all of the county residents. In addition, small businesses have an important role in the economic development of the county, as only 3.3 percent of all business employs more than 50 people. The encouragement of entrepreneurship is a method to increase the job base of the county. This encouragement includes financial support, incentives and local services. The County has aided small business development by supporting several programs that assist local entrepreneurs, resulting in a percentage of non-farm proprietors that is relatively high. However, the low reported venture capital suggests that the County can do more to support small business. In addition, it has been reported that members of the community are unaware of the availability of resources such as venture capital and research and development funds. The County has begun to take steps to invest more in its small businesses in addition to targeting the higher tech and higher paying professional jobs because their development could help create the types of jobs that the county needs.

In addition, workforce training and development is a constantly evolving area. Appalachian Technical College is the driving force for training programs, as well as the public school system and other local colleges as described in detail in a later Section.

The Development Authority of Cherokee County puts together recruitment business packages on a case-by-case basis in order to customize the prospects. In general, efforts at recruiting targeted industries have been met with interest from industries in the target area. The Development Authority continues to target suppliers to existing industry as well as high-end businesses such as bio-medical/bio-tech that would employ white-collar employees. During the individualized recruitment process, the Development Authority of Cherokee County has the capacity to offer programs and incentives to attract businesses. Although the Development Authority of Cherokee County has not used incentives in recent years to recruit, the Development Authority may offer incentives to new business on a case-by-case basis. It depends on amount of capital investment and number and quality of new jobs. In a case where there is substantial investment and good, quality jobs, the Authority may propose a five-year phase-in on ad valorem taxes. It is not the Development Authority's practice to offer straight abatements. Other programs include the Business Development Revolving Loan; Freeport Inventory Tax Exemption; Industrial Financing Bond Financing; Tax Incentives and Impact Fees (waivers or reductions) for the assistance of new businesses.

The Development Authority of Cherokee County uses tax phase-ins for existing business expansions as part of the Existing Industry Incentive Program, which is utilized largely by local industries that are considering or have recently expanded. The purpose is to encourage them to do their expansion and add capital investment and jobs to Cherokee County instead of relocating to adjacent counties. In that way, additional land or facilities resources can be acquired with financial assistance so that less expensive land or facilities in more outlying areas will not become a consideration. In addition, prospective businesses are informed of other available state and local programs as described in previous sections.

The Development Authority is funded by the Board of Commissioners with some funding coming from the Industrial Revenue Board financing fees. The sale of Development Authority property goes to the Board of Commissioners to pay on bond debt.

The Economic Development Strategy has established actions that promote examples of successful collaborative efforts within the community and to external audiences, such as "Use local media outlets to promote economic development priorities and initiatives to private sector partners" and "Emphasize successful col-

laborative efforts via County press releases and public relations efforts.” The Development Authority issues a press release as well as follow-up “success stories.” As well, the Chamber of Commerce has a number of programs that identify and acknowledge success stories, in particular the Small Business Recognition program. The Small Business Recognition committee accepts nominations for “Small Business of the Month” award recipients to be honored by the Chamber and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Monthly winners are considered for the “Small Business of the Year” award presented during the Chamber’s Annual Dinner.

Business Activity

The total number of establishments is an indicator of the amount of business activity in a community. Cherokee’s establishment statistics indicate that Professional and Business Services is the largest sector at 20.7 percent of all establishments, followed by Construction at 18.1 percent, and Financial Activities at 10 percent. Educational and Health Services, the largest sector in terms of employment, represents 7.4 percent of the total number of establishments. This is likely because employers in this sector, such as the public school system and hospitals, often employ a large number of people. The breakdown of business establishments by the number of employees reveals that the county is dominated by smaller businesses, with 79.8 percent of establishments employing less than 10 people and only 3.3 percent employing more than 50. The percentage of businesses employing less than five people is 62.4 percent.

The following is a list of the private-sector employers in Cherokee County with 50 or more employees. Most of the organizations are in the Educational and Health Care Services, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing sectors, reaffirming the employment sector analysis discussed previously.

Company Name	Location	Product	Employees
Pilgrim's Pride	Canton	Poultry Processing	750
Kingway Material Handling	Ackworth	Metal Storage Racks	250
Chart Industries, Inc.	Canton	Steel Cylinders	200
Piolax Corporation	Canton	Auto Parts	180
ERB Industries, Inc.	Woodstock	Safety Equipment	140
Universal Alloy Corporation	Canton	Aerospace Extrusions	125
Morrison Products	Canton	Blower Wheels for AC units	106
Haygood Contracting	Woodstock	Hauling and Grading	100
Kirk-Rudy, Inc.	Woodstock	Labeling/Imprinting Equipment	95
International Fragrance Inc.	Canton	Fragrances	82
Quill Corporation, Inc.	Canton	Office Products Distribution	80
Hill Parts	Ball Ground	Poultry Process Equipment	80
International Marble Industries	Woodstock	Cultured Marble Products	80
LAT Sportswear	Ball Ground	Fashion Apparel	75
Crist Co., Sure Tack Systems	Woodstock	Hot Melt Gluing Equipment	75
Gold Kist By-Products	Ball Ground	Poultry Rendering	71
Roytec Industries, Inc.	Woodstock	Electric Wire Harnesses	70
Hydro-Chem Division of Pro Quip	Holly Springs	Hydrogen	65
Brookstone Custom Shutter Store	Canton	Shutters, Blinds, Custom Closet	50
Go Plastics	Canton	Rotational Molding	50
Underwood Mold Company	Woodstock	Plastic Injection Molding/Molds	50

Source: Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce 2005

Status of Economic Opportunity

Most of the county's new business and investment comes from existing businesses that are succeeding in Cherokee County. There were some manufacturing closures in 2002, but existing industry activity has been very strong since then. Many of the existing manufacturing operations have been expanding.

Existing businesses are "changing with the times" and staying competitive in their markets. As we have seen in the last decade, the economy and consumer preferences can quickly change. Companies and industries once successful have quickly lost their market power. The county's leaders must keep attuned to these evolving trends to help existing companies capitalize upon emerging growth opportunities. To sustain future successes, the county's economic development leaders must become as responsive and flexible as the target business sectors they are trying to strengthen. By utilizing existing business and educational resources, Cherokee County can learn how successful companies operate and how those successes can be translated to support the development of an entire target business sector. Local colleges help employers and employees stay current with training opportunities, and public schools are communicating with the business community to try to get teens prepared for the emerging trends in employment, primarily in communications and training for emerging employment sector opportunities, particularly the five target business areas discussed in detail below.

In addition, with the slow but increasing growth in the Hispanic population, the County has adopted a goal in the Economic Strategic Plan to provide workplace and language training and programs for the Hispanic population and employers. Action strategies include:

- The expansion of English as a Second Language courses in conjunction with schools, technical colleges, literacy programs, workforce investment partners, and other training and workforce support programs.
- Expansion of the availability of existing basic Spanish language courses for English speaking audiences; and
- Development of "Spanish in the Workplace" courses for delivery at educational institutions and at job-sites.

Identification of Industries and Economic Opportunities

Community leaders seeking to improve their local economy must know the predominant business sectors in their area as well as how the sectors interact within and beyond the county. These business sectors, also known as clusters, are a "group of establishments located in close geographic proximity of one another, which either share a common set of input needs, or rely on each other as a supplier or customer." (Source: Target Business Analysis, Market Street Services, December 5, 2003).

The cluster development approach employs a systems approach by identifying linked businesses and promoting a framework in which those businesses can learn from each other. As an economic development strategy, cultivating the relationships between similar industries helps strengthen the core of the county's economy. As over 64 percent of the county's workers work outside of the county, this pool of workers is one of the community's most valuable resources, and creating jobs to attract these workers, back into the county has become one of the County's top priorities.

The County has demonstrated a focused community vision for economic development activities. As part of this Economic Strategy, a Target Business Analysis was performed, which examined existing business clusters and identified the most promising existing and potential business sectors for the county to focus on developing. The report focuses on five business areas that have the potential to grow, as well as those in which Cherokee County has already exhibited strength. The five business areas were selected on a variety of factors, including national trends, strengths of the Atlanta MSA, existing local strengths, wages paid, quality of the workforce, and locational advantages. Goals and strategy actions were established in order to maximize

potential for recruitment and expansion of the existing base for these industry clusters. The five business areas are:

- Information Technology;
- Health Care;
- Financial Services;
- Aluminum Manufacturing Support; and
- Automobile Parts Manufacturing.

Tourism was not selected as a recommended target business area in the Economic Development Strategy because it requires both significant further development of Cherokee County's current tourism resources, and the average pay levels for most occupations in this business area are low. However, the Tourism sector does have potential to generate substantial revenue in the county. This cluster includes arts, entertainment, recreation, conferences and meetings, sports, and accommodation and food services. Because Cherokee County is uniquely situated where "metro meets the mountains," visitors may experience two types of atmosphere in one location. Sports and scenic attractions include Lake Allatoona, the Etowah River, Lake Arrowhead, the Indian Museum and Boiling Park. The county also has several metropolitan events and arts activities such as those of the Arts Center, the Old Canton Theatre, the Funk Heritage Center and the Bennett History Museum, which could be used as tourist attractions. However, although the county possesses possible tourist attractions, there is a need to expand visitor-lodging options. In order to maximize fully the tourism potential, visitors must stay in the county instead of lodging in a neighboring county. The County has begun to take steps in determining how to expand facilities with a focus on conference centers, hotels and resorts.

Information Technology

Advances in technology have revolutionized the nature of work in virtually all employment sectors and thus created an expanding information-technology sector. While some sectors of this broad industry group have experienced a downturn in recent years, "dot-coms" and computer based employment opportunities will continue to expand as businesses desire more advanced hardware, software and support. Computer software engineers and computer support specialists are two of the fastest growing occupations in the Georgia Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Area that includes Cherokee County. Cherokee County already has a presence in the software publishing and computer systems design and related services sectors, although only a small percentage (roughly 3 percent) of the total MSA's establishments. The County can take advantage of such resources as Technology Park to lure budding or relocating firms to the county.

Health Care

Due to technological advances and the aging Baby Boom generation, economic forecasters agree that health care will continue to be a growing sector. Areas with a dramatically increasing population such as Cherokee County will naturally experience growth in the sector, and it is important for these communities to stay focused on what areas within the field offer the best opportunity for economic success as well as to capitalize on some of the niche-markets within the sector.

Most innovation in health care technology is supported by major research and university medical centers. As part of the Atlanta metropolitan area, Cherokee County is in close proximity to a variety of institutions. Teaching hospitals in the Atlanta MSA include Crawford Long Hospital, Egleston Children's Hospital, Emory University Hospital, Grady Memorial Hospital, and Piedmont Hospital. The county also has the advantage of having a branch of Northside Hospital in Canton, providing surgery, emergency, maternity, and outpatient services. Because the medical equipment industry is driven by small business innovation, Cherokee is at an advantage due to its existing programs. As discussed in the Business Climate Analysis, the county is served by a variety of entrepreneur support programs including Greater Atlanta Women's Business Project, Service Corps of Retired Executives, the Small Business Development Centers and Quick Start. However, in order for the county successfully to nurture, small business innovation, it will need to expand

those opportunities, as well as the availability of venture capital. The County can also be proactive in taking advantage of the State of Georgia's intention of focusing its incentive efforts on life sciences as one of three recognized growing sectors in the State.

The ambulatory health care services sector offers many opportunities for employment growth. Younger communities such as Cherokee can take advantage of the increasing demand for nursing and residential care facilities as the population ages by recognizing that more people are locating their aging parents to nursing and residential care facilities in close proximity to their homes. Cherokee County offers an aesthetically pleasing "Where metro meets the mountains" environment that could be marketed more strenuously as a retirement community. Already the community has 8 nursing and community care facilities for the elderly, as well as numerous "active adult" ownership retirement communities. As well, Northside Hospital has a campus in the county that employs about 500 people, offering a great opportunity to expand to related activities. Statistics illustrate that employees in this sector are relatively well paid, which supports the objective of the County to retain higher trained and paid employees within its jurisdiction. The county also has a burgeoning medical equipment and supplies manufacturing sector. Consistent with this sector's tendency to have smaller operations, the county also has several small businesses that manufacture products for the health care industry.

Financial Services

While most growth in the financial services sector of local communities will likely occur by expanding the workforce of existing businesses, it is possible to attract new opportunities. Long-term growth can include securities and brokerage firms, but in the short-term communities such as Cherokee County can best serve themselves by focusing on smaller-scale markets within the financial services sector. Certain financial services "back office" functions offer just such an opportunity as do financial services that serve residents such as tax preparation. The financial transaction processing and clearing sub-sector of the broader financial services sector and the collection agencies and credit bureaus sub-sector of the administrative services sector are good targets to begin a community's long-term effort to expand financial services.

Cherokee County's financial industry is primarily composed of two mortgage loan brokers, CMG Mortgage and First PrimeSouth Mortgage, and six banking institutions, Cherokee Bank, First National Bank of Cherokee, Social Security Bank, Regions Bank, Wachovia Bank, and Southern National Bank. Cherokee's proximity to the strong financial services sector in Atlanta will help the county to expand its own employment opportunities.

The financial services sector is heavily reliant on the most recent technological advances that enable internet-based services. As such, these "back office" functions can be offered from virtually anywhere, increasing the importance of less tangible quality of life concerns in the location of these facilities. However, communities that can offer the most advanced, and affordable, telecommunications infrastructure to serve this type of work have a distinct advantage in the field. Cherokee County's offerings in this regard are similar to most communities; therefore, the County should consider what it could do to advance beyond that level of service. With the developer's interest in providing premier telecommunications infrastructure, Technology Park offers a great opportunity for these "back office" financial services firms.

Aluminum Manufacturing Support

The aluminum manufacturing sector is growing, particularly as the manufacturing of transportation products continues to increase its reliance on aluminum as a more lightweight, preferable choice to steel. Aluminum extrusion, the process of reshaping aluminum into the desired form, is an important component of aluminum manufacturing. Cherokee County already has an international presence in the aluminum manufacturing sector. Universal Alloy Corporation of Canton, Georgia is part of ALU Menziken Aerospace, a Switzerland-based firm that specializes in the production of lightweight aluminum products. Because of the remarkable advantage of having a well-established aluminum extrusion company in Canton, Cherokee County has the opportunity to expand its share of the sector by targeting potential producers and suppliers for Universal Al-

loy's operations. There are currently no bilgot castors on the east coast, and as home to Universal Alloy, Cherokee County has an advantage in attracting one of these operations to this part of the country. Having additional diverse firms within the supply-side of aluminum extrusion rounds out an aluminum manufacturing cluster for the county and could facilitate the attraction of additional establishments related to the sector.

The manufacturing sector is always best served in a market with a strong transportation network. Cherokee County has the distinct advantage of being part of the Atlanta regional interstate system. In order to optimize this resource, addressing Cherokee's present congestion challenges should be a priority. Additionally, the county also has prime access to the railroad system, Cherokee County Airport, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and Georgia's seaports. As well, aluminum manufacturing uses a substantial amount of energy, therefore keeping electricity costs low is an important part of a firm's operations. Other infrastructure costs are also important to a firm's efficient operations, and therefore firms may avoid locations with substantially high utility costs. Cherokee County's utility costs are competitive. The choice of utility suppliers and incentive rates are vital to the aluminum industry.

Automobile Parts Manufacturing

Automobile manufacturing is increasingly making use of aluminum. Automobile parts manufacturing will benefit from being in close proximity to aluminum manufacturing. Cherokee County already has an automobile parts manufacturer, Piolax Corporation of Canton. Cherokee County is well positioned for motor vehicle parts manufacturing, which relies on an efficient transportation system to bring the necessary supplies to prospective automobile parts manufacturers and to take their products to the manufacturers of motor vehicles. Located on I-575, the county has great connectivity to I-75, I-85, and I-20, reducing transportation time for these businesses. However, Cherokee County must overcome its current congestion problems to be truly competitive. The county also has the advantage of access to railroads, Cherokee County Airport, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and Georgia's seaports.

Automobile parts manufacturing uses an extensive amount of energy, thus low electricity costs are important to production. Water, sewer, and solid waste removal are also an important component of the business and therefore firms prefer locations with less expensive utilities of this nature. Therefore, keeping the costs of these utilities low will be important if Cherokee County wants to attract more automobile parts manufacturers.

Coordination Efforts

For the Economic Development Strategy Plan to be successful, Cherokee County must be perceived as a unified community, where individual cities and the surrounding county are coordinated and focused on collaborative efforts. Efforts to achieve this image have begun, and the momentum should not be lost. Of the many ideas and concerns expressed during this planning process, the desire for "unity, cooperation, coordination" and less "in-fighting" was voiced more often than was any other.

Cherokee County, like any other growing suburban community, has too much competition outside of the county to wage internal turf battles. Developing a long-term collaborative spirit, and promoting a commitment to cooperation, will benefit all of the communities within Cherokee County. The success of the Economic Development Strategy Plan relies significantly upon the support and active participation of public and private leaders from throughout the entire county during the implementation phase of the process. The Economic Development Strategy Report established goals and strategies for maintaining and fostering communication between all agencies in the county with individual jurisdictions, private interests, the school systems, existing and prospective businesses, state agencies and other involved participants. This includes public relations, press releases, coordination with the Planning and Building Departments and their activities and responsibilities to streamline the permit process for expansion of existing businesses and start-up of new businesses in existing facilities and/or construction of new facilities, strengthening relationships with state and federal partners on key economic development efforts, and increasing informal opportunities for interaction between economic developers and private sector representatives.

Redevelopment and Downtown Revitalization

Diversified economic development is key, and this can be achieved in part through downtown (or other areas such as the Bells Ferry Corridor or Highway 92 Corridor in the unincorporated area) redevelopment. Downtowns, as well as major transportation and “village” corridors, are the hearts of the cities and the unincorporated areas, respectively, and need to be economic engines. The cities of Canton, Woodstock and Holly Springs have all conducted studies under the Livable Communities Initiative to enable redevelopment and revitalization of their downtown core areas. Employment opportunities will be generated both in the actual physical redevelopment phases, as well as associated with the new, relocated or expanded businesses locating in the downtowns or high activity corridors. There are areas being considered for redevelopment either through tax allocation districts or sometimes through empowerment/opportunity zones. Although occasionally lenders may perceive risks in redevelopment, that perception depends on the strength of the business or developer. Although redevelopment is more challenging than basic new development on raw or infrastructure improved land, if the municipality or local government is proactive and innovative in its approach, the developer is much more secure in its endeavor, thus enhancing the potential for success. Generally, redevelopment of deteriorating or underutilized commercial or industrial structures and grounds strengthens the area’s marketability and attractiveness to potential businesses/industries as compared to interest in the pre-revitalization condition. In cases where property is determined to be contaminated (such as an old service station site), the negative perception can be dissolved with exposure to the facts and the establishment of a clean-up action plan.

■ **Organizations and Tools within the County**

The County economic development strategy is to build on existing environmental, human and technology resources. The goal is to elevate Cherokee County to a No. 1 ranking nationally in quality growth created by economic development advances. To achieve this goal the County has reinvented several agencies and is creating others to improve legislation for growth, develop economic development performance standards, design guidelines, and to harness private investment in an intelligent manner consistent with the overall master plan of the County. Local objectives of these agencies are to:

- Expand citizen and business participation in self help activities;
- Protect the natural environment;
- Recruit high technology companies;
- Expand networking activities of agribusiness to foster joint marketing and research and development; and
- Experiment with the use of economic partnerships with the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Fernbank and private, liberal arts power house Reinhardt College.

Development Authority of Cherokee County

The Development Authority was chartered to recruit and promote quality commercial and industrial development within the county. The Development Authority of Cherokee County was created by statute in January 1981 under the Development Authorities Law (Chapter 62 of the Georgia Codes). The Authority has nine members, eight appointed by the Cherokee County Commission with the ninth member being the chairperson of the County's constitutional development authority (the Cherokee County Development Authority). The two authorities work in partnership with the county commission and local municipalities to support quality development in the county.

Chamber of Commerce

The 1000-member Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce is the official private sector economic development agency of the county. The Board membership rotates annually. Chamber divisions include Existing Industry, Education, Drugs Don't Work, Small Business Assistance, Economic Development, and innovative committees and task forces set in motion for individual purposes. The Chamber is a member of the Metro Atlanta Chamber Coalition, Northwest Atlanta Alliance (coordinated with Kennesaw College), Georgia and National Chamber Associations. Volunteers assist the Chamber in promoting activities, special functions and 'Chamber Awareness Month', which is held each May. An event is held each week during May that is designed to make the Chamber membership and community more aware of the Chamber and its programs.

Chamber Connection Committee

Members of the Chamber Connection Committee serve as public relations liaisons for the Chamber and educate the new members as to the types of programs available through the chamber, attending new business ceremonies and coordinating New Member Receptions. The Chamber Connection Committee mentors small business representatives and encourage their involvement in the Chamber, while extending small business services out in the community.

The staff provides many services and resources—some of these are available to the public, others to Chamber members. Business and community leaders volunteer hundreds of hours each year, reviewing challenges, seeking solutions and exploring new ideas together—to make Cherokee County a progressive, prosperous and imminently livable community.

Good Morning Cherokee

The Chamber's monthly 'Good Morning Cherokee' Breakfast Meetings offer members and potential members the opportunity to conduct business and network with fellow business leaders. GMC is held the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 am, except for the months of January and July. Chamber members sponsor the meetings and programs of interest are presented.

'Business After Hours'

This program allows businesses the opportunity to become better known in the business community's networking system. BAH events are sponsored by different members and are held at their own places of business. The Small Business 'Business After Hours' is held in the Chamber's Terrace Level each year during Chamber Awareness Month in May.

New Member Receptions

This program provides the Chamber's newest members with the opportunity to learn more about the organization, and its programs and benefits. Members of the Chamber Board of Directors' share their knowledge of committee activities and volunteer opportunities with attendees.

'Operation Thank You'

The Chamber works collaboratively with the Development Authority of Cherokee County to implement 'Thank You' during Manufacturing Appreciation Week in April. All industries and their employees are acknowledged for their contribution to Cherokee County's employee base and economic viability.

Wednesday Workshops

Seminars are scheduled on a monthly basis for members and non-members. Programs are designed based upon suggestions by the Chamber membership. Subjects vary and include informational programs designed for various types and sizes of businesses.

The 'Chamber Choice' Discount Program

Members agree to offer a discount on products and services to fellow Chamber members. 'Chamber Choice' cards are sent to all Chamber members. Participating members agree to accept 'Chamber Choice' cards and to inform their employees about the program. In 2005, the Chamber encouraged additional member businesses to offer discounts through the Chamber Choice program, while also encouraging members to patronize Chamber Choice participants.

Shop Cherokee Program

The Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce created this program in 1997 in an effort to encourage the concept of shopping locally. It provides an opportunity for businesses and/or individuals to purchase a unique gift that can be redeemed at a variety of local businesses. The purchaser orders 'Shop Cherokee' Gift Certificates from the Chamber office in any denomination. 'Shop Cherokee' Gift Certificates may be personalized with both the name of the presenter and the recipient. A personalized gift envelope is included, as well.

'Shop Cherokee' generated over \$107,000 in sales in 2004, which means that over \$107,000 was spent with local businesses that otherwise could have been spent with any number of out-of-county companies. The Chamber's ongoing goal is not only to increase the 'Shop Cherokee' Gift Certificate sales, but also to increase the number of redeeming merchants. This program is supported by Chamber member businesses. Members in good standing simply agree to redeem the 'Shop Cherokee' Gift Certificates for the amount designated on the certificate. The business then returns the 'Shop Cherokee' Gift Certificate(s) to the Chamber office for prompt reimbursement for the total value of the certificate(s).

The Regional Issues Advisory Council

This committee hosts, through sponsored events, open forums on topics relating to local and regional transportation, environmental, water quality/quantity and land use issues that effect Cherokee County and its residents.

The Education Committee

The Education Committee assists in coordinating the "Partners In Education" program, which is a joint venture between the Cherokee County School District and the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce. The program collaborates with businesses and schools to provide volunteer support and donations. There are currently 200 active partnerships between local schools and Chamber Member Businesses. The Education Committee also supports programs like "Principal For A Day," where business leaders gain insight to the daily challenges of educators. In honor of National Children's Book Week, the Chamber hosts Annual Adult Spelling Bee in conjunction with the Sequoyah Regional Library System and sponsored by WellStar. A portion of the proceeds will help purchase children's books.

Leadership Cherokee

As strong leadership is a prime ingredient in the continuing development of any community, the Chamber's Leadership Cherokee program educates existing and emerging leaders. In its 17th year, Leadership Cherokee includes over 300 Alumni. Leadership Cherokee is a program of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce, which seeks out existing and emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds and offers them an educational experience to expose them to various aspects of the community. The program is designed to be an educational experience. Leadership Cherokee will not attempt to create a consensus or promote any specific issue. If Cherokee County is to achieve its potential, the people must be aware of the social, economic, educational and governmental needs of the community. The participants profit from getting to know each other and from the formal and informal exchange of ideas and experiences. They gain knowledge from the over-all program on many subjects, thus preparing them for a more active leadership role in the community.

Organized in 2000 and graduating its first class in 2001, Teen Leadership Cherokee is designed to develop the knowledge and leadership skills of young people in Cherokee County in the tenth grade so they may con-

fidently become our leaders of tomorrow. Participation in Teen Leadership Cherokee will demonstrate that in this transient society, a diverse group of people working together, rather than individually, can be effective in solving the problems faced by the community. To accomplish this mission, the Teen Leadership Cherokee Program offers a series of workshops to explore:

- Community issues;
- Personal development issues – team building;
- Economic issues; and
- Political issues.

The Small Business Recognition Committee

This committee accepts nominations for “Small Business of the Month” award recipients to be honored by the Chamber and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Monthly winners are considered for the “Small Business of the Year” award presented during the Chamber Annual Dinner. Qualifications for applicants are as follows: Company must be a member in good standing of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce and must have been a member of the Chamber for a minimum of 12 months; Company must be a manufacturing, retail or service business; and Company should have no more than 25 full time employees.

The Governmental Affairs Council

Through a “Call to Action” initiative, this committee notifies the membership regarding legislative issues of concern to business. Through support of the Regional Business Coalition's Legislative Agenda, the council will also update the membership regarding such issues as exemption of interstates from congressional balancing and activities of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.

During 2005 the Committee visited the State Capitol, as well as participated in the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (GACCE) Fly-In to Washington, D.C. Governmental Affairs will also host the annual Elected Officials Appreciation Reception in the fall as of means of saying “thank you” to Cherokee’s elected officials for all they have done for Cherokee County and its people. During the final months of the year, the Committee formulates a Legislative Agenda based upon key items of legislation that are of importance to the membership.

The Workforce Development Council

This committee is comprised of Chamber Member business leaders from a variety of different sectors. The council works closely with the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Labor and Appalachian Technical College to promote industrial growth and low-cost training in the county. The Council oversees three main sub-committees: Training/Career Resource Center, Career Fairs and Business Expo.

- Training/Career Resource Center: In 2003 and 2004, the committee compiled a survey and brochure that included results from more than 100 business leaders addressing training needs. This information has helped provide additional research for the Cherokee Career Resource Center. The center, located in downtown Canton, offers a wide range of services that assist individual seeking employment, training and education at no cost.
- Career Fairs: Through a partnership agreement with the Cherokee County School District, the committee helps to coordinate career fairs for middle school students. Each fair highlights a wide range of careers available through the school district's pathway curriculum concept. The pathways are: Arts-Communications-Humanities, Business-Information Management-Marketing, Engineering-Industrial Systems, Health-Medical, Agriscience-Environmental, Social-Human Services.
- Business Expo: The Business EXPO committee plans an EXPO in September.

City of Woodstock Economic Development and Planning Office

This agency supervises growth, revitalization, historic preservation, urban design, the new Gateways project, and the application of grants and zoning for the city. The office has instituted an overlay commercial zoning Village system of economic development along state route 92 corridor. It is also competing in the Georgia Home Town economic development program to revitalize their central business districts.

Farm Bureau

The Farm Bureau is a nonprofit agency established for agricultural economic development purposes. Membership is limited to farm owners. The Bureau is active in the master planning and zoning of Cherokee County. Additionally, the Bureau advocates or evaluates legislation options such as a Development Transfer Bank, Conservation Easements, Zero Coupons, Townships and Conservation Subdivisions and the creation of a countywide agricultural business plan.

Cherokee Existing Industry Incentive Program

The Cherokee County Development Authority, in coordination with Cherokee County government, provides a tax incentive program for qualified industries located in Cherokee County. The purpose of this program is to encourage and support local industrial expansion. Qualifying activities include: 1) Acquiring new or re-conditioned equipment; and/or 2) Acquiring, constructing, expanding or improving existing facilities. The tax incentive applies only to the value of new or reconditioned equipment and/or facility capital improvements acquired during the calendar year. The tax benefit is awarded based on the following schedule:

Investment	Percent of Specified Taxes to be Paid				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
up to \$500,000	33.3%	66.6%	100%	100%	100%
\$500,000 to \$1,250,000	25%	50%	75%	100%	100%
over \$1,250,000	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%

Normal tax rates apply after the abatement period and special assessments continue to be payable during the abatement period. If the participant fails to make any payment shown or any special assessment assigned, penalties or interest will be assessed in accordance with applicable Georgia laws relating to late tax payments. Should the industry cease operation in Cherokee County, the abatement is terminated. To qualify, an industry must meet the following criteria:

- Has operated in Cherokee County for at least five years; and
- Invests a minimum of \$150,000 in a qualifying activity within the year; and
- Produces a value-added product (manufacturer, not commercial or retail).

Participants in the program are required to enter into a standard agreement to document the abatement and to comply with state laws relating to such. As state law stipulates that only property titled to a public entity can have taxes abated, title to the property must be held in the Authority's name during the abatement period. The equipment or facilities are re-transferred to the participant at the end of the abatement period or sooner if the participant requests. Should the participant desire to have title returned before the end of the abatement period, the abatement must terminate. The participant will also enter into a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with the County to make above scheduled pro-rated payments in lieu of taxes during the abatement period in the amounts as set forth above.

An application fee of \$100 is due at the time of submission of program application. Successful applicants will be required to pay a transaction fee for processing and filing required legal documents. This fee is paid to the law firm selected by the Authority to process the filing. The fee for Tier 1 applicants (\$150,000 to \$500,000) is \$750; The Tier 2 (\$500,001 to \$1,250,000) fee is \$1,500, and the Tier 3 (over \$1,250,000) fee is \$5,000.

Business Development Revolving Loan Fund

Businesses in Cherokee County, an eligible Appalachian Region county, may qualify for loan funds through the Business Development Revolving Loan Fund. Eligible activities include working capital; new construction and rehabilitation; building acquisition; equipment purchase & installation; facade improvements; and land acquisition. Ineligible uses include speculative projects; projects appropriate for 100 percent private sector financing; and assistance to businesses relocating jobs from one labor market area to another. The maximum loan amount is \$200,000 per qualifying business, or 50 percent of total project cost, whichever is less. There is no maximum project cost and no minimum loan amount.

The Business Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is a \$3 million pool that can be used in the Appalachian Region for loans to projects that create or save jobs and that:

- Promote industrial locations or expansions;
- Encourage downtown development;
- Complement local development strategies; or
- Satisfy other public purposes

Funds for the Business Development Revolving Loan Program were granted to DCA by the Appalachian Regional Commission. DCA administers the RLF but loans are made through local development authorities (LDAs). The DCA Loan Committee reviews all loan requests and sets terms for each approved loan application depending on project needs. Eligibility requirements include:

- Loans may only be made to private, for-profit businesses, including both owner-operators and real estate developers. Lending institutions are not eligible for RLF loans.
- The loan applicant must demonstrate ability to repay the loan.
- The loan recipient must create or save at least one job for every \$20,000 of RLF loan funds received.
- Business owners must arrange financing for at least 50 percent of the cost of their proposed project. Past investments usually are not counted toward this 50 percent requirement. (Note: other lending institutions may provide some or most of the money needed to meet the 50 percent requirement.)
- A minimum 5 percent equity injection is required.

Loan terms usually include below-market interest rates, depending on project requirements, and a repayment period of up to 15 years, depending on the useful life of the assets financed with the loan. Collateral is typically a second mortgage on the real estate.

Freeport Inventory Tax Exemption

Cherokee County offers a 100 percent Freeport Inventory Tax Exemption. This exemption covers raw materials and goods in process of manufacture, finished goods produced in Georgia within the last 12 months, and finished goods stored in Georgia within the last 12 months and destined for shipment out-of-state.

■ Economic Development Training Programs

The labor market in Cherokee County has begun a slow transformation from a blue-collar labor force to a white-collar one. However, commuting patterns as of the 2000 Census with only 35.4 percent of the workers living in Cherokee County actually working within the county indicate that the majority of employment opportunities are fulfilled outside of the county. The County needs to continue to diversify and bring more white-collar employment opportunities to Cherokee County. As well, prior analysis indicates that service and retail industries will remain the largest employment sector for years to come. Nevertheless, these changes have affected the need and types of training and education being made available to Cherokee County residents. The complement to a strong primary and secondary education is a comprehensive higher education system. This system includes community or technical colleges, which overall in Georgia have a placement rate of 98.2 percent, and four-year universities that prepare individuals with the necessary skills and tools needed to compete successfully in today's workforce.

The quality and availability of the workforce are two major concerns for businesses today. This has become the number one issue in economic development for Cherokee County. For the County, this issue is focused on creating the educational and workforce development systems necessary to ensure the availability of quality workers. Public and private schools from Pre-K through post-secondary are part of this system, as are the organizations and agencies that provide training and supportive programs for the county's workers. To achieve this end, goals and strategic actions have been established in the Economic Development Strategy, of which one goal ("Align educational, training and workforce programs and services with targeted business areas") is particularly relevant to the link between identifying job opportunities for particular community populations. Strategic actions proposed include:

- Share target business strategies with all educational and training providers to identify existing strengths and potential areas for improvement;
- Ensure that training and educational needs of major employers are also being met, if not addressed as part of the target business strategy;
- Expand training and educational opportunities available to entrepreneurs and small business owners.

The following details programs that offer training opportunities for workforce development.

Cherokee County School System Career/Technical Education

The county is well positioned in the provision of workforce training resources, beginning with public education. The Cherokee County School system is involved in economic development strategic planning through ongoing dialogue with the Cherokee Development Authority in efforts to support one another. The Cherokee County school system launched its new career and technical education program in the fall of 2003. The program is designed to provide students at all levels with the education and technical skills required for postsecondary options by providing academically rigorous and career relevant curriculum. The program's purpose is to enhance student's competitiveness in the workplace, while simultaneously preparing them for college-level academic work. Each grade level has a different career/technical focus to fit the needs, abilities and interests of the students. Elementary students have career awareness activities, middle school students participate in career exploration, and high school students focus on career pathways of their choice. This program requires the assistance and participation of the business community, institutions of higher learning, and parents to help improve and enhance the programs for the benefit of students who are the future employees of existing and future businesses.

North Metro Tech

Although North Metro College is located in adjacent Bartow County near the southwest corner of Cherokee and Cobb, its Acworth address makes it easily accessible to Cherokee County residents. It is a public two-

year postsecondary institution with a vision “to be a leader in workforce development in Northwest Georgia.” Like Pickens Tech, North Metro Tech is a unit of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. The Commission of the Council on Occupational Education accredits it. In addition to workforce and economic development programs, North Metro, with a 96 percent placement rate, offers several associate degrees, diplomas and technical certificates.

North Metro Technical College offers several workforce and economic development programs including an adult literacy program, economic development, tech prep, and the school-to-work program. The Adult Literacy Program, provided by North Metro Technical College, offers free day and evening classes at various locations. One goal of this program is to help adults obtain the necessary skills and knowledge for employment and self-sufficiency. Another goal is to help current parents become full partners in their children’s educational development. The program helps in the completion of a secondary school education through a GED preparation program.

The college’s economic development division provides customized workforce development training to business and industry. It also delivers Quick Start training programs in its service delivery area. Quick Start provides high quality training services at no cost to new or expanding business in Georgia. The college offers programs that assist students in their transition from high school. Tech Prep is a program that connects the academic and technical courses taken in high school with a certificate, diploma and/or Associate program. Formerly a national initiative, School-to-Work in Georgia is a program that focuses on helping local communities improve methods of preparing all students for career success.

Appalachian Technical College

Appalachian Technical College is a public two-year postsecondary institution that operates as a unit of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. Appalachian Technical College provides accessible, quality associate degree, diploma and certificate technical programs; non-credit courses; customized training; and adult education services using student-centered instructional delivery and up-to-date technology to meet the workforce and economic development needs of people, companies and communities of Cherokee, Fannin, Gilmer and Pickens counties. Campuses are located in Woodstock and Jasper County.

With a fiscal year 2002 graduation rate of over 70 percent, placement rate of 99 percent, and licensure pass rate of 93 percent, the college offers various associate degrees, diplomas and certificates. The College’s 53 programs are divided among five programs areas: business technology (18), health technology (5), industrial technology (21), personal services (4), and business and industry training programs (5). The College “recognizes the worth and potential of its students and endeavors to meet their educational needs by providing a qualified faculty, a customer focused administration and staff and up-to-date curriculum.” Workforce development is an integral part of the mission of Appalachian Technical College, and the Economic Development Department of the College provides customized training to the business and industry community in Cherokee County. Appalachian Technical College is also the managing entity for the Quick Start program (provides training for new and expanding industries) assistance in Cherokee County. These programs include OSHA compliance/accident reduction, supervisory skills development, customized Spanish for business and industry, maintenance training, credit courses, computer skills training, and GED testing. By offering the aforementioned programs, the college provides leadership in the economic and workforce development of the four-county service area.

Appalachian Technical College has also established a partnership with the Department of Labor, the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce, the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Cherokee County Board of Education to establish a One-Stop Shop, Career Resource Center in downtown Canton. Serving more than 3,000 people during the last three quarters of 2003, the purpose of this center is to provide support to dislocated workers and low-income adults; provide training and job search assistance; and through Youth Focus, assist young people from ages 14 to 21.

The Quest Program, which has a location in Canton, Georgia, is a field-experience program designed by Covenant College (Lookout Mountain, Georgia) to allow working adults to complete their bachelor's degree at an accelerated pace. Students attend classes once a week for approximately 14 months. Requirements for this program are that the student must be at least 25 years old, have 60 semester hours of college credit, have a minimum of five years work experience, and be currently involved with an organization where course principles can be applied.

Reinhardt Methodist College

Reinhardt College's 540-acre main campus is located in Waleska. The educational program emphasizes the study of the liberal arts and sciences within the College's historic commitment to the United Methodist faith and tradition. Reinhardt College offers four-year baccalaureate degrees and a two-year degree in pre-nursing. In the fall of 2002, 1100 students attended Reinhardt. Of those students, 43 percent were upperclassmen; 83 percent were full-time and 17 percent were part-time; 59 percent were female and 41 percent were male. In May 2002, with a 39 percent graduation rate, Reinhardt College awarded 177 baccalaureate degrees and 35 associate degrees. Because of the large number of students who attend graduate school after graduation, placement rates are difficult to track, thus they are unavailable.

Kennesaw University

Kennesaw is located on I-75 in Cobb County. It is a regional university regularly ranked by U.S. News as a top southern public university and has graduate and undergraduate curricula. 14.6 percent of its fall 2001 enrollment consisted of Cherokee County residents. KSU's mission is to "serve as a highly valued resource for this region's educational, economic, social and cultural advancement." In 2002, the characteristics of baccalaureate graduates were 67 percent transfer students, 19 percent beginning freshman, and 14 percent beginning freshman with a learning support requirement. The university, with an institutional six-year graduation rate of 23 percent, offers several bachelor and master degree programs. Of the summer 2002 to May 2003 graduates, 81 percent were employed at the time of graduation. KSU is home to the Center for Leadership, Ethics and Character (CLEC). The mission of the CLEC is to "promote principle-centered, transformational and ethical leadership to internal and external constituencies through education, training, renewal, research and programs focused on the principles of ethical conduct, character development, stewardship, service and community engagement."

Pickens Technical Institute

Pickens Tech, although located in Pickens County to the north, has state of the art training facilities for computer use, metal works, and a variety of manufacturing training facilities. Pickens is a stable for the training at local manufacturing plants. The Institute is a division of the University System of Georgia and provides state sponsored job training under the BEST legislation.

Cherokee Learning Center

The Cherokee Learning Center is a participant in the Certified Literate Community Program. The program promotes literacy in Georgia by involving entire communities. The CLCP is a business-education-government partnership resulting in improved literacy levels of children, families, and workers in an entire community.

Cherokee Youth Focus

Operated by Cherokee schools, the Cherokee Youth Focus attempts to address challenges faced by the region's youth who are from low-income families, school dropouts, runaways/homeless or other at risk circumstances. This program provides education and employment services as well as tutoring, mentoring, GED instruction, basic skills improvement, and career planning.

Partners in Education

“Partners in Education” is a joint venture of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce and the Cherokee County School System. In this program, a business is matched with a school to provide volunteer support or unique services matched to the school’s needs. The Partners in Education mission is to enhance the learning process and to enrich the learning experience for Cherokee County students while contributing directly to the quality of life for coming generations.

■ **Marketability**

Business costs are all of the expenses associated with the initial investment and regular business operations in a local community. Traditionally, business costs have been categorized as land, labor and capital. In this section, several other factors that do not directly affect the cost of doing business but still influence the overall business climate will also be analyzed.

According to an Atlanta Journal-Constitution article, the 2002 elections changed the business climate between developers, builders, and the County Commission in Cherokee County. The article states, that a previously “slow-growth” board evolved into a more “development friendly” board. Recent “pro-growth” initiatives include giving a subdivision a dense zoning instead of the recommended medium density zoning, rolling back impact fees, planning to rewrite the land-use plan, and forming a blue-ribbon commission to recruit new businesses and jobs to the county. These actions indicate that Cherokee County is attempting to signal to businesses that they are welcome in the community.

Real Estate

The amount of available office space and land is an important indicator about an area’s ability to handle the development of new businesses. Limited supply will result in increased rent costs, which is ultimately undesirable to businesses. The following table illustrates available business and industrial parks as reported to the Development Authority of Cherokee County. Industrial parks can be assets to a community because they can provide well-maintained sites and buildings that are awaiting new tenants. Parks with available space are located in the cities of Canton and Ball Ground. The business and industrial parks have comparable transportation access. I-575/Airport and Wilbanks Industrial Parks are the only two parks without railroad access. The Bluffs of Technology Park, a mixed-use park, has the most available acres, 703. Also, in Cherokee County’s agreement with Technology Park/Atlanta (TP/A) to be developers of the Bluffs of Technology Park, there is a provision that TP/A donate sufficient land for Appalachian Technical College to build a satellite campus in the park. Bell Industrial Park, located in the City of Woodstock, does not have any available acreage. The Development Authority of Cherokee County’s website provides further information about available building and office space. The website has a link for individuals to do a search based on his or her site or building needs (current usage, dimension, location). All of the sites and buildings have information about square footage, acres, jurisdiction, price and area. The website also has the location, size, environment, utilities, and transportation information of the reported industrial and business parks.

Table 60: Cherokee County Business Park Statistics						
	Bell Industrial Park	Canton-Cherokee Business/Industrial Park	1-575/Airport Industrial Park	River Mill Industrial Park	The Bluffs of Technology Park	Wilbanks Industrial Park
Location	Woodstock	Canton	Canton	Ball Ground	Canton	Canton
Total Acres	102	120	122	100	703	84
Available Acres	0	15	50	85	703	79
Zoning	Mixed-Use	Industrial Park	Industrial Park	Industrial Park	Mixed-Use	Industrial Park
Highway Access	1-575 adjacent to Canton Road. Direct access to Bell Parkway.	Adjacent to I-575. Hwy. 51 mile north. Direct access to GA Hwy. 20	Adjacent to I-575 and Ball Ground Hwy. Direct access to Airport Dr.	I-575 is 0.3 mi west. Ball Ground Hwy. 0.1 mi west Direct access to East Cherokee Drive	Adjacent to I-575 Hwy. 5 is 0.5 miles south-east	Adjacent to I-575 and Ball Ground Hwy. Direct access to Wilbanks Dr.
Railroad Access	Georgia North-eastern	Georgia North-eastern	None	Georgia North-eastern	None	None
Air Access	International & commercial 33.4 miles. Cherokee County - 13.9 miles	International & commercial 41.8 miles. Cherokee County - 5.1 miles	International & commercial 44.8 miles. Cherokee County - 1.5 miles	International & commercial 45.9 miles. Cherokee County - 1.1 miles	International & commercial 44.1 miles.	International & commercial 45.6 miles. Cherokee County - 0.7 miles
Seaport	Savannah, GA 241.2 mi SE	Savannah, GA 242.7 mi SE	Savannah, GA 244.8 mi SE	Savannah, GA 244.1mi SE	Savannah, GA 244 mi SE	Savannah, GA 244.5 mi SE
Barge	Chattanooga 79.5 miles NW	Chattanooga 73.8 miles NW	Chattanooga 73.0 miles NW	Chattanooga 73.4 miles NW	Savannah Ocean Terminal	Chattanooga 73.1 miles NW

Source: *Business Climate Analysis*, Market Street Services, October 2003

As of November 2005, there were 25 vacant “build to suit” sites and 32 existing buildings available in the county. In addition, the website also provides access to site maps and detail maps of some of the properties. Three of the business parks are under the umbrella of the Development Authority of Cherokee County. These are:

The Bluffs of Technology Park

The Bluffs was named 2000 Land Deal of the Year by the Atlanta Business Chronicle for its quality and scope. The project is an outstanding example of private and intergovernmental cooperation. The development was conceived through the joint effort of the Cherokee County Commission, the Development Authority of Cherokee County, the City of Canton and Technology Park/Atlanta Inc. This property features office, service and technology space for lease or purchase in low and mid-rise buildings. The Bluffs is modeled on the developer’s successful Johns Creek project. The Bluffs, a 700-acre property, is ideal for build-to-suits and corporate campuses. A build out of five million square feet within 15 years is anticipated. Incorporating smart growth principles and maintaining significant green space, The Bluffs is designed to create a major regional employment center convenient to residents of Cherokee County and north metro Atlanta.

I-575/Airport Industrial Park

This 122-acre industrial park is conveniently located off Exit 24 in the Interstate-575 corridor. Utilities, paved streets and curbing are in place to support new and expanding development. Adjacent airport facilities, fiber optic cabling, covenants, planned site development, recreational amenities and designated green spaces make the I-575/Airport Industrial Park an excellent choice for new and relocating businesses. Located in unincorporated Cherokee County, the I-575/Airport Industrial Park is home to ULMA, SMB Machinery and DLI II. Property remains available in this development.

Canton-Cherokee Business & Industrial Park

This 120-acre park is within the City of Canton. Its location, accessibility and support facilities, including spur service by the Georgia Northeastern Railroad and the Cherokee County Airport, have made this a demand location. Companies located in the Canton- Cherokee Business & Industrial Park include Morrison Products, Piolax Corporation, Quill Corporation, Universal Alloy Corporation and Wadeken Industries, among others.

Private Business and Industrial Parks

Cherokee County has a number of private business and industrial parks ready to accommodate the needs of new and expanding businesses.

Business Support

Business support includes providing a forum for discussion of the concerns of local businesses, research on factors that affect the performance of businesses, and willingness to change accordingly. Cherokee County has made several advances towards the support, recruitment and attraction of businesses.

- **Technology Committee:** The Executive Director of Cherokee County's Development Authority chairs the Technology Committee for the Georgia Economic Development Association. This committee works to identify and analyze issues and trends related to attracting and supporting technology-focused investments in Georgia. They also provide analysis and advice regarding certain public policy issues concerning effective access to modern telecommunications technology for communities, businesses and economic development practitioners throughout Georgia.
- **Cherokee County Industry Council:** Another form of business support in the county is the Cherokee County Industry Council. Its mission is "to create an organization to provide local industry leaders a forum to discuss issues of common concern and to meet personally with state and local political leaders to discuss needs of existing industries." The inaugural meeting was scheduled for the end of October 2003.

Local Business Services

The availability of local services can also influence a business' decision to locate in an area. The time and effort a business must use to seek out services to support their business ventures will be reflected in their expenses. Sales figures are one simple measure for the availability and sophistication of local services. Currently, Cherokee County's 0.7 "pull factor" indicates that sale dollars are flowing out of the county, creating an underserved business environment. However, Cherokee County's total retail sales are expected to grow 48 percent in 5 years. This projected growth exceeds the projected growth for Georgia, 23.1 percent.

Permits and Licenses

For the unincorporated areas of Cherokee County, the building inspection department, planning department, building license office, and environmental health department are either located in downtown Canton in the Justice Center or its neighboring Administration Building. Each department has a role in the permitting process, thus to encourage a user-friendly business environment, it is useful to have these close locations. All incorporated and unincorporated areas of Cherokee County have the same building codes and follow similar permitting and licensing processes in regards to fulfilling zoning requirements and obtaining a building permit.

The fees for business licenses in the unincorporated area of Cherokee County are \$30 per year for each full time employee or owner, and \$15 per part-time employee. All business licenses expire December 31 of the current year. Prior to applying for the license, one must obtain from the Planning and Zoning department the zoning classification for the location of the business.

In the City of Woodstock, the cost of a business license is also \$30 per employee. However, unlike the County, this fee is pro-rated if submitted mid-year. Applicants must submit an application to the Clerk, who processes the request. In Canton, the business license fees are based on the type of business and expected gross receipts, with a minimum fee of \$100. Applicants must go to City Hall to apply for a business license, as well as obtain a certificate of occupancy from the Building Department.

Taxes and Incentives

The overall tax structure of the State and the specific community is a consideration for relocating and expanding businesses. Additionally, the tax credits and incentives that states and communities offer to businesses can similarly play a considerable role in a company's site selection process.

- **Corporate Income Tax:** In Georgia, the corporate income tax is a flat rate of 6.0 percent. Georgia businesses are taxed only on income apportioned to Georgia, not on a "unitary tax" basis.
- **Sales Tax:** The amount of sales tax levied in an area affects the price of goods purchased by businesses. In Cherokee County, the State sales tax is 4 percent and the local sales tax is 2 percent.
- **Property Tax:** Property taxes raise revenue for a variety of local services that may include general government operations, police and fire protection, street maintenance, transportation, indigent care, and school district operations. Within the City of Canton, the property tax rate is \$13.08. Within the City of Woodstock, the property tax rate is \$12.88. Outside of both cities, the rate per thousand is \$11.03. Because of the bedroom-community character of Cherokee County, property taxes are necessary to its operations. A more diverse base than the county currently has would greatly benefit the reliability of its property tax revenues, and a thorough review and adjustment of any weaknesses discovered would greatly enhance Cherokee's ability to maintain financial solvency.

Payroll

Cherokee County's workers are paid considerably less than the other comparable areas in the region and the State in almost every business sector. Cherokee County's relatively low wages could be a benefit to companies looking to relocate because their total variable costs would be less than in an area with higher average wages. However, it should be remembered that low wages do not contribute to an overall healthy local economy because they do not generate wealth for the community.

Natural Resources

Preservation of natural resources is a multi-tiered task. Regulatory measures to protect significant resources need to be in place during the land development process, the public needs to be educated and aware of the current conditions and funding which is necessary to lease or acquire lands to be preserved, or to rehabilitate or maintain historic resources. The County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock have taken measures to preserve and protect their environmental and historic resources (as applicable to each jurisdiction), primarily through the adoption of DNR Part V Environmental Standards and compliance with applicable state, federal, and other agency regulations. Modifications to zoning codes and other ordinances have been made to protect resources and allow more creative types of development.

The whole county is included in the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD). Cherokee County is in the process of adopting amendments to the zoning and development regulations to comply with the necessary requirements. Following is a list of the ordinances that are adopted or in process:

- Conservation Subdivision (Adopted).
- Erosion & Sediment Ordinance (Adopted).
- Stormwater Regulations (Adopted).
- Tree Ordinance (Revisions Pending – Current Ordinance is relevant).

These ordinances require a pre-design meeting to identify resources needing protection.

However, additional measures are recommended to further assess and protect the natural and historic resources of the county, particularly in pre-development assessment phases of the land development process. Information is currently fragmented; a comprehensive documentation and mapping of wetlands, sensitive habitats of known species of concern, stream protection buffers, significant forested areas containing concentrations of specimen trees, steep slopes, and other important resources should be conducted and prepared as an overlay to the zoning map. Sites where species of special concern are located should receive priority for protection and land acquisition by whatever means available as passive open space, as greenspace, or potentially as Wildlife Management Areas under appropriate circumstances. The County should identify targeted areas for conservation proactively, and not just react to their disposition when faced with a development request.

In order to meet DNR's original goal of 20 percent of county land permanently preserved in a natural state, 54,963 acres were identified as the goal for protection through acquisition, conservation easements, and transfer or purchase of development rights. However, since 2003 when the state funding was terminated, the County has targeted the acquisition and protection of 25 acres of land per year, and has been able to meet that goal with a recent acquisition of 100 acres. Modification of the Zoning and Development Codes is also warranted to establish buffer requirements that entail the preservation of sensitive lands as buffers between developments.

As part of the requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Minimum Planning Standards, communities must adopt at least the minimum DNR's "Part 5 Minimum Environmental Standards." These state-wide standards were developed by DNR pursuant to Code Section 12-2-8 to address three basic concerns:

- Aquifers and groundwater recharge areas;
- Water supply watersheds; and
- Wetlands.

The land resources enjoyed by the residents of Cherokee County are presently abundant and varied in nature. However, these represent a finite stock of resources. The demand on land resources is large and continually growing as development pressures increase. The water quality of the Etowah River and its tributaries has been steadily

declining. Lands previously held for wildlife management are being lost to potential transportation networks and master planned communities. Volumes of crop production and timber farming are declining.

Prime habitats for indigenous plants and animals in Cherokee County include streams and riverbeds, bottomland forest, grassy pastures and upland forests. The ideal landscape habitat should include large patches of habitat and corridors between habitats to allow for gene flow. As development continues to spread across the county, habitat fragmentation is becoming a significant concern. The creation of greenway connections between passive parks and Wildlife Management Areas, as well as open space areas in conservation subdivisions, should be sought to provide movement by wildlife as well as humans. Sites where species of special concern are located should receive priority for protection and acquisition under the Greenspace Plan.

The Etowah River corridor is considered to have the largest number of imperiled species in the state, four of which are federally protected. The fragile nature of the Etowah River is being addressed in a multi-jurisdictional effort to prepare a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which will necessitate the County to adopt regulations and standards for development as recommended by the HCP. As well, the Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority (CCWSA) meets all Federal, State and other Water Protection Act regulations in the location of water and sewer projects. After the basic stormwater regulations are in place, the County plans to work on low impact development strategies.

■ **Climate**

Cherokee County has a moderate climate due to its geographic location. Summers are warm and humid, but not to an excessive degree. Maximum summer temperatures average around 90 degrees. Minimum summer temperatures range in the low seventies. Nighttime temperatures tend to be very pleasant.

Like most southern regions, winters in Cherokee County are mild. Freezing typically occurs less than 60 times, on average, per winter. No month has an average temperature below freezing. This climate is suitable to agriculture because the ground seldom freezes to a depth of more than three inches and rarely stays frozen more than four days. Because of this mild climate, outdoor related activities and natural amenities are an integrated part of the Cherokee County lifestyle.

■ **Topography and Steep Slopes**

Cherokee County lies within the Upper Piedmont Physiographic Province, which is further divided into the Cherokee Highlands District, the Dahlonega Upland District, the Hightower-Jasper District, and the Central Upland District based on differing topographical and soil characteristics. The Cherokee-Upland District covers most of the northwest portion of the county, including the City of Waleska. It ranges from 1,000 to 2,000 feet in elevation and features southwestwardly flowing streams in wide valleys separated by hills 200 to 300 feet above the valleys in elevation. The Dahlonega Upland District, located in the northeastern part of the county has average elevations of 1,200 feet, with topography similar to that of the Cherokee Upland District. The Hightower-Jasper District, which encompasses most of Canton and the cities of Holly Springs and Ball Ground, has a different structural and lithological history. Although elevations range from 1,000 to 1,100 feet with ridges rising 200 to 300 feet above the valleys, they tend to be narrower, separated by low parallel ridges. The Central Upland District begins just north of Woodstock and covers the extreme southeast edge of the county with low linear ridges of 1,100 to 1,300 feet in elevation.

Topographical slopes of 25 percent or more are considered significant. Areas with such steep slopes have the greatest potential for erosion since the slope increases the speed of water running down it, and thus hastens soil erosion. In addition, soils on such steep slopes present difficulty for building and infrastructure development due to the increased potential for the soils to collapse under weight loads or slump, and septic runoff may be difficult to control. Many species of animals and plants that only live on steeper slopes are particularly vulnerable to development. The Slopes Map depicts areas that have a 25+ percent slope.

Protected Mountains

Mountains over 2,200 feet are safeguarded under the Georgia Mountains Protection Act. Cherokee County contains two protected mountains—Pine Log Mountain (at an elevation above 2,350 feet) and Bear Mountain (at an elevation of 2,302 feet), the only protected mountains in the ARC region. Cherokee County is currently working with ARC, the Georgia DNR and the owners of a trust that currently oversees over 600 acres of land at the highest elevation of Pine Log and Bear Mountains to acquire this land for state protection. If acquired, this land would be jointly managed by DNR and the Cherokee County Recreation Authority for environmental and ecological education programs.

Soils

The underlying bedrock underneath the surface of Cherokee County consists of various igneous and metamorphic rocks, especially gneiss and schist. Formed deep within the earth over millions of years, they make excellent foundations for construction of all types, and weather to form fertile soils. Major bands of these minerals run from the northeast portion of the county to the southwest.

As mapped by the Soils Conservation Service, there are nine types of soil associations found in Cherokee County. (See the Soils map, below). Soils may be classified according to structure, texture, organic matter content and permeability.

Soil Type	Land Use				
	Agriculture	Woodlands	Septic	Foundation	Industrial
Chewacla - Cartecay - Toccoa	fair to good	excellent	poor	poor	poor
<i>nearly level soils on stream floodplains</i>					
Wickham - Masada - Hiawasse	good	good	fair to good	good	good
<i>very gently sloping and gently sloping soils on uplands</i>					
Hayesville - Madison	poor	fair	poor	good	poor
Gwinnett - Hayesville - Madison	excellent	excellent	poor to fair	good	poor to fair
<i>moderately steep soils on uplands</i>					
Hayesville - Gwinnett - Musella	good	good	fair to good	good	good
<i>steep to very steep soils on uplands</i>					
Tallapoosa - Madison - Hayesville	poor	good	poor to fair	poor	poor
Talladega - Tallapoosa	poor	poor	poor	poor	poor
DeKalb	fair to good	good	fair to good	fair	fair
Hayesville - Madison	good	good	poor	poor	poor

Source: Georgia Resource Assessment Program's "User's Guide to Soils Information."

Some soil types present serious difficulties for development that will utilize on-site septic systems for sewage disposal, or for the support of load-bearing foundations. Although every soil association has some natural limitations for development, all soils in Cherokee County are more or less suitable for most land uses depending on the developer's willingness to improve soil characteristics for a particular use. The following table indicates their relative suitability for development of various land uses. In addition, soils associated with groundwater recharge areas require special protection and the restriction of certain uses. The County has adopted the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Part V Environmental Regulations for groundwater recharge areas whereby the Environmental Health Department oversees enforcement of the regulations.

■ Water Resources

Cherokee County is characterized by a series of broad to narrow, gently sloping ridge tops and moderately steep hillsides adjacent to numerous, small drainage ways that dissect the areas. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over several river basins in Georgia, one of which is the Upper Coosa River System that runs through Cherokee County. The Coosa River System includes the Etowah River, which flows along the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Lumpkin, Dawson and Forsyth Counties before flowing southeast through Cherokee and Bartow Counties. The Etowah River is impounded in Lake Allatoona, located in Cherokee County, the second largest Corps reservoir in the U.S.

Availability of water and water quality are major issues for Cherokee County. Other water related issues include flood control, irrigation, environmental quality protection, economic development and land use, power, fish and wildlife preservation, open space preservation, outdoor recreation opportunities, and tourism. Public health benefits that result from maintaining high standards for water quality are advantageous to all Georgians. Water resources are considered state assets that we all share in; and therefore it is essential that the quality of public drinking water be ensured.

The County has taken several steps to protect its water resources:

- The County is implementing the requirements of the DNR Part V Environmental Regulations through implementation of Article 26 of the County's Development Code with tailored standards and restrictions for Protected Mountains, the Etowah River/Little River Corridor, Groundwater Recharge Areas, Wetlands, and Watersheds;
- In conjunction with State funding, the County originally aimed to set 54,963 acres of its land mass in permanent open space. A large percentage of open space would be along waterways in order to promote higher water quality standards, as follows: 9,841 acres of watersheds; and 9,803 acres of primary stream buffering and greenways. Since funding was terminated in 2003, a goal of protection of 25 acres of land per year has been established. A total of 675 acres have been acquired and reserved as greenspace to date;
- Septic tanks are restricted to areas of low density, and are subject to additional requirements within groundwater recharge areas as established in Article 26 of the County Code of Ordinances. Septic tanks and septic drain fields are prohibited in corridor buffer areas, with the exception of a single septic tank allowed in association with a single-family residence on a minimum 2-acre lot, although the septic drain field is not permitted within any corridor buffer area.
- The Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, adopted in July 2005, establishes a minimum requirement for a 150-foot wide undisturbed buffer along the Etowah and Little River corridors, which exceeds the DNR Part V minimum of a 100-foot wide undisturbed buffer. Stream buffers for smaller stream resources are a 50-foot minimum with a 25-foot wide additional setback where impervious materials may not be used and grading or other disturbances are discouraged.
- Participation in the generation of the Etowah River Habitat Conservation Plan; and
- Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which implements floodplain management measures to reduce risk to new developments.

North Georgia Water Planning District

In 2001, the Georgia General Assembly created the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District to help address the need for long-range water planning. This Act created a planning entity dedicated to developing comprehensive regional and watershed-specific plans to be implemented by local governments in the District. These plans will protect water quality and public water supplies, protect recreational values of the waters, and minimize potential adverse impacts of development on waters in and downstream of the region.

The general purposes of the District are to establish policy, create plans and promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues in the district; to facilitate multi-jurisdictional water related projects; and to enhance access to funding for water related projects among local governments in the District area. It is the primary purpose of the District to develop regional and watershed-specific plans for storm-water management, wastewater treatment, water supply, water conservation and the general protection of water quality, which plans will be implemented by local governments in the District. Local governments within the District that do not substantially adopt the model ordinances will be ineligible for state grants or loans for stormwater related projects. This decision may be appealed to the District Board with a majority vote required to overturn. Those governments that do not implement appropriate plans would have their current permits for water withdrawal, wastewater capacity or NPDES stormwater permits frozen.

The Etowah River Basin is subject to the provisions of this plan. A full discussion of water planning issues is presented in the Community Facilities and Services Chapter of this plan. Specific environmental measures are presented here.

Streams and Watercourses

All watercourses that appear as a solid or broken line on the U.S.G.S. Quadrangle maps are considered regulated streams. Other natural watercourses may be classified as regulated streams. All watercourses, whether “regulated” according to the U.S.G.S. Quadrangle map, are protected within Cherokee County. The State requires a minimum of a 25-foot buffer on any stream. The Cherokee County Development Code outlines buffer requirements within each watershed for primary and secondary streams, and has adopted a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, which exceeds DNR and State regulations.

Of the significant rivers and streams in Cherokee County, the US Environmental Protection Agency, via the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), in 2002 identified the Long Swamp Creek, and potentially Sharp Mountain Creek, as not supporting the Clean Water Act (CWA) mandate of being “fishable and swimmable.” The list of waterways not meeting the CWA mandate is referred to as the 303d list. Additional information on non-point source pollution can be found later in this chapter.

Other Major Perennial Streams, or streams listed as trout fishing resources within the county include:

Byrd Creek	Bluff Creek	Owl Creek	Knox Creek
Puckett Creek	Pine Log Creek	Wiley Creek	Stamp Creek
Sweetwater Creek	Little Creek	Boston Creek	Moore Creek
McCory Creek	Noonday Creek	Murphey Creek	Shoal Creek
School House Creek	Rose Creek	Mill Creek	Canton Creek
Edward Creek	Salacoa Creek	Soap Creek	

Reservoirs

Buffers around public water supply reservoirs shall be maintained as required in the Watershed Management Plan for the respective reservoirs. In no case shall the required buffer be less than 150 feet in width. Vegetation, land disturbance and land uses shall be controlled by provisions of the applicable Reservoir Management Plan, as approved by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Water Supply Watersheds

A water supply watershed is the area of all land upstream of a reservoir or intake land that drains into that intake or reservoir. A drainage basin is the total area drained by a major surface water formation (i.e. river, stream). The State of Georgia has passed legislation setting minimum buffer requirements and impervious surface limitations to reduce the environment impacts of storm water runoff and soil erosion. Watershed protection measures have been adopted as part of Article 26 of the Cherokee County Development Code.

Three water supply watershed district overlays are designated in Article 26 and consist of the land areas that drain toward the central core of the watersheds. The boundaries of the 3 overlays are defined by the ridge lines encompassing the central core and a radius of 7 miles upstream of a water supply water intake:

- Cleghorne Spring (northwest sector) consisting of 38 parcels;
- Yellow Creek (northeast sector) consisting of 78 parcels; and
- Big Creek (southeast sector) consisting of 115 parcels.

Protection of water supply watersheds helps keep drinking water free of contamination. By limiting the amount of pollution that gets into the water supply, governments can reduce the cost of purification and guarantee improved public health. DNR categorizes watersheds as either large or small. More stringent watershed protection criteria are applied to water supply watersheds less than 100 square miles in size due to their increased vulnerability to contamination, additional protection requirements are instituted for Reservoirs. Watersheds that are above a public water intake that is greater than 100 square miles in size are considered large watersheds, and are less restrictive.

Only a small amount of surface water in Cherokee County is subject to stream buffer requirements under the Part V watershed requirements. This area is found in the southeastern part of the county and is associated with a public water intake located in Fulton County. The two public water intakes in Cherokee County that are directly on the Etowah River, one in the City of Canton and the County's intake facility, are part of watersheds that are over 100 square miles, and therefore are considered large watersheds.

Although DNR Criteria only requires large watersheds with reservoirs and small watersheds (with or without reservoirs) to institute buffer and impervious surface restrictions, Cherokee County requires a measure of protection to all watersheds in the county. In July 2005, a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance was adopted, which establishes a 150-foot wide natural buffer along the Etowah and Little Rivers, and a 50-foot buffer along primary and secondary rivers. Components of the ordinance for watershed protection include setbacks and buffer requirements as strict, or in many cases more restrictive than the state. The County has regulations regarding:

- Natural undisturbed buffers;
- Septic tank and septic absorption fields;
- Erosion and sedimentation control;
- Stormwater management control;
- Overland and flow/non-point source discharges;
- Development densities and setbacks;
- Impervious surface limitations within watersheds;
- Restrictions on hazardous waste handling and disposal, and sanitary landfills;
- Public education; and
- Water conservation.

Protected River Corridors and Major Bodies of Water

The entire Etowah River Corridor, having an average flow of greater than 400 cubic feet per second, qualifies as a protected river under the O.C.G.A. 2-12-8. The Act specifies that a 100-foot vegetative buffer must be maintained along the entire corridor, as measured from each bank of the river. This buffer may be adequate to ensure water quality on the river and yet may not be adequate for preserving wildlife habitat, archeological resources, or for developing proposed open space/recreational resources.

River Basin Management Plans are prepared in accordance with legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly that calls for the Environmental Protection Division to prepare plans for each major river basin in Georgia. The Coosa River Basin Management Plan, which includes the Etowah River and its tributaries, was completed in 1998. The plan was developed in cooperation with the public and agency partners including the Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the DNR Wildlife Resources Division, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U. S Geological Survey, and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Etowah River Corridor

The Etowah River is of regional importance because it is a source of water and electrical power for communities in the northwestern part of Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Under State law, a 100-foot wide undisturbed buffer is required on either side of the river. The County has adopted the Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, which requires a 150-foot wide buffer along the Etowah River. The County, and other affected agencies, has begun to look at ways to further buffer the corridor to protect scenic resources and wildlife habitat.

Because there are few roads accessing the river outside of Canton, much of it is in pristine condition, bordered by low-density residential and agricultural land uses. The Cherokee County Recreation Authority has acquired 1,245 acres of land, some of which border the river, for passive recreation opportunities.

Lake Allatoona

The Lake Allatoona Reservoir was completed in 1955 by the Corps of Engineers for the purposes of power generation and flood control. The lake holds back the floodwaters of the upper Etowah and upper Coosa River. At normal pool level, the lake contains 12,010 surface acres of water and has a shoreline of 270 miles, within both Cherokee and Bartow Counties. Within Cherokee County, the Corps owns a buffer around the lake comprising about 17,753 acres. Corps owned reservoirs are specifically exempted from buffer requirements placed on other public water supply reservoirs and watersheds by state law: however, under the Corps' lake management plan, Lake Allatoona is protected to a higher degree, for the most part, than specified by state law.

Yellow Creek Reservoir

The Yellow River Reservoir consists of 420 acres located primarily in Dawson County with arms of the reservoir coming into Cherokee County. The reservoir is owned and operated by the Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority as a public water supply. The facility falls under the DNR Part V Environmental Standards and requires a local government management plan. Portions of the reservoir within Cherokee County are also subject to the buffering, use restrictions, and impervious surface requirements applicable to other watersheds in the county.

■ Groundwater Recharge Areas

Groundwater is contained in underground geologic formations called aquifers. Water is released to the surface through wells and springs or by seepage into lakes, streams and wetlands. Aquifers store ground water used for public and private drinking water supply and irrigation. In Cherokee County, the primary bedrock is

composed of crystalline granite, gneiss, schist and quartzite. This low storage capacity indicates that most of the water supply must be received from surface streams, rivers, reservoirs and lakes.

As defined and mapped by the Department of Natural Resources and Georgia Geologic Survey, there are three probable areas in the county which may be significant recharge areas, based on a scale of 1:500,000 which limits identification of recharge potential areas to only the larger sites. They are relatively flat areas with thick soils, which from a development perspective may be favored sites for commercial and industrial development. The three areas are located in a southwest to northeast trend across the county, with one at the lower southwest corner of the county, and the other two extending in a northeast direction near Holly Springs and Canton. However, it is the State's intent that these identified areas are where ground water protection efforts should be directed. Groundwater quality is particularly important in Cherokee County because a portion of the county is still dependent on well water for domestic use. Centralized sewer systems do not cover all of the county's land area, leaving many aquifer recharge systems vulnerable to infiltration from septic tank drainage fields.

Both the state and federal government regulate land uses within groundwater recharge areas. A Groundwater Recharge Area Protection District (GW) has been established to protect the quality of groundwater by regulating land uses within significant groundwater recharge areas. Cherokee County has adopted the minimum DNR Part V requirements for Groundwater Recharge Areas. In addition the County has adopted regulations established minimum lot size requirements for sewer system and alternative septic systems. New manufactured home parks must be located with accessibility to public water and sewer systems.

The Cherokee County Environmental Health Department approves all septic tank permits. This department will ensure the minimum lot sizes are met and the requirements of the Department of Human Resources "Manual for On-site Sewerage Management Systems" are met for all groundwater recharge areas.

■ Wetlands

Wetlands serve as important fish and wildlife habitats and breeding ground, and are an integral factor in food chain production. Numerous plant and animal species have adapted to the special conditions of freshwater wetlands and cannot survive elsewhere. Wetlands serve as storage areas for flood protection/control, erosion control, water quality maintenance and groundwater recharge, supply and recreation opportunities. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Cherokee County's wetlands can be found along major creeks, rivers and lakes, usually within their respective flood plains. Wetlands serve as:

- Recharge areas for groundwater;
- Habitats for fish, plants, and other wildlife;
- Flood control devices;
- Water purifiers by filtering and trapping pollutants and sediment;
- Transition zones between terrestrial and aquatic environments; and
- Buffers between developed and undeveloped areas.

The County has adopted the DNR Part V regulations in addition to federal regulations and enforcement measures, to serve as the standard for wetlands protection. Section 26.7 of Article 26 establishes a Wetland Protection District comprised of all lands referenced by the National Wetlands Inventory Map. In addition to the minimum DNR Part V regulations, the County has adopted the following procedures for development proposals affecting a wetland area:

A land disturbance permit is required for all development activities in Cherokee County. The County's Engineering Department issues land disturbance permits and has acquired a copy of the National Wetlands Inven-

tory Maps (U.S. Department of the Interior) which by adoption of Article 26, became the official reference maps for the identification of wetlands within Cherokee County.

The Engineering Department determines whether a given development will fall within a wetlands area and whether the wetlands area has been designated as a significant wetland. If so, the following evaluative criteria are used to determine the impact of the activity on the wetland area:

- Will the land use lead to permanent alteration of the wetland that will negatively affect its natural functions (including water quality maintenance, erosion control, etc.)? If yes, the activity in question should be restricted.
- Will the use cause permanent alteration of the wetland that will negatively affect its recreational or fishing use, if any? If yes, the activity in question should be restricted.
- Will the impact of the land use be temporary or permanent? If permanent, the activity in question should be restricted.

If the proposed development is located within 100 feet of the Wetland Protection District boundary, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determination is necessary. All jurisdictional wetlands will be referred to the Corps of Engineers for a designated 404 Permit or Letter of Permission. No local permit should be issued until this requirement is fulfilled.

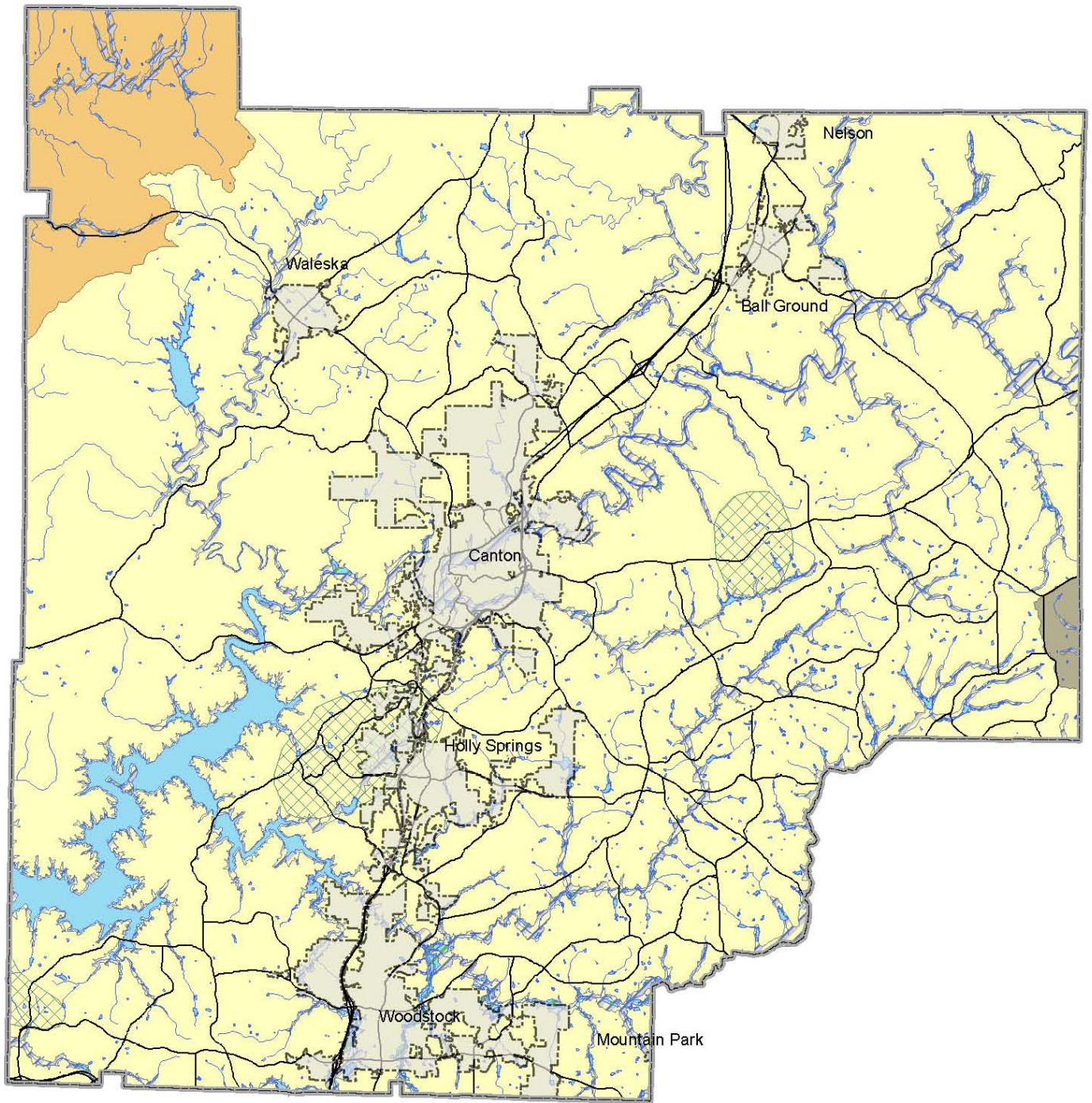
■ Floodplains

Floodplains in their natural or relatively undisturbed state are important water resource areas. They serve three major purposes: natural water storage and conveyance, water quality maintenance, and ground water recharge. Extraneous materials placed in the floodplain eliminate essential water storage capacity by taking the place of the water that would otherwise be stored there during a flood, causing water elevation to rise and resulting in the flooding of otherwise previously dry land.






Cherokee County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, a federal program that allows property owners within communities that participate in the program to purchase federally backed flood insurance. Participating communities are required to implement floodplain management measures to reduce flood risks to new development and adopt a floodplain protection ordinance to meet these requirements. The cities of Ball Ground and Waleska do not participate because they have no flood prone areas. The City of Woodstock began participating in the program in 1988.

In compliance with the other requirements under the NFIP, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified and mapped areas that are prone to flooding. The 100-year flood level (the extent of flooding likely to occur only once every 100 years) is the national standard on which the floodplain management and insurance requirements of the NFIP are based. With the exception of the requirements of the Flood Protection Ordinance, the County relies on the existing requirements as set forth by FEMA and the NFIP to ensure flood protection measures are implemented.

Cherokee Sensitive Environmental Areas

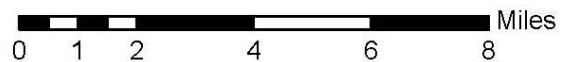


Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Wetlands | River Watersheds |
|  100 Year Flood Plane |  Coosawatee |
|  Groundwater Recharge Zones |  Etowah |
| |  Upper Chattahoochee |

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CHEROKEE COUNTY
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.
CANTON, GA.
DATE: 08/24/06



■ Environmentally Sensitive and Ecologically Significant Areas

The greatest threat to threatened and endangered species in the county does not result directly from killing, hunting, poaching or extermination, but rather indirectly from loss of habitat. The Pine Log Mountain, Lake Allatoona and McGraw-Ford Wildlife Management Areas in Cherokee County are managed for licensed hunting and fishing and provide primitive campsites. The existing Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) belong to private landowners or entities and are secured by short-term leases. An important wildlife resource, the Little River WMA, was lost due to lease expiration in the early 1990's, although the County was fortunate that a new area was placed under lease on Georgia Power Land—the 2,400 acre McGraw-Ford WMA along the Etowah River in the vicinity of SR 372.

While lakeside WMAs are useful habitats, their linear nature makes them inadequate for some critical wildlife activities. Wildlife needs quiet consolidated core areas for breeding, hiding and foraging. These critical habitats are continually shrinking due to the expansion of residential and commercial development into the undeveloped lands. It is recommended that the County develop a strategy for negotiation of new lease agreements, acquisition of land, and/or extension of existing lease agreements on additional properties for WMAs for habitat conservation.

Plant and Animal Habitats

Before western settlers arrived around in the early 1800's, forests and wetlands dominated the uplands of Cherokee County. These forests consisted of a combination of hardwoods and evergreens. Both wetlands and forest areas provided natural habitats to wildlife and animals. Due to growth and development, most of the old growth forests were lost by the turn of the century. Before adequate regulations were in place, many hundreds of acres of wetlands have been lost to development, construction and flooding by dams throughout the county. Several habitat protection measures are available through the State of Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has created the Georgia Natural Heritage Program to focus on natural elements of concern within the state. Elements of the program include plant species, animal species or natural community types that are especially rare or threatened.

Common mammalian species in Cherokee County include deer, rabbit, raccoon, squirrel, opossum, muskrat, beaver, mink, fox, bat and potentially bear. Doves, quail and waterfowl are the primary game species found in the county, along with hawks, crows, owls and songbirds. The majority of smaller mammals can adapt readily to urbanized environments, with the exception of roadways and the dangers associated. However, larger species, such as deer, require a more specific habitat for activities such as winter feeding, fawning and escape.

Most lakes and streams in the county contain largemouth bass, sunfish, crappie and catfish. The Corps maintains fisheries for crappie, largemouth bass, striped bass, white bass, hybrid bass, channel catfish and flathead catfish on Lake Allatoona. The county also contains several secondary trout streams protected by state law and managed by the Game and Fish Division of DNR. These include streams within the Boston Creek, Stamp Creek, Pine Log, and Salacoa watersheds as well as Bluff Creek upstream of Route 114, Soap Creek upstream of Route 116, Wiley Creek and Murphy Creek. Secondary streams are those in which there is no evidence of natural trout reproduction, but are capable of sustaining trout throughout the year. DNR regulations stipulate that an undisturbed natural vegetative buffer of 25 feet be maintained adjacent to these stream banks, and no land disturbing activity be conducted within 100 feet of the banks.

Cherokee County is home to several species of plants and animals that are classified as endangered, threatened or rare. State and Federal legislation relating to endangered plants and animals include the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the State Wildflower Preservation Act of 1973, and the Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973. The following list includes all plant and animal species that have been found and documented as occurring in Cherokee County, which are classified as protected by the State of Georgia and/or the Federal Government. Classifications are as follows: Threatened and/or Endangered. A third category is species of management concern for species categorized as Rare. The Fish and Wildlife Service are currently evaluating plants and animals within this category for

population threats and trends. The following table identifies known (documented) Special Concern Animals and Plants in Cherokee County.

Table 63: Plants and Animals of Special Concern in Cherokee County			
	State Rank*	U.S. Rank*	State Status*
Animal or Fish Name			
Etheostoma coosae: Coosa Darter	S3		
Etheostoma etowahae: Etowah Darter	S2	LE	T
Etheostoma rupestre: Rock Darter	S2/S3		
Etheostoma scotti: Cherokee Darter	S2	LT	T
Haliaeetus leucocophalus: Bald Eagle	S2	PS:LT,PDL	E
Hybopsis lineapunctata: Lined chub	S2		
Ichthyomyzon gagei: Southern Brook Lamprey	S3		
Macrhybopsis sp.1	S3		
Notropis chrosomus: Rainbow Shiner	S3		
Notropis stilbuis: Silverstripe Shiner	S3		
Noturus munitus: Freckleberry Madtom	S1		E
Noturus nocturnus: Freckled Madtom	S1		E
Percina antesella: Amber Darter	S1	LE	E
Percina lenticula: Freckled Darter	S1		E
Percina palmaris: Bronze Darter	S2		
Phenacobius catostomus: Riffle Minnow	S3		
Pimephales vigilax: Bullhead Minnow	S3		
Plant Name			
Lygodium palmatum: Climbing Fern	S2		
Lysimachia fraseri: Fraser's Loosestrife	S1/S2		R
Nestronia umbellula: Indian Olive	S2		T
Prunus virginiana: Chokeberry	S1		
Schisandra glabra: Bay Starvine	S2		T
Xerophyllum asphodeloides: Eastern Turkeybeard	S1		R
*Legend:	State Rank	U.S. Rank	State Status
	S1 = Critically imperiled due to extreme rarity (<5)	LE = Endangered LT = Threatened	T = Threatened E = Endangered
	S2 = Imperiled due to rarity (6-20)	PE/PT = Candidate Species	R = Rare
	S3 = Rare or uncommon	PS = Partial Status PDL = Listed	
Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Updated 10/22/2004			

The Georgia Natural Heritage Program (GNHP) is organized to collect information on rare species gathered throughout the state. Properties using federal funds, applying for federal permits or State public agencies using federal funds must survey their properties for endangered species and prepare plans to reduce or avoid impact. As part of the County's Tree Ordinance, developments must retain certain existing mature trees and replant additional trees. Native vegetation is suggested to provide habitats for indigenous birds and animals.

It is recommended that future site and development guidelines include assessments for these rare and endangered species. Once identified, site plans may be modified to accommodate human uses and natural habitat. The use of

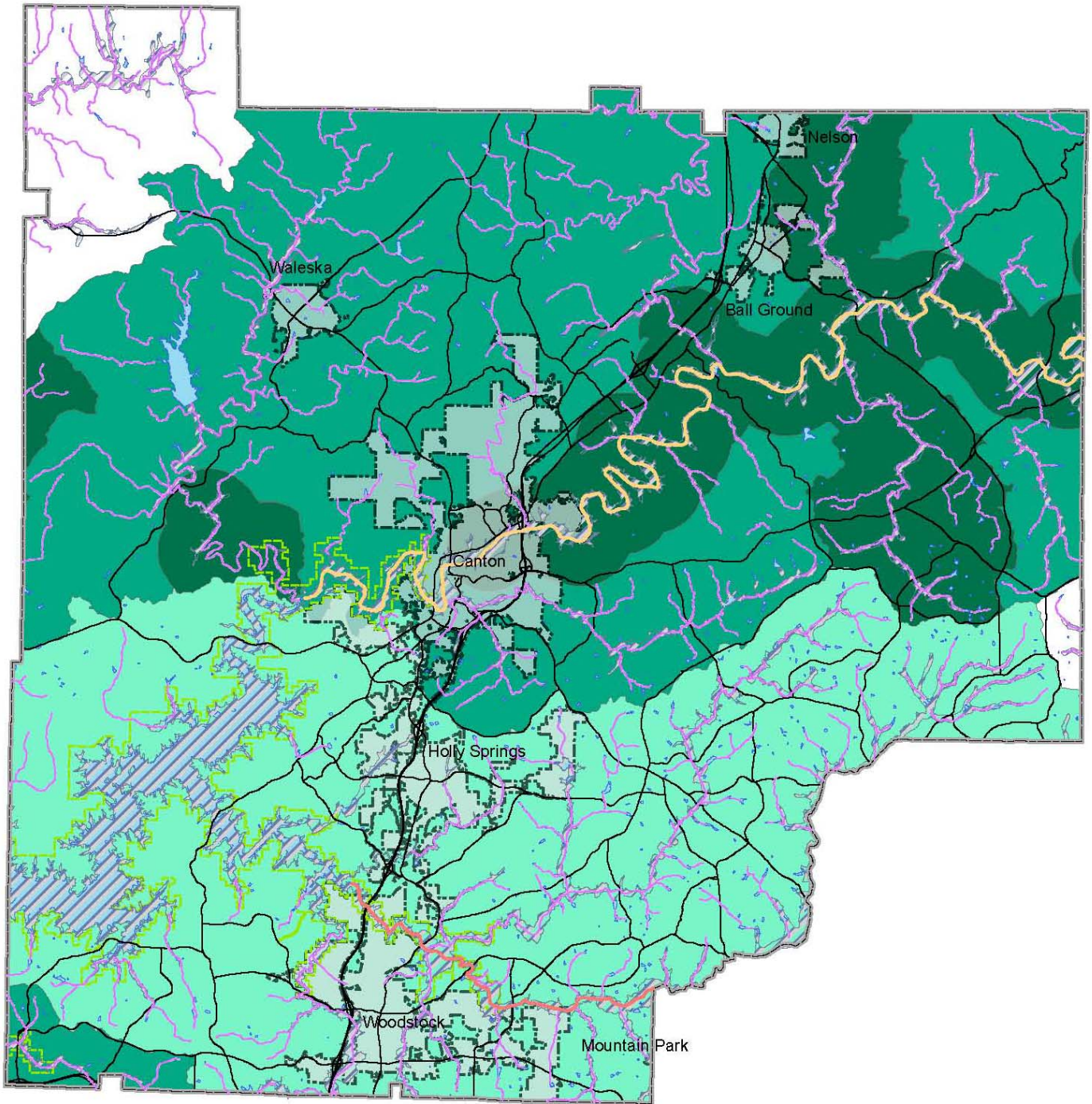
the Conservation Subdivision development standards is recommended in areas where sensitive habitats are found. It is recommended that the County develop an Environmental Checklist and Regulations for development for rare and endangered vertebrate, invertebrate and plant species, or areas of special habitat.

Etowah Basin Habitat Conservation Plan










The cities and counties of the Etowah Basin are working hard to protect imperiled aquatic species in the basin through a provision of the Endangered Species Act that allows them to write a Habitat Conservation Plan. The local governments have formed a steering committee made up of representatives from each jurisdiction in the Etowah Watershed. This group, with help from scientists, policy analysts and educators from the University of Georgia, GA DNR, Kennesaw State and the Nature Conservancy, among other groups and resource management agencies, is working to create a plan for the watershed that protects the habitat the endangered darters live in. Rather than trying to stop growth in the area, this group seeks to structure it in an environmentally responsible way. They are meeting regularly with local government officials, area developers and other citizen groups to create a plan that works for all concerned.

Table 64: Federal and State Protected Aquatic and Wetland Species in the Etowah River Basin			
	U.S. Rank*	State Status*	Ranking
Vertebrate Animals			
Myotis grisescens: Gray Myotis Bat	LE	E	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity
Cyprinella callitaenia: Bluestripe Shiner		T	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity
Etheostoma brevirostrum: Elijay Darter		T	Imperiled or critically imperiled in state
Etheostoma etowahae: Etowah Darter	LE	T	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity
Etheostoma scotti: Cherokee Darter	LT	T	Imperiled or critically imperiled in state
Hybopsis amblops: Bigeye Chub		R	Demonstrably secure in state
Noturus munitus: Freckleberry Madtom		E	Rare or uncommon in state
Noturus nocturnus: Freckled Madtom		E	Historic occurrence in state, not verified in 20 years
Percina antesella: Amber Darter	LE	E	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity
Percina lenticula: Freckled Darter		E	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity
Plants			
Platanthera integrilabia: Monkeyface Orchid		T	Imperiled or critically imperiled in state
Xyris tennesseensis: Tennessee Yellow-eyed Grass	LE	E	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity
	*Legend L= Listed E = Endangered T = Threatened R = Rare		
Source: Coosa River Basin Plan			

Cherokee Protected Environmental Areas

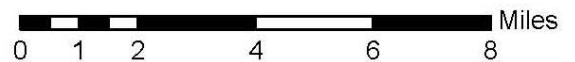


Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  100 Year Flood Plane | Etowah HCP Priority Areas |
|  Etowah River Buffer |  1 |
|  Little River Buffer |  2 |
|  50ft Stream Buffer |  3 |
|  Impervious Surface Buffer |  Corps Property |

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Drawing Prepared By:
CHEROKEE COUNTY
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.
CANTON, GA.
DATE: 08/24/06



The Army Corps of Engineers and a group of city, county and water development officials are meeting regularly to create a plan to assess holistically the health of the Etowah Basin watershed. The six-year plan includes a comprehensive monitoring and protection plan that will help local officials make decisions about water resources. Examples of requirements of the HCP might include riparian buffers adjacent to streams (in areas that do not have them), or stormwater management ordinances to reduce levels of pollutants in runoff. Participants in the HCP are also eligible to compete for additional federal funding for land acquisition or other land protection programs. The outcome of the Plan is that local governments (Cherokee County among them) adopt policies so that activities they conduct (such as road construction) would have minimal impact on imperiled species. In addition, zoning codes and development regulations will need to be amended to ensure that new private construction would have minimal impact. In the participating jurisdictions, consultations with the Fish and Wildlife Service would be expedited and the need for individual HCPs eliminated. It is recommended that Cherokee County continue as a participant in the HCP process, and amend zoning codes/development regulations to reflect the requirements in the HCP.

■ Conservation Areas

Cherokee County is fortunate to have many conservation, recreation and natural areas. As mentioned earlier the county's mild climate is very conducive to outdoor activities. This section identifies prime forest and agricultural land, conservation areas, passive open space and greenways within the county. Additional information regarding parks and recreation facilities is located in the Community Facilities and Services Section of this Community Assessment.

Prime Forest

Cherokee County's location at the edge of the Georgia Piedmont is reflected in the types of species found here. The moderate slopes of this rolling terrain are for the most part forested by hardwood species. Man made clearings and fields provide habitats for many kinds of animals and plants. Cherokee County was once covered almost entirely by trees, although much of the original virgin forests had been cleared for agricultural uses by the early 1900's. In rural areas, much of the forest cover consists of early pioneer species and young trees that have sprung up since the abandonment of farmlands and pastures. In developed areas, the forest is a mix of native and horticultural species, as well as remnants of original forest. The remaining forests consist mainly of three major forest types: red oak, white oak and black oak, hickory, maple, sycamore and pine. The majority of the total forested acreage is of the mixed type. As of 1997, the latest statistics available, 176,400 acres in Cherokee County were forested, which was 65 percent

Table 65: Forested Acreage in Cherokee County—1989-1997

Owner	1989	1997	% Change
All Ownerships	191,418	176,400	-7.80%
Federal, State and Municipal Forest	9,941	11,000	10.70%
Forest Industry	41,061	19,100	-53.50%
Corporate	32,764	36,900	12.60%
Private Individual*	107,653	109,400	1.62%

* Includes what was previously broken out under the "farm" category, which encompassed 4,681 acres in 1989. No separate data is available for 1997.

Table 66: Volume of Saw Timber and Growing Stock 1989 and 1997

Category	Species	1989	1997	% Change
Saw Timber Cut (in board feet)	All Species	1,099,125	1,223,000	11.30%
	Pine/Softwoods	560,043	486,700	13.10%
	Soft Hardwoods	223,028	273,900	22.80%
	Hard Hardwoods	316,054	462,400	46.30%
Growing Stock (volume in board feet)	All Species	348,572	315,600	-9.50%
	Pine/Softwoods	155,678	148,400	-4.70%
	Soft Hardwoods	84,924	120,400	41.80%
	Hard Hardwoods	107,970	99,400	-7.90%

of the total 271,200-acre total land area. The volume of live trees in the timberland is 357.8 million cubic feet, with two-thirds hardwoods and one-third softwoods (pines). As of April 2005, there were no acres reserved in the Crop Reserve Program or Wetlands Reserve Program.

As Table 65 indicates, Cherokee County lost 15,018 acres of commercial forest land to other kinds of land use between 1989 and 1997, a 7.8 percent decline. Most of this land loss was under Forest Industry owners, reflecting the sale of 20,000 acres by Georgia Kraft, Inc., which was 50.3 percent of the lands, held under the Forest Industry classification. The majority of percentage of forestlands lost has been primarily to development. Saw timber of mature trees increased by 11.3 percent between 1989 and 1997, primarily in the hardwood forest category, reflecting the increasing amount of development, while growing stock overall declined, although the percentage of growing stock in the soft hardwood category actually almost doubled, losses were recorded in the pines and hard hardwoods.

The Georgia County Guide classified approximately 36,205 acres as agricultural in 2000, comprising 13.4 percent of the total land area, a decrease of 5.47 percent from 38,298 acres in 1997. In 2002, there were 606 farms in the County, a reduction of 7.6 percent from 1997. The average size was 60 acres, although the median farm size was approximately 35 acres. In comparison, the representative counties in Georgia held an average of 67,574 acres of land in agriculture, generally about 28 percent of total land, and an average of 310 farms, although the average sizes were much greater at 244 acres, with the median size at 125 acres. Supporting this finding is the statistic that 17.3 percent of the existing farms were less than 10 acres, as compared to 7.7 percent of the average county. Harvested cropland and livestock production have been steadily decreasing.

Prime Farmland consists of soil types that are the most suitable and productive for agricultural purposes, such as sandy loams. According to the latest data, in 1978, there were 25,453 acres of prime farmland in Cherokee County. The Soil Conservation Service has also identified over 57,000 acres of additional farmland in Cherokee County that is considered to be of statewide importance. Prime farmland is widely distributed throughout the county, and is found to some degree on small pockets of remaining land within the communities of Ball Ground, Waleska and Holly Springs.

As the county continues to develop, it is anticipated that farm, timbering and livestock production will continue to decrease as agricultural uses are converted into residential and commercial uses. As of August 2005, there were 61,702 acres of land held under conservation tax credit; the largest are two adjacent tracts under the same ownership totaling 3,714 acres, which are under timber production.

The above analysis suggests that development is encroaching steadily on land that was previously farmed or in a natural forested state, and at significant rates. Although several thousand acres may be designated for agricultural use, only a small proportion of that is currently utilized for active crop production or livestock. Farming contributes to the county economically as well as preserving its traditional rural character. As the county continues to grow, land use policies and controls should promote the continuance of farming where compatible with other goals. As farms are rezoned, it may create land use conflicts with adjacent non-farm uses. Buffering techniques are needed to reduce the environmental impact at the transition areas. In response to this, the County has established minimum buffers required between Agricultural and other land uses in the Zoning Code, wherein: a 50 foot buffer is required when a parcel zoned AG is adjacent to properties zoned PUD, RM-15 and RM-10; a 40 foot buffer is required when Ag is adjacent to RTH and RA properties; and a 35 foot buffer is required when Ag land is adjacent to the RZL zone. When adjacent to all other residential zones, which are lower density, a minimum 15-foot buffer is required.

County Parks and Passive Open Space

The Cherokee County Parks and Recreation Authority holds 1,245 acres in passive open space, which contain undisturbed land, land adjacent to the Etowah or Little Rivers, walking trails, off-road bike paths, open fields (not playing fields or play areas). Improved parkland and recreation resources in the county are further discussed in the Community Facilities and Services Section of this Community Assessment.

Waste Management Inc. is donating 30 acres of land adjacent to their property to establish a park. This project will be a joint effort between WM and the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Authority. An environmental learning center will be established here with the help of organizations like the Native Plant Society, the UERA, the county extension agent, the school system and other interested volunteers.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Recreation Areas

The U.S. Corps of Engineers is a principle land and water owner in the county. Lake Allatoona, approximately 12,010 acres at normal pool level with 270 miles of shoreline, is primarily operated for flood control, power production, and water supply with recreation as a secondary, yet important benefit. The Etowah River is the source of Lake Allatoona's water. Allatoona Dam impounds run-off water from 1,110 square miles into the Lake. The Corps has developed and manages several of its own recreation facilities, including boat ramps, hiking trails, campsites, picnic areas, and a museum/nature interpretive center located on the 17,736 acres.

Through long-term leases, the Corps has allowed some private developments to be built near the lake, including the Allatoona Landing, a quasi-public organization's recreation facilities. The cities of Holly Springs and Canton lease parkland adjacent to the lake. These local governments are responsible for the maintenance of the areas they lease.

Wildlife Management Areas

Natural open space also includes three Wildlife Management Areas that are managed by the Georgia DNR. The Corps of Engineers leases portions of its land holdings to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division for the operation of wildlife management areas. These large tracts of land principally serve public hunting interests during the regulated State hunting seasons but also serve as access points for fishing on the lake. Wildlife Management Areas owned by the Corps include 4,433 acres at Lake Allatoona. The McGraw-Ford (2,400 acres) and Pine Log Mountain (14,900 acres) WMAs are privately owned and leased to DNR. Among the undeveloped and unused land within the WMA's, almost 97 percent is forested. The remainder is previously used land that is now vacant. However, as development pressures mount, habitat for wildlife has been shrinking in the county. The Lake Allatoona WMA has shrunk considerably in recent years. Approximately 4,000 acres of land that formed a portion of the original Lake Allatoona WMA is under development as the Towne Lake PUD, a mixed-use community. In addition, the Wildlife Resources Division lost over 20,000 acres of leased land north of the lake when Georgia-Kraft sold its land to private interests, although the County is negotiating the potential for acquiring a portion of the Pine Log Mountain WMA.

Greenspace Program

The County participated in the previous Governor's Greenspace Program. The intent of the program was to assist localities with the preservation and creation of passive open space. Utilizing resources from this program and others, the County and its cities adopted a plan in 2001 to develop a system of greenways to interconnect recreation, living and working areas throughout the county that include scenic corridors and sensitive natural resources, such as wetland areas.

The original Cherokee County Greenspace Program utilized resources from the state in order to leverage the additional funds needed to achieve permanent protection of valuable greenspace in the county. Ultimately, the program would develop a system of greenways and protected open spaces that interconnect recreation, living and working areas throughout the county, primarily along the Etowah River Corridor. The objectives of the original program were closely tied to this Plan's guiding principles for protecting natural and scenic resource, protecting the rural character of the county and providing transportation alternatives and linkages. Highlights of the County's original Greenspace program included:

- Ultimate protection of 54,963 acres of both public and private land through acquisition, conservation easements or TDR for a period of 10 years.
- Protection of: 9,841 acres of watersheds; 9,803 acres of primary stream buffering and greenways; 15,861 acres of open space/viewsheds;
- 5,325 acres of agricultural lands; 2,500 acres within conservation subdivisions and other types of zoning; 11,643 acres of federally protected land (Lake Allatoona).

The Greenspace Program was intended to provide for:

- The protection of Shoal Creek, Etowah River and Salacoa Valley watersheds;
- Acquisition and development of land within the Etowah River Corridor for use as a linear park for open space, passive recreation, trails and bicycle paths, and an outdoor recreation park with emphasis on camping, nature and wildlife interpretive centers and botanical gardens;
- Participation with the Corps of Engineers to protect significant natural areas, critical habitat, and rare and endangered flora and fauna on Lake Allatoona properties;
- Preserve greenspace near heavily developed residential areas in the vicinity of Brick Mill Falls and between Canton and Holly Springs for parks or neighborhood buffers;
- Preserve two conservation areas (Pine Log Mountain and Bear Mountain to protect the scenic value of the mountains);
- Create four district parks of 100 acres each for passive recreation and expand Waleska Park.
- Preserve viewshed corridors along designated roads and highways.

As of August 2005, the Cherokee Parks and Recreation Department has acquired 1,245 acres of passive open space in the unincorporated county. After termination of the Governor's Greenspace funding the County has set its goal of acquiring 25 acres per year.

To accomplish this greenspace preservation, the County intends to utilize several tools such as:

- The County Stream Buffer Protection ordinance which provides for a 50 foot undisturbed natural buffer along all primary and secondary streams and a 150 feet undisturbed buffer along the Etowah and Little Rivers;
- Promotion of the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and traditional neighborhood ordinances that encourage principles of open space design;
- Revision of the development ordinance to provide for narrower streets to promote clustering development away from greenspace;
- Fee simple acquisition;
- Donated and purchased conservation easements;
- Participate with the Corps of Engineers to protect sensitive areas around Lake Allatoona;
- Implement the sign kiosk program to preserve viewshed areas.

Greenspace is located in three tracts of land: the Wyngate Tract (20 ac) which protects water quality, riparian buffers and natural habitat; the Emerald Development tract (131.4 ac) which protects scenic quality, natural resources, passive recreation and connectivity; and two Hudgens' tracts - Tract 1 (423.4 acres) which promotes scenic attributes, passive recreation opportunities and connectivity, and Tract 2 (100 acres) which was purchased with County funds subsequent to termination of program funding. An additional 2 acres has been acquired by the City of Woodstock for the Rubes Creek Park, which protects water quality, riparian habitat, wetlands, natural habitat, connectivity and passive recreation opportunities. Following the termination of

state funding resources, the County has set a goal of protecting 25 acres per year. However, the County is in the process of identifying further funding methods and working with Land Trusts to provide additional open space resources.

■ Potential Tools for Conservation

One of the county's primary attractions is its rural character. Although the County favors growth to support its economic development objectives, it is not to be at the expense of its fundamental rural character. To address this issue, the County has adopted a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance, , as well as considering the implementation of a Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR) and a Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR) as a means of preservation of prime agriculture and forest lands. These are described as follows:

Conservation Subdivision Ordinance

This ordinance provides density neutral cluster development for greater flexibility of design and environmental protections. Three main features of the ordinance are: 1) it is density neutral and encourages preservation; 2) it calls out rare plants and animals as having a right to protection through zoning; and 3) it has broad authority to protect "wetlands, aquifers, topographical or soil features, marine and wildlife habitat; and other features having conservation values, including views, vistas, and indigenous vegetation.

This ordinance provides flexibility in ensuring preservation of open space within a master-planned residential development. Neutral density is achieved by allowing smaller individual owned residential lots in neighborhoods that are surrounded by aesthetically and ecologically important areas. The goal of the design process is to identify and set aside conservation open space areas prior to the delineation of transportation and residential pod layouts. Open space areas include wetlands, river buffer zones, woodlands, playing fields, and meadows, depending on the resources of the land. The intent of the conservation subdivision regulations is to:

- Preserve significant areas of land for ecological, recreational, and agricultural purposes in perpetuity;
- Encourage more efficient development of land consistent with public health, safety, and general welfare;
- Afford greater flexibility of design and placement of buildings and structures;
- Preserve and protect exceptional terrain, natural beauty, or sites of historic interest from inconsequential placement of homes, roadways, utilities and appurtenances;
- Preserve the Etowah River and its streams and tributaries as natural resources;
- Prevent flooding, erosion, and water pollution, and protect the quality and quantity of drinking water; and
- Promote a less sprawling form of development.

There are currently 57 such subdivisions in the developed, construction or planning stages. The greenspace in these neighborhoods is considered an amenity, which encourages tree preservation, and helps the metro Atlanta area move toward meeting its EPA Clean Air goals.

Tree Preservation Ordinance

The County has adopted Article 25 of the Development Code, which articulates tree preservation and planting standards. The existing ordinance is currently under revision and review. The purpose of the ordinance is to protect and replace trees as part of the development process. The provisions of the Ordinance apply to all development, public and private, with the exception of agricultural/forestry uses, the building of a single or

double residential unit, county right-of-ways, golf courses, utility easements, hydrology management, and lakes. The Ordinance establishes a minimum tree density of 20 units per acre. The minimum tree density requirement may be achieved through preservation of existing trees, planting of new trees that meet the criteria specified in the Ordinance, or a design that encompasses both approaches. If the required density cannot be attained on the subject parcel, two alternatives are available: Tree Bank or Tree Replacement Fund Contributions for planting of trees on alternative locations. The Ordinance requires a tree survey and inventory, as well as a Tree Preservation and Planting Plan are required as part of the development application process. The Ordinance also establishes requirements for tree planting in parking lots.

Technology Ridge Tree Buffer Zone

Article 25 also incorporates a Technology Ridge Tree Buffer Zone that applies to all parcels lying within 75 to 120 feet in a horizontal linear distance measured from each side of the I-575 right-of-way. The buffer zone is intended to provide visual aesthetic value while filtering noise, light and pollution.

All new development must incorporate two criteria prior to issuance of a land disturbance permit. For one, new development is required to incorporate one of three tree protection buffers organized on a sliding scale:

- A 75-foot wide buffer with required under-plantings to block 90 percent visibility of all buildings on a year round basis;
- A 100-foot wide buffer with required under-plantings to block 75 percent visibility of all buildings on a year round basis; and
- A 120-foot wide tree buffer requiring under-plantings to block 60 percent visibility of all buildings on a year round basis.
- Under the 100- and 120-foot tree buffer option, an architectural bonus is offered which reduces the under-planting to block 45 percent visibility of buildings if building facades have architectural treatments equal to the Comprehensive Interchange Design and Landscape Plan of the nearest Interchange Zone.
- A square footage bonus is offered under the 100- and 120-foot tree buffer option whereby 33 percent and 60 percent respectively of the total approved commercial, office or industrial square footage may be permitted for residential uses.
- A tree bonus option is applied to properties incorporating the 100-foot tree buffer of a 25 percent decrease in total overall site tree density units, under the 120-foot tree buffer option a 50 percent decrease in total overall site tree density is possible.

The second component of the Technology Ridge Tree Buffer Zone is on the areas within 1,000 linear feet of the right-of-way of an I-575 interchange. These areas are designated as Interchange Zones.

Agricultural Zoning Hierarchy

The agricultural zoning hierarchy is comprised of three levels whereby each level supports the other two while at the same time having inherently different zoning criteria.

- Level I: Consists of 1-acre parcels whereby ownership will be transferred to family heirs for legacy purposes and sale of land;
- Level II: A minimum of 2-acre parcels for development of residential subdivisions;
- Level III: A minimum 5-acre parcel for Prime Agricultural land.

Transfer of Development Rights Program

Transfer of Development Rights is a process of transferring the development rights of one property to another. The initial step begins with the development rights being assigned a value for a given unit of land. This

action is followed by the development right being transferred from a designated sending area to a designated receiving area. Once a transfer is completed, then a Conservation Easement is placed on the property designated as the sending area. The County has developed a first draft of a TDR Ordinance, but has not adopted the program as of 2005. It is recommended that the County modify the draft as needed, and continue to pursue the adoption process for the TDR Program.

Purchase of Development Rights Program

The County Board of Commissioners oversees the Purchase of Development Rights Program. In the PDR Program, the development rights that are sold to the county and removed to preclude any future acquisition of property for continued development instead of being transferred. The County has not taken any action on this program. It is recommended that the County target the preparation of a PDR Program for adoption in the STWP.

■ **Environmental Protection**

Although there are numerous landfills in the county operated by private solid waste disposal companies, two sites have been identified by EPD that have potential for impacting groundwater:

- **Brookstone Fine Wood Products:** Located at 12230 Cumming Highway in Canton near the intersection of A.V. Roberts Road. 1,2-Dichloroethane has been found in the groundwater exceeding the reportable quantity. The nearest drinking well is between ½ to 1 mile and it has been determined that the leaching has not resulted in human exposure.
- **Blaylock Road Landfill:** Located in Holly Springs near Toonigh Rd. and Blaylock Rd. The contaminate vinyl chloride has been found in the groundwater at levels exceeding the reportable quantity, which has been determined to have resulted in human exposure greater than the MCL. Categorized as a Class IV, cleanup activities are underway.

The County does not currently maintain an inventory of abandoned or contaminated properties, or those properties with unknown or suspect historical use of contaminants. Typically, the County requires soil testing prior to issuance of grading and land disturbance permits, particularly on sites previously used for any auto or machine repair, in order to identify any existing on-site contaminants.

■ **Potential Non-Regulatory and Outreach Programs**

Non-regulatory programs include incentive programs, citizen involvement efforts, and technical assistance and education.

Conservation Tax Credit

A conservation tax credit reduces property taxes on properties declared to be under conservation use. Although these properties are not permanently protected, the tax rate reduction allows an owner to maintain natural areas at a reduced tax rate even as these properties experience increased development pressure.

Conservation Use Program

Tax benefits for land conservation are provided through the Conservation Use Program. Under this program, the State of Georgia offers a tax incentive to qualifying property owners who wish to enter into a conservation covenant. Owners of qualified property must enter into a covenant with the state stipulating that the land will be maintained in its current condition for a period of 10 years. In exchange for the covenant, ad valorem tax will be assessed on the value of the property's current use rather than the fair market value. Strict penal-

ties are enforced if the covenant is broken before the 10-year agreement expires. Covenants can be re-established after each 10-year period.

Property eligible for the Conservation Use Program includes environmentally sensitive land, residential transitional property, and certain agricultural and forestry property. Environmentally sensitive land includes steep slopes, mountain slopes and mountaintops, wetlands, floodplains, habitats that contain endangered or threatened species and provide a significant portion of the species' biological requirements, significant groundwater recharge areas and undeveloped barrier islands. Residential transitional property is defined as property that includes a maximum of five acres surrounding the residence of a single-family homeowner, or is located in transitional developing areas as evidenced by recent zoning changes, the purchase of adjacent property by a developer, or the close proximity to property, which has undergone a change from single-family residential use. Agricultural and forestry property includes land used for a variety of row crops, aquaculture, horticulture, floriculture, forestry, dairy, livestock, poultry and apiarian products.

Conservation Easements

Under the Georgia Uniform Conservation Easement Act, conservation easements are non-possessory, in-perpetuity interests in real property created for any of the following purposes:

- Retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open-space use;
- Assuring the availability of land for agricultural, forest, recreational, or open-space use;
- Protecting natural resources;
- Maintaining or enhancing air or water quality; or
- Preserving historical, architectural, archeological or cultural aspects of real property.

A Conservation Easement is a legal agreement a property owner makes to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on the property. Each conservation easement's restrictions are tailored to the particular property and to the interests of the individual landowner.

Georgia Adopt-A Stream

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is a citizen involvement and water quality-monitoring program focusing on non-point source pollution. Volunteers adopt a section of stream, river, lake or wetland for one year. During that time, they evaluate water quality and habitat conditions, pick-up litter, and increase community awareness of these resources. Georgia Adopt-A-Stream provides education on nonpoint source pollution and protection of stream and river corridors. Currently more than 5,000 volunteers participate in individual and community sponsored Adopt-A-Stream Programs.

River Care 2000 Program

River Care 2000 is a conservation program established by Governor Zell Miller in September 1995. One key objective of this program is acquisition of river corridor lands for purposes of protection that will forestall unwise development in flooding prone areas. The Coordinating Committee has approved procedures for three types of projects—Riverway Demonstration Projects, which improve public access to a river with scenic and recreation uses and protect natural and historic resources by acquiring and managing land in the river corridor; Significant Sites, tracts of land the DNR will acquire and operate as traditional state public-use facilities and Restoration Sites, which are tracts of land the state will identify, acquire, and manage to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) Land Acquisition

DNR's Wildlife Resources Division began a land acquisition program in 1987 to acquire 60,000 acres of additional lands for Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Public Fishing Areas (PFAs). This initiative was funded by a \$30 million 20-year obligation bonds to be paid off by hunting and fishing license increases and WMA permit fees.

Nonpoint Source Education: Project WET (Water Education for Teachers)

A report outlining a plan for nonpoint source education in Georgia was completed in 1994. Titled Georgia Urban Waterbody Education Plan and Program, the report laid out nonpoint education strategies for seven target audiences—general public, environmental interest organizations, civic associations, educators, business associations, local government officials and state government officials. EPD initially targeted its education efforts towards educators and students in grades K to 12. Covering impacts on ground water and surface water, the curriculum addresses the following nonpoint sources: agriculture, forestry, urban and construction. EPD began implementing Project WET in December 1996. In 1997, WET Facilitator Training Workshops were successfully completed in Alpharetta, Macon and Savannah, Georgia. Currently there are 86 Project WET Facilitators in Georgia.

Greenprint Georgia

The Greenprint Georgia program is an innovative way to help local governments protect their critical natural and cultural resources and build enduring, prosperous communities. The Trust for Public Lands is helping Georgia communities create practical greenprints that not only protect important natural resources—like drinking water, watersheds, wetlands, parks and other open space, but also the special places that define an area's history and unique character.

■ Natural Resources Outreach Programs and Organizations

The County's Environmental Coordinator (EC) is responsible for education and outreach to the community concerning a variety of environmental issues. There are a number of local and regional outreach programs and organizations the County is currently involved with, as well as a number of potential non-regulatory programs, such as incentive programs, citizen involvement efforts, and technical assistance and education.

In August-September 2005, the County hosted meetings with interested parties concerning new ordinances: Conservation Subdivision; Erosion & Sediment Ordinance; Stormwater Regulations; Tree Ordinance. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan Update has extensive public participation. Once adopted, the Plan will be available for review on the County's website.

The following lists various outreach programs and organizations with which Cherokee County is currently involved:

Recycling

Cherokee County operates a recycling operation that includes a main Recycling Center and 50 drop off sites. Further recycling information is available on the County's web site: www.cherokeega.com.

Partnership Agreement with the Cherokee County School System

This allows the EC to organize environmental presentations in the schools as well as teacher workshops and participate in school functions such as Science Olympiad, Science Fair and choosing teacher of the year. Over a given year, thousands of students will be introduced to such issues as recycling, littering and water and air quality.

Environmental Education to the Community

The EC does community presentations as well as attending various festivals and volunteer functions. At festivals like Riverfest and the Lake Allatoona cleanup (Sponsored by the Corp of Engineers), thousands of brochures are dispersed. They address the following issues; recycling, litter, water preservation, storm water runoff, riparian buffers, rain gardens, xeriscape landscaping, septic tank care, composting, importance of trees, hazardous waste and others.

“Bring One for the Chipper” (Christmas tree recycling)

A State sponsored environmental event that Cherokee County participates in, with help from the Recreation and Parks Authority, America Recycles Day, The Great American Cleanup, and the Etowah River Cleanup as a Rivers Alive event.

Water & Storm Water Management

The EC and county officials help facilitate a group of organizations that are involved with federal and state initiatives. Others educate the public and offer grants that help protect and preserve our rivers, streams and lakes in Cherokee County. The following is a list of these organizations:

- **Lake Allatoona and Upper Etowah River Comprehensive Watershed Study:** On June 24th, 2005 leaders from the US Army Corp of Engineers, GA EPD, U.S. EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the counties of Cherokee, Bartow, Cobb, Dawson, Forsyth, Lumpkin, and Pickens, Cherokee Co. Water & Sewer Authority, Etowah Water & Sewer Authority, Cobb Co.-Marietta Water Authority, members of Congress, and representatives from civic and environmental organizations gathered together to celebrate the signing of an historical agreement to collaboratively monitor, assess, and improve the quality of water in Lake Allatoona and the Upper Etowah River Watershed.
- **Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP):** The HCP is establishing a comprehensive plan for developing in the Etowah Watershed, which will strive to protect aquatic species (some of which are endangered) and water resources in accordance with the federal Endangered Species Act. The HCP is overseen by a steering committee composed of representatives from each of the counties and municipalities within the watershed. The steering committee is assisted by a team of scientists, policy analysts and educators from the University of Georgia, Kennesaw State University and the Georgia Conservancy, funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Upper Etowah River Alliance:** Is a volunteer organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the Etowah Watershed. This is done through educational efforts (seminars have included xeriscaping, rain gardens, erosion control and others). The UERA was awarded a 319 grant from the federal government to implement best management practice projects that include septic tank repair, stream bank restoration, campsite restoration, as well as xeriscape and rain garden projects. The UERA also administers the Adopt-A Stream program in Cherokee County.
- **Celebrate Etowah:** Is a volunteer organization dedicated to informing the Etowah Watershed public about events, cleanups and festivals that take place in the fall of the year. Last year this group distributed over 7,000 calendar of event brochures as well as 500 t-shirts to event participants. This was all possible through cash and in kind donations from Cherokee County Government, private companies, and concerned citizens and organizations. (Web site: www.celebrate-etowah.org.)

Pine Bluff Landfill (Waste Management Inc.) Cherokee County Park Project

Waste Management Inc. is donating 30 acres of land adjacent to their property to establish a park. This project will be a joint effort between WM and the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Authority. An environmental learning center will be established here with the help of organizations

like the Native Plant Society, The UERA, the county extension agent, the school system and other interested volunteers.

Lake Allatoona Preservation Authority

This group is dedicated to the preservation and protection of Lake Allatoona. Each year they work with the Corp of Engineers on the Allatoona Lake cleanup that is a Rivers Alive event. This cleanup is one of the largest in the nation each year. (Web site: www.allatoona.org.)

Litter Pickup Program

Cherokee County has an ongoing litter pickup program that includes an Adopt-A-Mile program. This program was responsible for removing 120 tons of litter from our roads last year. A Litter Task Force was formed that includes county staff, commissioners, and judges, law enforcement, probation department and the State Department of Transportation. This has led to more coordinated effort and better ideas to address this issue.

Metro North Georgia Water Planning District

The County Environmental Coordinator is on the education committee for this metro program sponsored by the state.

Environmental Library

The EC along with other concerned organizations has worked with the School System to establish an environmental library with materials gathered from the Water Planning District, Keep America Beautiful, UERA, Nature Conservancy, Turner Broadcasting's The Natural South and numerous other resources. A workshop for teachers has been planned so that teachers can be properly trained to use the Enviroscape model on storm water runoff and Probe Ware hand held computers that track and collect environmental information. Thirty of these remarkable instruments were donated by the Engineering Department of Cherokee County to help students learn more about water and atmospheric conditions of our environment.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The county's rich history is made evident by the numerous historic buildings dispersed throughout the area. The Cherokee County Historic Resources Survey, completed in 1989, was performed as part of a countywide effort initiated by the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners to identify and survey all historically significant properties, communities and towns in Cherokee County. This study details 44 identified properties that are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

■ Historic and Cultural Resource Overview

Historic resources include landmark buildings, historic structures and sites, commercial and residential districts, historic rural resources, archaeological and cultural sites and the historic environment in which they exist. Historic Resources serve as visual reminders of a community's past, providing a link to its cultural heritage and a better understanding of the people and events that shaped the patterns of its development. Preservation of these important resources makes it possible for them to continue to play an integral, vital role in the community. Currently the County has a number of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Woodstock Train Depot, the Alfred W. Roberts House in Ball Ground, the Canton Commercial Historical District, the Crescent Farm (including Edgewater Hall and the Rock Barn) in Canton, the Canton Wholesale Company and the Canton Cotton Mill #2.

As in many Georgia counties, distinct periods of building activity are apparent. The main building period in the county was between 1880 and 1919, better known as the period of the New South. Other major historical periods represented include Antebellum, Reconstruction, Roaring Twenties, Great Depression and World War II/pre-Cold War. For Cherokee County, this was a period of growth and expansion brought on by the construction of the Georgia Pacific Railroad. A variety of types of architectural styles includes examples of Victorian, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival, Romanesque, Italianate, Beaux Arts Classicism and Tudor Revival. Craftsman and Minimal Traditional are the most common architectural styles found in the county.

Active Cultural and Historic Organizations

The Cherokee County Historical Society was founded in 1975 as a nonprofit corporation and has a membership in excess of 400. The Historical Society's bi-monthly meetings focus on the history or culture of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia. The Cherokee County Historical Society has created an extensive website, several informational pamphlets and booklets on the history of the county. The website provides a pictorial inventory of historical resources in the county from the 1989 Historic Survey, including detailed descriptions of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and 15 recently surveyed properties. The Society's newsletter, published bimonthly, is mailed to all members. It includes articles, meeting notices, membership updates, events calendar and news items of relevance to Cherokee County history and preservation. The Historical Society spearheaded the preparation of a book, *The Heritage of Cherokee County, GA.*, a community project to gather historical and family heritage information on the county from its inception in 1831 to 1998. It references early communities, churches, businesses and organizations. This 675-page work contains about 1,550 family stories and over 1,000 pictures. In addition, The Cherokee County Historical Society maintains two unique facilities listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- **Crescent Farm Historical Center:** Locally known as the Rock Barn, the Historical Center is located at 658 Marietta Highway across from City Hall in Canton. This historic structure serves as the meeting place, exhibition center special events facility.
- **Archives & Collections:** The Historic Cherokee County Courthouse is located at 100 North Street in downtown Canton. Administrative office, boardroom, collections and archives of the Historical Society

are located on the third and fourth floors, formerly the Jury & Jailer's Quarters (3rd Floor) and the County Jail (4th floor). The Jury Quarters & Jail were made available for use to the Cherokee County Historical Society by the Board of Commissioners in 1995. The Commission also allocated \$10,000 in funds for purchase of equipment including a computer, fax, archives material and supplies.

In the cities of Holly Springs, Woodstock and Canton, committees have been established to oversee construction and rehabilitation in certain districts, primarily associated with LCI and Downtown Development Plans, but these committees have limited power. Canton has an oversight committee to govern the downtown area, and Holly Springs has a Historic Commission.

Historical and Cultural Resources Preservation

The Cherokee County Historical Society, as the leading proponent for preservation in the county, is taking steps to ensure that historic resources are being preserved, given limited funding resources. To date, seven properties and one historic district have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As well, the Historical Society has restored the Crescent Farm Rock Barn for use as a local museum and conference center, and has saved the Cherokee County Courthouse from destruction and neglect. Other individuals throughout the county have worked independently to nominate properties to the National Register or to restore individual properties, but there is no centralized public organization to support or encourage preservation on a larger scale.

An update of the historic survey that was originally conducted in 1989 is underway. The update includes the review of the 562 significant historic resources originally surveyed in 1989 to determine if they are still in existence, their structural integrity, as well as their historic integrity, and other pertinent facts. As well, the 44 properties determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are also being re-surveyed, and a new list will be produced. Rural resources will also be included in the survey process, based on the 143 significant rural historic structures listed in the 1989 survey. New historic resources will also be assessed and added to the inventory. When complete, the survey will present significant properties by name, location, origination date, architectural description, and a brief history, if known, and will include photographic documentation of every property. Notable properties that have been re-surveyed and are available for review on the website include:

- Canton High School/Grammar School Building
- Canton Cotton Mills #2
- Coker Hospital
- Holbrook Campground
- Sixes School
- First Baptist Church
- Edward M. McClanless House
- Grisham-Galt House
- Don and Sharon Stafford House
- Odian W. Putnam House
- Merritt-Dean House
- Greene House
- George M. Harmon House
- Conns Creek School

- Conns Creek Arbor

The intent of the survey is that it will be used as a preservation tool by identifying structures that should be preserved and for targeting areas where development should be monitored. When the survey is completed, the results will be presented to the County and its cities for potential mapping. From the resource mapping, the County can determine if a significant historic resource will be lost during the course of the development application and review process, and incorporate potential measures to protect the site, or incorporate it into the project can be determined. As well, potential revisions to zoning designations may be made, and future historic districts identified.

The Historical Society is working with the cities and County to consider adding more historic districts (with restrictions on preservation set locally), and possibly qualifying as a “Certified Local Government” under the Historic Preservation Division of Georgia DNR. In order to process local historic district nominations community support is vital and will require education and outreach efforts to the community. If sufficient interest is apparent, the Historical Society will evaluate the potential historic districts in the County, and begin working with the cities and volunteers to prepare the applications and hold town meetings. Historic districts are likely to be limited to downtown areas, so protection will not be afforded to those outside the areas unless other actions are taken.

In addition to the County’s Historic Properties Survey, the University of Georgia maintains the Georgia Archaeological Site File that keeps a record of all discovered sites and the type of information that they have or may provide. Cherokee County has the second largest number of sites listed in the entire state at over 1,000 individual sites. In order to protect these resources, studies are made of the immediate impacted area for federally funded projects, such as in the case of highway construction or Lake Allatoona. If significant resources are found, plans are made to minimize or avoid adverse effects. General areas may be targeted for their potential to yield archaeological resources for projects of local origin. Resources often cluster around geographic features like fertile valleys and waterways and around natural transportation routes like old roads or ridge trails. Such areas should be examined closely for archaeological potential and the site file should be consulted in the planning stages for most projects. It is recommended that Cherokee County develop an Archaeological Resources Map as a means to identify and preserve significant sites.

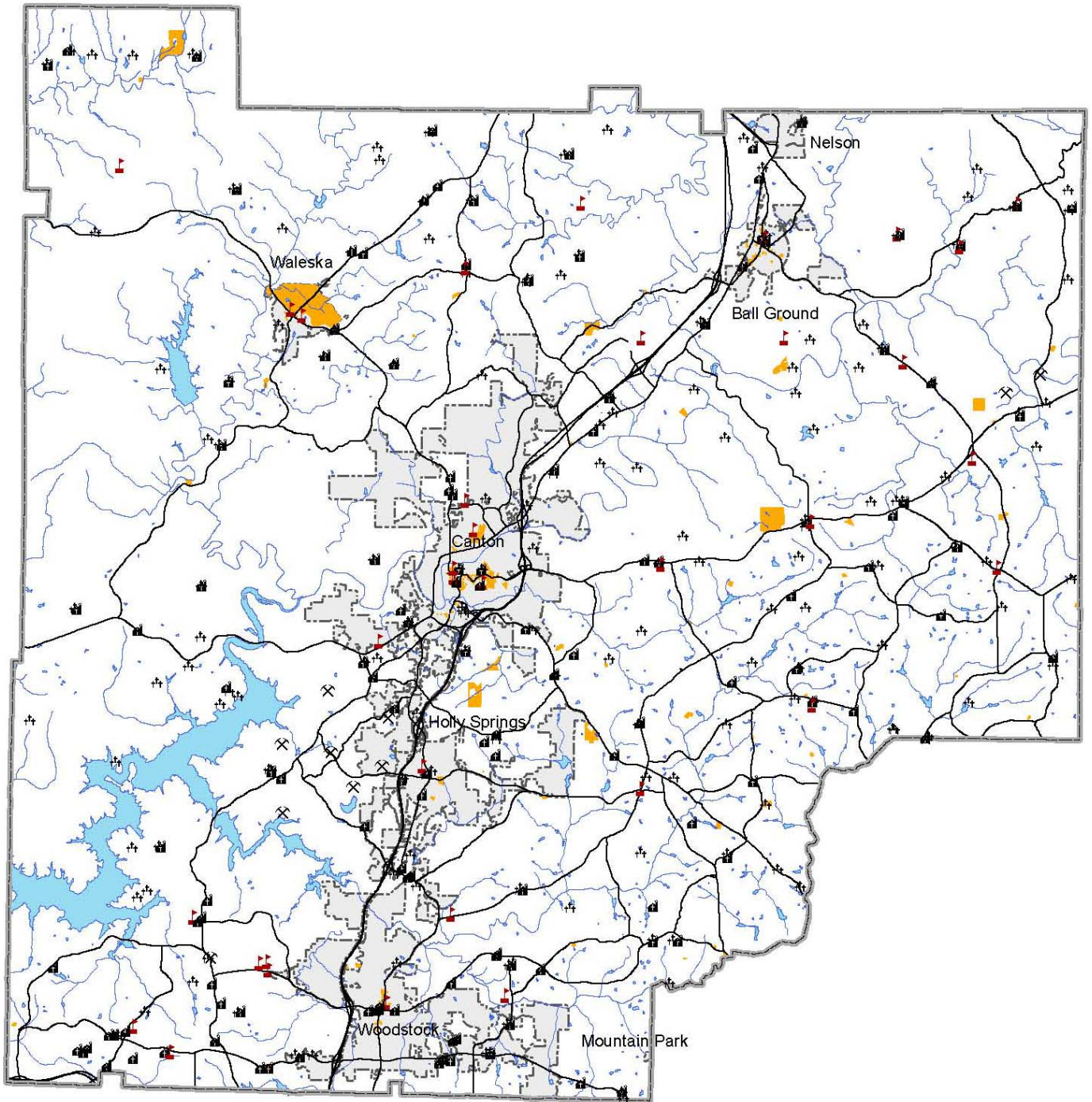
Impact of Development on Historic Integrity or Cultural Significance Resources

Currently historic, archaeological and rural resources in Cherokee County have very little protection. The county has no local historic resource protective ordinances. Only those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places have any type of protection; the protection is minimal and only relates to impacts of state or federally funded projects. Negative impact is mitigated but mitigation does not preclude demolition if the resource is judged expendable. Most resources deemed to have features of historic integrity are lost to new development.

The overall level of integrity of the properties analyzed in the 2005 survey ranged from fair to good. A considerable number of resources exhibited a moderate degree of integrity loss. The physical conditions of a few of the historic resources surveyed are in poor or deteriorated condition. A majority of these structures are located in the rural, unincorporated areas.

To enhance preservation protection, it is recommended that the County prepare a Historic Preservation Ordinance, including the process for disposition of properties identified on the survey. If the property is on the potentially eligible list for the Historic Register, it is recommended that disposition of the property be coordinated with the Historic Society prior to issuance of permits in order to allow for potential rehabilitation of the property, integration of the structure into the proposed development plan, acquisition, or movement of the structure to another location, among other options. The Historic Society has contacts in the private sector that may be organized for support in the preservation efforts of a structure not otherwise protected by federal or state listings.

Cherokee Historical and Cultural Resources

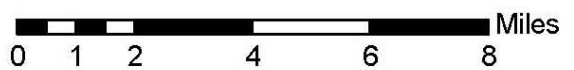


Legend

- ⊕ Cemeteries
- ⛪ church
- ⊗ mine
- 🏫 historical school
- ▭ Parcels with Historical Structures

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Drawing Prepared By:
CHEROKEE COUNTY
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.
CANTON, GA.
DATE: 08/24/06



■ Federally Registered Sites

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all people who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, Federal agencies, and others identify important historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions.

In Cherokee County, these include:

Historic Train Depot—Woodstock

The Woodstock Depot is located in downtown Woodstock, GA along the railroad track. It is fairly typical railroad depot architecture from the Victorian era, as found in North Georgia.

The Depot is a one-story wood frame building with exterior weatherboard and tongue-and-groove siding. The roof is red clay tile, hipped over the passenger area and gabled over the freight area with a decorative ridge and a hip knob. There are two gable dormers with half moon vents. The passenger area has two entrances on the west side, of which the southern most was originally designated for blacks. The two areas in the building, the freight office on the north side and passenger/ticketing (or freight clerk's office) on the south side, are reflected in the changing roof design and symmetrical to asymmetrical floor plan. The ticket window between ticketing and passenger areas still survives.

The Depot is historically significant because it was built in 1912 by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad as a replacement depot. It served the many needs of the citizens for both shipping and receiving freight—including agricultural products, as well as the arrival and departure of passengers for travel, work, attending schools, departing for military service, etc. Passenger service ended in 1949. In earlier history of the railroad line, the Marietta & North Georgia Railroad completed its route from Marietta in Cobb County to Canton in Cherokee County in 1879. Thus, the line came through Woodstock by 1879. After the Civil War, interest in a railroad for Cherokee County was renewed.

The depot was the focal point for transporting local items including cotton, rope, and other agricultural products. The depot was also used as commuter transit for students attending school in Canton and Marietta. The depot was manned by an agent and had a full-fledged service with telegraph until the late 1950s. Passenger service was terminated March 1, 1949.



Currently, the line is owned by the Georgia Northeastern Railroad Company, and freight service is still available on request. The depot is currently owned by the City of Woodstock, and the land is leased from the railroad. The depot is currently used as a community meeting place, having most recently been the city hall, police and fire station, and is being renovated to accommodate a restaurant.

The Alfred W. Roberts House—Ball Ground

One of Ball Ground's largest houses, the Alfred W. Roberts House was originally constructed in the mid-1800s and enlarged around 1900. It is a good example of an evolved house that reflects changing architectural tastes, a practice that was common in small towns in Georgia and the southeast in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is important for its unusual eclectic style which encompasses "plantation plain," Victorian and Classical elements—all a reflection of the historical development of the property between 1855 and 1932. It is believed that the oldest part of the structure dates from the mid-1850s, and is comprised of what is now the central portion of the house. This consists of two rooms upstairs over two rooms downstairs, (referred to architecturally as 'two over two'), central hall and stairway, and two chimneys facing the original north and south walls. The kitchen and dining building was originally detached and located just west of the main house.

The property has several notable outbuildings—a barn, garage, log pump house, and a well house. The Roberts House is important for its rock garden and pet cemetery, as well as local marble sidewalks, benches, steps, birdbaths and urns. The property is landscaped with large old red maple, Norway spruce, magnolia, oak, hemlock, Yuka, cypress, cedar and dogwood trees. In addition, the property has informally planted shrubbery, including boxwood, acuba and ivy.

Local historical significance is measured in terms of the house's association with the family of Alfred W. Roberts (1844-1918), a prominent merchant and charter citizen of the town of Ball Ground. Alfred W. Roberts purchased the property around 1887, and enlarged and remodeled the original 'plantation plain' style structure to include Victorian detailing around 1898. In the late 1910s, the style of the exterior of the house was again altered with the addition of a Classical front porch.

A. W. Roberts served in the Confederate Army, and in 1879, he married Althea Georgia Ann Coggins (1861-1932). They had seven children. His marriage into the Coggins family, who were associated with early business concerns in the Canton area, enabled him to broaden his contacts in granite, banking and retailing. Ball Ground was incorporated in 1883, and A. W. Roberts was involved in most phases of the town's early development as a banker, real estate developer, cotton broker, and creator of the Roberts Marble Company. He was one of the founders of the Bank of Ball Ground in 1906, and founded the Roberts Store, which served the town for about 80 years. In addition, his sons Judson, Clyde and Paul owned and operated the family marble monument business. In an effort to provide electricity for the marble manufacturing company, as well as residents in Ball Ground, the Roberts brothers built a log dam on Long Swamp Creek creating a 65-acre lake. This facility brought the first electricity to Ball Ground and was later purchased by Georgia Power Company. Descendants of Alfred W. Roberts live in the home today.

Important exterior architectural details include the balustrade porch with Doric columns, marble front steps, bracketed cornices, brick chimneys, and multiple gables with decorative feather-cut shingle patterns. Interior features associated with the late 19th century period include French doors, chair rail, baseboards, vertical panel tongue-and-groove wainscoting, picture rail, walls with horizontal boards, and original knobs and door locks. Features associated with the mid-19th century plantation style "two over two" room house which are embedded in the present house include: (1) Hand-hewn sills in the cellar that are mortised and tenoned together; (2) Wide boards on stairway wall to basement; (3) Wide baseboards and floor boards, and a slightly crude two-panel door into a first floor bedroom; (4) Wide ceiling boards, old mantel, wide baseboards, two-panel door, and low ceiling in a second story bedroom.

The Canton Commercial Historic District

The Commercial Historic District is significant for representing the intact portion of Canton's historic central business district. Downtown Canton served as the historic commercial center for the city and much of Cherokee County during the 19th and 20th centuries. Canton grew slowly in the antebellum years, and it was destroyed by Sherman's troops during the Civil War. The town began rebuilding following the war and was aided by the 1879 arrival of the Marietta & North Georgia Railroad. It began to prosper and expand.

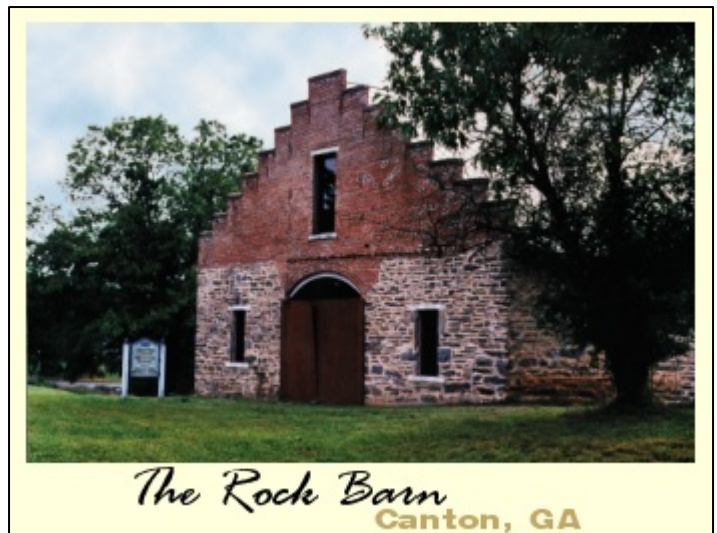
The historic district consists of one and one-half blocks of late-19th century and early 20th century commercial buildings in downtown Canton, GA. It is centrally located within the city on a high rise of ground. Streets in the District form part of the city's original gridiron street system. Lots are generally long and narrow, and they are relatively small. Buildings are uniformly set back from the streets, range from one to three stories in height and have long, narrow proportions. They date from the 1890s to the 1930s reflecting Canton's second period of historic growth and development. Development began in the 1890s with the establishment of two major local industries—the Georgia Marble Finishing Works (1891) and the Canton Cotton Mills (1899). Additionally during this period, the town got its first bank, the Bank of Canton (1892).

Styles represented in the district include simple Victorian Eclectic, early 20th century Commercial, Beaux Arts, and Art Moderne; several buildings in the District are utilitarian in design and express no architectural style. Brick, the predominant building material, is used both structurally and decoratively. Detailing is confined primarily to front facades and is, for the most part, relatively simple. Examples of corbelled cornices and stringcourses, decorative spandrels, segmental arch and pent/parapet rooflines are all found in this District. The Beaux Arts style marble-clad Bank of Canton (1892) and the Art Moderne, stucco-clad Canton theatre (1913, remodeled CA 1940) stand out because of their distinct styles and building materials. Many storefronts in the District have been remodeled, along with a few front facades, although there were virtually no non-historic structures in the District.

Crescent Farm—Canton

A. L. Coggins referred to his 350 acres as Crescent Farm. The farm derived its name from the manner in which the Etowah River partially encircles it in a crescent-like shape. It was best known on both a local and national basis for its world-class harness race horses. Coggins built his Colonial Revival residence, called Edgewater Hall, on the same site where a former Victorian frame structure once stood. He occupied the house from 1922 to 1926. Aside from the main house and traditional outbuildings there was a cotton gin, smokehouse, blacksmith shop, racehorse barn, stud horse barn, large mule barn and a quarter mile race track. The house and barn are situated in an area that is commercially developed and contains a school complex. The house underwent major rehabilitation in 1986 when it was converted from a residence to offices, with all work accomplished in keeping with the Colonial Revival style. Additions were made on the north and part of the west sides, including changing the entrance to the south side. An original Porte cohere was removed at the south entrance and an entry room built.

The structures consist of an historic Georgian Revival style house built in 1922 and an historic rock barn built in 1906. The house and barn are located on a hill near the Etowah River in Canton, GA. Edgewater Hall, also known as the A. L. Coggins House, is a two-story red brick structure with a central hall plan on both floors, as



well as an attic and basement. It was designed by noted Atlanta architect Francis P. Smith (1886-1971) and has detailing in locally quarried marble. There are five chimneys serving eight fireplaces with the original mantels. There is marble trip on the exterior, as well as marble keystones, window and doorsills. The original hardwood floors have survived (and are now carpeted), and there is an ornate walnut staircase, decorative arched landing windows, and French doors with brass knobs. The original room arrangement included five bedrooms, three baths, a living room, sunroom, breakfast room and kitchen. Many of these rooms now serve as offices. The house sits atop Mt. Etowah overlooking the river of the same name. There are magnolia, oak and maple trees on the grounds.

The only surviving original Crescent Farm building is the Rock Barn, built as a stable for racehorses. It has been separated from the historic house by GA Hwy 5 for over 50 years now. The barn was rock on the lower level and brick on the gable portion, with an open latticed gabled end. Marble sills were at each window. The crosshatched timber gable permitted air to circulate through the hay stored in the loft. The rocks used for building materials were dug from the Etowah River. The Rock Barn is one of the only rock barns in Georgia.

The Canton Wholesale Company Building

The building was constructed in 1920 to function as a warehouse. Jones added to his Mercantile Company with the construction of the Main Street Garage, Inc. (1926), the North Canton Store (1928), the Cartersville Warehouse (1928) and the Etowah Maid Dairy (1929). The Canton Wholesale Company Building is the only remaining building of the Jones Mercantile Company.

The two-story building is square in form, constructed of brick in a common bond pattern, with brick buttresses are located along all four sides of the structure. The architectural style of the building is representative of the Stripped Classical style (Commercial Style) with its simple masonry rectangular facade, use of windows as stringcourses and use of buttresses to create bays. The interior of the building has changed little over time. It was originally used as a warehouse for dry goods. The interior features original post-and-beam supports of pine, open space with workstations, exposed brick walls, original pine floor on the second level, and concrete slab floor on the first level. Of some architectural significance is the use of traditional heavy timber, or 'slow burning', interior framing. The simple design of the building represents the early 20th century growth of Canton's industrial/commercial development following the completion of the Marietta & North Georgia Railroad.

Canton Cotton Mill #2



Built in 1923, Canton Cotton Mill #2 is located northeast of the city of Canton and is bordered by Georgia Highway 5 on the north and the Etowah River on the south. The mill is composed of a three-story, brick main manufacturing building; an attached, one-story, brick dye house; and eight one-story, brick warehouses. The mill was designed and built by C.E. Blank, an architect and builder for Dressler Industries, headquartered in New England. In 1899, the charter for Canton Cotton Mill was granted. The primary investor in the company was Robert Tyre Jones (1849-1937), who contributed \$25,000 of the \$75,000 needed to start construction. Robert Jones was the owner of the Jones Mercantile Company, one of the largest mercantile companies in the area during the late 19th century. Canton Cotton Mill #1 was constructed in 1900 along the railroad near the Etowah River on the southwest side of

Canton. Robert Jones oversaw the mill operations and led the initiative to switch production from cotton sheeting to the more-profitable denim material. The mill became well known in the industry. Government contracts during World War I and increased efficiency, the company decided to build a second plant. Mill #2 was located northeast of Canton, outside the city limits, along Georgia Highway 5.

Construction for mill #2 began in late 1923 and finished in the summer of 1924. Operations at mill #2 began shortly thereafter with 750 looms and 23,000 spindles. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the mill produced fine denim cloth known for its quality and durability. During the 1940s, the mill projected low-grade cotton tent twill for the government. In 1950, an addition to mill #2 allowed the company to double its manufacturing capacity.

The original main building is 34 bays long and 10 bays wide. On the west end, an L-shaped one-story dye house is attached to the building, creating an alley behind the main building. Eight one-story warehouses are located behind the main building, running the length of the alley. This layout allowed for short distances between production areas and warehouses. In 1930, a two-story, 16-bay wing was added to the east end of the main building.

By 1947, an additional warehouse was built, two warehouses were enlarged, and the alley was covered to create a machine shop. Three additional warehouses were also built, but are no longer standing. The next major expansion occurred between 1947 and 1951. A three-story, nine-bay-long addition was added to the west end of the main building, two floors and a one-story addition were added to portions of the dye house, a second floor was added to warehouse #5, and a bridge connected the second floor of the main building to warehouse #5. The main mill building is of heavy-timber construction with load-bearing brick walls. Three towers are attached on the south façade and two on the west façade. The fenestration consists of one rectangular window in each bay on each floor. The interior of the building features an open plan with wood columns and beams and maple floors. In 1963, the company implemented a massive reorganization and modernization effort that included new automated equipment, the projection of blended synthetic fibers, and the name changing to Canton Textile Mills. During the late 1960s and 1970s production at the mill declined with the demand for cotton fabrics at a low, due to the growing dominance of polyester fabric. In 1981, the mill closed.

The c. 1950 two-story addition features steel columns and beams with a portion of the first floor having concrete mushroom column construction. The attached, brick dye house features heavy-timber construction and an open plan. The eight warehouses are wood construction with concrete floors and an open plan. A concrete loading dock runs along the south side of warehouse #2, 3, and 4. The second floor of warehouse #5 features arched multi-light metal windows. The mill remained an important manufacturer of cotton fabrics until its closing in 1981. During the certified rehabilitation, the mill buildings were converted into loft apartments. The mill village historically associated with Canton Cotton Mill #2 is physically separated from the mill by the four-lane Georgia Highway 5 and nonhistoric commercial development and thus is not included in the nomination.

Historic Courthouse—Canton

The Historic Cherokee County Courthouse has been completely renovated, including the installation of a sprinkler system in the building, central air conditioning and handicap access. Visitors to the structure can see a courtroom and jail as were used in the early years of the 20th century. The building, however, is not completely a museum. The first three levels (basement, first and second floors) hum with the comings and goings of county business. The old courtroom serves as a meeting room for the County Commission. The third floor formerly housed the jailer's and the jurors' quarters. These have been restored to their original appearance, complete with marble shower stalls and old-style plumbing fixtures. On the top (4th) floor, one is confronted with a heavy metal door. Today, the door stands open, but in bygone days, it would have been securely locked to hold prisoners. Viewing the area "behind the eagles," one can see the old cells—now cleaned and painted—and the spartan metal furniture upon which the prisoners slept, sat and took their meals.

■ Eligible Historic Resources

In addition to those resources listed on the National Register, a number of properties have been identified that have potential for registration, as well as other contributing properties of historical significance.

The Cherokee County Historic Property Survey includes an extensive collection of historical property surveys from Cherokee County. Each survey entry is accompanied by multiple photos of the property as well as architectural data about the buildings at that address (e.g. when it was built, by whom, building materials, architectural style, etc.) Presently these surveys contain information not only of historic buildings throughout the county, but also biographical information about notable people who have lived in them. Thus, the site should be of interest not only for architectural buffs but also for those seeking a better understanding of Cherokee County history. Each entry can be accessed individually using several different categories including, address, current use, date of construction, building type, style, etc. The surveys were conducted by Dan Latham of the Cherokee County Historical Society in 1976 and 1988 and were recently digitized; 291 properties have been posted on the website, and 596 photographs catalogued. The current 2005 Cherokee survey covers the categories of landmark buildings and structures, commercial districts, and residential districts. Canton had 311 total properties surveyed, Ball Ground 49, Waleska 17, Woodstock 36, and Holly Springs 6.

Potential National Register Properties

The following table lists the properties that have been identified by the Historical Society as having potential for inclusion in the National Register.

No.	Property	Location
1	Runyon-Bozeman House	109 Rope Mill Road, Woodstock
2	Queen Anne Vernacular Style, C. 1895-1905 (district)	107 Rope Mill Road, Woodstock
3	Woodstock Presbyterian Church, c. 1923 (district)	SW corner of Kyle and Rope Mill Road, Woodstock
4	Dempsey-Petree House, c. 1892 (district)	113 N. Main Street, Woodstock
5	J.H. Johnson House, c. 1913 (district)	111 N. Main Street, Woodstock
6	Woodstock Baptist Church, c. 1913 (district)	N. Main Street, Woodstock
7	Merritt-Dean House, c. 1875 (district)	101 E. Main Street, Woodstock
8	E.D. Dial House, c. 1910's (district)	206 N. Main Street, Woodstock
9	Queen Anne Vernacular Style, C. 1900-1910 (district)	209 N. Main Street, Woodstock
10	Woodstock Elementary School, c. 1933-35 (district)	N. Main Street, Woodstock
11	Bungalow Style, c. 1920's (district)	214 N. Main Street, Woodstock
12	Wiley b. Dobbs house, c. 1899-1900 (district)	301 N. Main Street, Woodstock
13	Pyramidal Style, c. 1910's (district)	303 N. Main Street, Woodstock
14	Chandler-Drinkard House, c. 1929-30 (district)	305 N. Main Street, Woodstock
15	Queen Anne Vernacular Style, C. 1900's (district)	307 N. Main Street, Woodstock
16	Woodstock Depot, c. 1912 (individual)	E side of Main Street, Woodstock
17	Folk Victorian Style, c. 1875-85 (individual)	125 E. Main Street, Woodstock
18	George C. Hammond House, c. 1870-95 (individual)	NW side of Bartow Street and Lee Street, Waleska
19	Lewis Carpenter House, c. 1850's (individual)	Theodore Cox Circle, 0.5 miles N of Sardis Rod
20	Harry Gibbs House, c. 1890's (individual)	W. side of Old Canton Road, S of Ball Ground
21	Leslie Garvey House, c. 1880's (individual)	311 Old Canton Rd., Ball Ground

Table 67: Potential National Register Properties

No.	Property	Location
22	Dr. J. P. Sayre House, c. 1880's (individual)	Corner of Chestnut and Valley Streets, Ball Ground
23	Commercial Brick 2 Story, c. 19000-25 (district)	S. side of Gilmer Ferry between Mound and Church Street, Ball Ground
24	A.R Roberts House, c. 1920's (individual)	523 Old Canton Road, Ball Ground
25	Jack Lovelady Building, c. 1920's (district)	S. corner of Gilmer Ferry and Mound Street, Ball Ground
26	Roberts Building and Masonic Lodge, c. 1923 (district)	N. corner Gilmer Ferry & Old Dawsonville Road, Ball Ground
27	A.W. Roberts and Son Building, c. 1911 (district)	E. corner of Gilmer Ferry and Old Dawsonville Road, Ball Ground
28	Bud Holcombe's Barbershop, c. 1900-25 (district)	N. side of Gilmer Ferry between Old Dawsonville & Civic, Ball Ground
29	Consumers Monument Co.Office, c. 1920's (district)	N. side of Gilmer Ferry between Old Dawsonville & Civic Drive, Ball Ground
30	Dr. G. C. McClure House, c. 1900-10 (individual)	N side of Gilmer Ferry between Northridge and Holbert Street, Ball Ground
31	Striplin-Lovelady House, c. 1916 (individual)	Between Summit Circle and Gilmer Ferry Road, Ball Ground
32	John Franklin wheeler House, c. 1906 (individual)	SE corner of Gilmer Ferry and Gazaway Lane
33	Conn's Creek Arbor, c. 1914 (individual)	Beard Lane 0.3 mi S of Conn's Creek Road
34	Lee Newton House, c. 1853 (individual)	N. side of GA 20 0.85 miles W of E. Cherokee Drive
35	John Pascoe House, C. 1836 (individual)	W. side of Yellow Creek Road 1.1 miles N. or GA 369
36	Gothic Revival Style House, c. 1880's (individual)	E. side of County Line Road 0.7 mile S. of GA 20
37	Holbrook Campground, c. 1889-90 (individual)	W. side of Holbrook Campground Road, 1.4 mile from GA 20
38	Mrs. Ralph Quarles House, c. 1830's (individual)	W side of Cherokee Drive 0.1 mile N. of GA 140
39	Bates House, c. 1875-1900 (individual)	E. side of GA 140 0.85 miles S of Sugar Pike Road
40	John T. Moore House, c. 1913-16 (individual)	NW. side of Cherokee Drive 2.2 mile S. of GA 140
41	Holly Springs Depot, c. 1900-10 (thematic)	S. side of Hickory Street between Main and Palm Road
42	E.M. Barrett House, c. 1927 (individual)	W. side of Palm Road between Hickory and Walnut St., Holly Springs
43	Verde Antique Marble Quarry (thematic)	W. of Marble Quarry Road 0.5 mi N. of Sixes Road
44	John Brolley House, c. 1870's (individual)	E. side of GA 205 0.5 mile S. of Kellogg Creek Road

Source: Dan Lathem, Jr.: *Historic Resource Survey of Cherokee County, Georgia*, 1989; *Georgia Historic Resources Survey*, 1988

Cemeteries

Cemeteries provide invaluable information about the historical evolution of a specific area. Dates and architectural details of grave markers reveal the economic prosperity of different eras within the delineated area (ie, township, community). The Historic Society references a book, *Cemeteries of Cherokee County* by Shirley Morris, which serves as a complete guide to historic burials in the county. Cherokee County has adopted Article 24 of the Zoning Code for the protection and treatment of cemeteries, and has completed the preparation of a location map that identifies the existence of cemeteries within the county. A Cemetery Committee has been appointed to create a uniform procedure for the identification, preservation, protection and maintenance of cemeteries, graveyards and burying grounds, in accordance with the provisions of Article 24. Special markers were proposed which identify cemeteries of historical significance, thus allowing preservation of historical data for local government archives and establishing a database for individuals to locate individuals within a genealogy search. The map will be updated if new information becomes available because of the 2005 survey update.

■ Potential Financing Mechanisms

Several financing mechanisms are available to assist in historic preservation and planning:

- State Tax Incentives—a state income tax incentive to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties that includes a 25 percent credit for income-producing properties; a 30 percent credit for residential properties; a mortgage certificate program; and a pass-through provision;
- The Georgia Land, Water and Wildlife and Recreation Heritage Fund;
- Heritage tourism grants;
- Georgia Heritage Program grants; and
- HPD Georgia Historic Resources Survey Contracts

Cemeteries and archeological resources are protected through state guidelines.

Community Facilities and Services

This Section inventories and assesses those facilities that serve the residents of the participating jurisdictions in this Joint Comprehensive Plan—Ball Ground, Waleska, Woodstock and the unincorporated area of Cherokee County.

The community facilities examined in this Section include:

- Courts and government administration facilities;
- Public safety (fire, EMS, Sheriff and police);
- Parks and recreation;
- Libraries and cultural facilities;
- Educational facilities;
- Public health and services;
- Water supply and treatment;
- Sewerage systems and wastewater treatment; and
- Solid waste management.

■ Courts and Government Administration

Cherokee County government facilities are located primarily in three areas: inside the City of Canton, on Chattin Drive, just south of Canton off Univeter Road, and the South Annex Complex located on Highway 5 just north of downtown Woodstock. Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock City Halls are located in or near their respective downtowns. The table below lists the General Government Facilities within Cherokee County and the location of each.

Facility	Location	Departments
County Justice Center	90 North Street	Superior, Probate and Magistrate Courts; Judicial Services, District Attorney, Solicitor, Pre-Trial and Clerk of the Court; Law Library; Marshals; Board of Commissioners, Finance Department and Senior County Staff
Historic County Courthouse	100 North Street	Tax Assessor, Tag Office, Mapping, IT & Cherokee County Historical Society
County Administration Building	130 East Main Street	Engineering, Building Dept., Planning & Zoning, Business License, Fire Marshal, Environmental Health, Juvenile and Felony Probation Offices, the Cherokee Learning Center and the Family Violence Center
Albert L. Stone Elections Building	400 East Main Street	Voter Registration, Veteran Services & Fire Marshal
Roads and Bridges	403 Chattin Road	Roads and Bridges
Public Safety Building and County Jail	498 Chattin Drive	Sheriff & Adult Detention Center
Animal Shelter	131 Chattin Drive	Cherokee County Animal Shelter
Senior Services (main office)	1001 Univeter Road	Senior Services
South County Annex	7545 North Main Street	Tag Office, Health Dept., recreation center
Recycling Center	470 Blalock Road	Recycling

Facility	Location	Departments
Woodstock City Hall/Police Station	103 Arnold Mill Rd	Police Department, Council Chambers, Mayors Office, Administrative Offices, Planning and Zoning.
Woodstock Building Department	223 Arnold Mill Rd	Building Review, Inspections, GIS/Mapping, IT
Woodstock Public Works	210 Bell Park	Water/Sewer Streets, ROW and Parks Maintenance
Woodstock Train Depot	E. Main Street	Downtown Development Authority - Future Restaurant Site
Woodstock Water & Sewer Department	228 Arnold Mill Rd	6 Bldgs - Offices, Warehouse, Chemical Feed, Chlor/Poly, Blower & Press
Waleska City Hall	8891 Fincher Road	City Offices & Council Chambers
Ball Ground City Hall	301 Gilmer Ferry Road	City Offices and Police Department

■ Public Safety

County Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by Cherokee County in the unincorporated area and in Ball Ground and Waleska. The Cities of Woodstock and Canton operate their own fire departments. A listing of all fire stations in the county, including those operated by Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock, are shown in the table that follows.

Station	Location	Address	Jurisdiction	Square Footage	EMS	Plans
1	Oak Grove	6276 Bells Ferry Road	Cherokee Co	4,750	Yes	Future Renovation
2	Ball Ground	388 Groover Street	Cherokee Co	5,720	Yes	Future Expansion
3	Hickory Flat	3624 Hickory Flat Hwy	Cherokee Co	2,900		
4	Free Home – CSC*	9253 Free Home Hwy	Cherokee Co	7,500	Yes	
5	Macedonia	10378 E. Cherokee Drive	Cherokee Co	4,208		
6	Clayton	3869 Lower Burris Road	Cherokee Co	3,921		
7	Little River	1530 Barnes Road	Cherokee Co	4,700	Yes	
8	Holly Springs	101 Hickory Circle	Holly Springs	10,000		
9	North Canton	1398 Reinhardt College Pky	Cherokee Co	4,600		
10	Wigley Road	105 Wigley Road	Cherokee Co	5,244		
11	Canton	2731 Marietta Highway	Canton	5,850		
12	Waleska - CSC	9081 Fincher Road	Cherokee Co	7,500	Yes	
13	Sutallee	2833 Knox Bridge Hwy	Cherokee Co	4,599	Yes	Future Replacement
14	Woodstock	223 Arnold Mill Road	Woodstock	11,400		
15	Mica	5804 Yellow Creek Road	Cherokee Co	4,692		Future Replacement
16	Canton	190 West Main Street	Canton	8,200		
17	Lake Arrowhead	125 Chickasaw Drive	Cherokee Co	4,320		
18	Salacoa	5840 Salacoa Road	Cherokee Co	1,880		
19	Priest Road (u.c.)	6001 Priest Road	Cherokee Co	10,730		Under Construction
20	Bells Ferry	6724 Bells Ferry Road	Cherokee Co	10,212		
21	Airport - CSC (closed)	1190 Evenflo Drive	Cherokee Co	6,300		
22	Bridge Mill - CSC	9550 Bells Ferry Road	Cherokee Co	6,300	Yes	
23	Hickory Flat -CSC	7625 Vaughan Road	Cherokee Co	6,300	Yes	

Station	Location	Address	Jurisdiction	Square Footage	EMS	Plans
24	Woodstock	1000 River Park Boulevard	Woodstock	6,650		
25	Holbrook Campground	2550 Holbrook Campground Rd	Cherokee Co	2,968		
27	Lake Arrowhead		Cherokee Co	1,650		
32	Hickory Flat	3644 Sugar Pike Road	Cherokee Co	2,192		

*CSC—Community Service Center, which includes activity space for community meetings, etc.

At the current time, there is only one separate fire tax district in the county, which is located in the Oak Grove/Little River area. This fire district consists of four fire stations that are supported by Fire District Tax revenues, which pay for the stations' operational costs, such as equipment and maintenance, and includes the salaries of 65 career firefighters, 1 fire inspector, 2 fire safety education specialists, and 1 full time mechanic. Operationally, the four stations are fully integrated into the County system. Fire Administration for the county consists of a fire marshall/training officer, 1 fire inspector, and one secretary who serve the tax district and the Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Many capital costs are paid for from the impact fee program; operational costs are paid from the county General Tax Fund. Altogether, there are 421 fire or EMS personnel, and 22 administrative personnel, in the department.

Continued increases in the population do not guarantee that sufficient volunteer workers will be available. Public funding to support more full-time staffing will be required and is now under consideration. A new tax district or districts may eventually be established to fund fire protection services to match the level of development and population density.

Type of Call	Number (7/04-6/05)
Structure Fire	210
Vehicle Fire	132
Vegetation Fire	172
EMS	11,164
Rescue	29
Hazardous Condition	925
Service Call	539
Good Intent/False Call	2,096
Other	363
Total	15,630

In order to respond to fires in adjacent districts and to maximize resources, the county has mutual aid agreements with the cities of Canton and Woodstock, and all departments are linked to the countywide E911 system.

Fire fighting apparatus for the County stations is comprised of 30 engines, 12 advanced life support units, 7 tanker trucks, 8 fire rescue vehicles, 2 mobile air units, 2 rescue boats, a hazardous material unit, and other support vehicles.

Five new stations have recently been completed, and one is under construction at Priest Rd & Hwy 92; these new stations are located in those areas with the greatest growth potential: west of Interstate 575 near I-75, the airport industrial park, the City of Waleska, Highway 20 east, and near Bradshaw, and are listed on the preceding table as stations 4, 12, 21, 22 and 23, and 19 (under construction).

Table 70 shows the emergency calls between July 2004 and June 2005, broken out by type. There were 15,630 emergency calls during this period.

The County Water and Sewer Authority is continuing to improve its water system to include fire protection. A system of dry hydrants has been installed by the Georgia Forestry Commission to allow for refilling of tank trucks from lakes and ponds.

All fire departments and administrative staff provide a variety of services in addition to traditional "fire fighting." The majority of calls are first responses to medical emergencies. Response calls also include vehicle accidents, smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector alarms, locked vehicles, illegal burning, grass and woods fires, gas leaks, downed power lines, EMS assistance, hazardous materials leaks, spills and releases,

high angle rescue, and cave-ins. Fire prevention services also includes construction plans review and construction inspections, annual inspections, and fire safety education.

State ISO ratings, which determine fire insurance rates, vary by district from 9 to 5, with five being the more desirable rating. Some districts have split ratings, where certain areas without public water may have little protection and therefore a higher rating. These rates are critically important for planning the location of future stations.

Based on the estimated day/night population in 2005 of 183,226 within the County's fire protection service area, the levels of service are as follows: for the 113,186 square feet of floor area in the fire stations, the level of service is 618 square feet of building per 1,000 persons, and the 61 heavy vehicles equate to 0.333 heavy vehicles per 1,000 persons.

Table 71: Emergency Calls by Type in Woodstock	
Type of Call	Number (7/04-6/05)
Structure Fire	52
Vehicle Fire	24
Vegetation Fire	26
EMS	2,059
Rescue	17
Hazardous Condition	94
Service Call	249
Good Intent/False Call	91
Other	987
Total	3,599

Woodstock Fire Protection

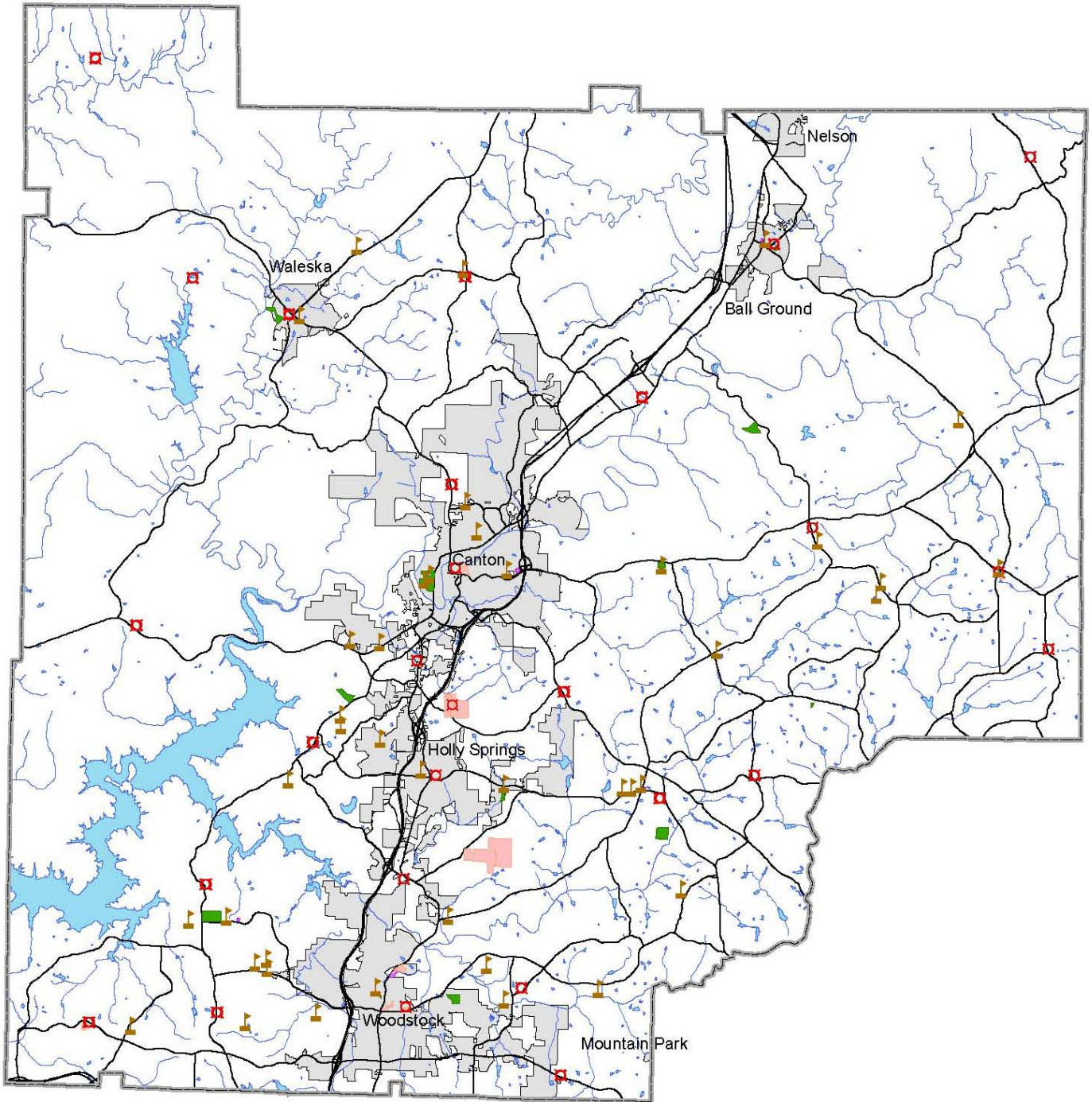
The City of Woodstock provides fire protection services within the city limits and, through mutual aid agreement, in combination with the County. The City operates two fire stations (Stations 14 and 24 on the preceding table), with a total of five heavy vehicles. Current staffing levels are 39 fire or EMS personnel and 1 administrative employee. Between July 2004 and June 2005, the department responded to 3,599 emergency calls; these are broken out by type on Table 71.

Based on the city's estimated day/night population in 2005 of 28,750, Woodstock's levels of service are as follows: 628 square feet of building per person and 0.174 heavy vehicles per person.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Service uses the 911 dispatching system, which is operated by the county. An Enhanced 911 Emergency Service went on line in April of 1996 that is based on all residential and commercial properties having an assigned address. The ambulance service for the county is privatized.

Cherokee Community Facilities

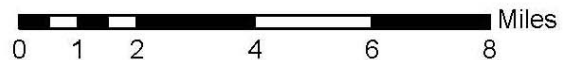


Legend

- ☒ Fire Stations
- ▲ Schools
- General_Facilities
- Libraries
- Sheriff&Police
- Parks&Rec

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CANTON, GA.
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Sheriff's Department

The Cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock have their own police departments, as well as Reinhardt College in Waleska. The Cherokee County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement for the remainder of the county including within the City of Waleska. The Sheriff's Department employs 340 persons, 71 of which are administrative staff, and 18 of whom are court personnel. The main headquarters are located at the Cherokee County Correctional Facility on Chattin Road. Additional precinct offices are located throughout Cherokee county. The Department has several divisions including Detention, Uniformed Patrol Division, K-9 Unit, Special Traffic Unit, Hit and Run Unit and Criminal Investigation. Table 72 lists the Sheriff's Department facilities. Based on the estimated day/night population in 2005 of 143,276 within the Sheriff's law enforcement service area, the level of service for sworn officers is 1.75 per 1,000 persons.

The Cherokee County Correctional Facility has room to house 512 inmates. In addition to inmate housing and Sheriff's Department administrative offices, the facility also houses County Fire Department administration offices, the E911 center and the Emergency Operations Office.

Table 73 summarizes emergency call statistics for the department over the past three years. Between 2003 and 2005 there has been an overall increase in total service calls of 29%. Family violence calls have increased over that period by 22%, and "other calls for service" have increased by 89%. Declines have been seen in other categories over the same period: "persons crimes" calls are down by 15%; property crimes calls are down by 5%; traffic related calls are down by 44%.

Administration	498 Chattin Drive
Bells Ferry Precinct	5598 Bells Ferry Road
Bridge Mill Precinct	9550 Bells Ferry Road
E911 & Emergency Operations Center	498 Chattin Drive
Free Home Precinct	9253 Freehome Hwy
Hickory Flat Precinct	7625 Vaughan Road
Inmate Housing	498 Chattin Drive
South Annex	7545 Main Street, Suite 300
Traffic Enforcement	1190 Evenflo Drive
Waleska Precinct	9081 Fincher Road

	2003	2004	2005
Persons Crimes	469	458	401
Family Violence	2,637	3,261	3,207
Property Crimes	11,848	11,128	11,218
Traffic Related	58,669	65,918	32,681
Other Calls for Service	77,997	85,650	147,759
Total	151,620	166,415	195,266

Ball Ground Police Department

The City of Ball Ground provides police protection within the city limits through a city police department. The Department currently has three uniformed officers. The Department operates out of a station at 301 Gilmer Ferry Road. Based on the city's estimated day/night population in 2005 of 1,377, Ball Ground's level of service for sworn officers is 2.18 per 1,000 persons.

Woodstock Police Department

The City of Woodstock provides police protection within the city limits through a city police department. The Department currently has 39 uniformed officers, 4 detectives, and 7 administrative personnel. The Department operates out of a station at 203 Arnold Mill Road. In 2003 the Department responded to 10,061 emergency calls. In 2004, the Department responded to 11,165 emergency calls, an increase of 11% over the previous year. Based on the city's estimated day/night population in 2005 of 28,750, Woodstock's level of service for sworn officers is 1.5 per 1,000 persons.

Cherokee County Animal Shelter

The County operates an animal shelter at 131 Chattin Drive.

■ Parks and Recreation

In 1995, the Georgia State Legislature passed the “Cherokee County Parks and Recreation Act” which created a new corporate entity called the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Authority (CRPA). The CRPA is an independent public corporation that, due to its privatization, is now a profit-based entity. The Authority has an appointed five-member Board that provides policy direction, but is managed by a single director and three administrative assistants.

The Authority is divided into two divisions. The Recreation Division of the CRPA has a professionally trained superintendent and a total staff of seven people. The staff includes a facility supervisor, two recreation supervisors, two athletic supervisors and a maintenance leader. The Parks Division of CRPA employs ten people, including a senior parks supervisor, four crew leaders and five parks workers. Although the staff is small, the Authority manages a full range of active and passive recreation programs for all segments of the Cherokee County population.

Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority Facilities

Since the passing of the Recreation Act, the Authority has undertaken the expansion and improvements of existing parks as well as the construction of new facilities. CRPA’s park facilities and recreation programs serve the entire county, including all of the cities. In addition, Canton and Woodstock have a number of city-owned and operated parks. The following table provides a list of the park sites the CRPA has leased from the county and cities and their amenities.

Park	Location	Acres	Type	Facilities
Activities Center	202B Rope Mill Road	n/a	Special Use	Gymnastics Facility, 2 Activity / Meeting Rooms, Weight Room, Offices, Restrooms
Barnett Park	10795 Bells Ferry Road	25	Community Park	3 Baseball / Softball Fields, Playground, Running / Walking Track, 2 Concessions Buildings, 4 Picnic Areas, Restrooms
Blankets Creek Bike Trails	Sixes Road	430	Special Use	3 Beginner - Advanced Mountain Bike Trails
Buffington Park	4568 Cumming Highway	5	Neighborhood Park	Baseball / Softball Field, Outdoor Basketball Court, Concession Building, Picnic Pavilion with Grill, Restrooms
Calvin Farmer Park	235 Old Dawsonville Road	9	Neighborhood Park	Duck Pond, Playground, Pavilion with Grill, 2 Picnic Areas, Running / Walking Track
Ball Ground City Park	250 Civic Drive	3	Neighborhood Park	Baseball / Softball Field, Outdoor Basketball Court, 2 Tennis Courts
Cline Park	704 Bartow Street	12	Neighborhood Park	Picnic Pavilion with Grill, 2 Tennis Courts, Outdoor Volleyball Court, Playground, Running / Walking Track, Restrooms
Dwight Terry Park	13395 East Cherokee Drive	30	Community Park	2 Baseball / Softball Fields, Football / Soccer Field, Playground, Running / Walking Track, Concession Building, Restrooms
Field's Landing Park	600 Field's Landing Drive	280	Community Park	Boat Ramp, Fishing Dock, Playground, Gazebo, 7 Pavilions with Grills, 2 Picnic Areas with Grills, Restrooms

Table 74: Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Authority Parks and Facilities				
Park	Location	Acres	Type	Facilities
Hobgood Park	6688 Bells Ferry Road	60	Community Park	10 Baseball / Softball Fields, Football / Soccer Field, 4 Tennis Courts, Outdoor Volleyball Court, Amphitheater, Fitness Court, 2 Playgrounds, Running / Walking Track, 2 Concession Buildings, 2 Pavilions with Grills, 4 Picnic Areas (1 with Grill), Restrooms
J.J. Biello Park	155 Brooke Boulevard	470	Community Park	Tennis Center with 10 Lighted Courts, Pro Shop, Restrooms
Kenney Askew Park	1080 Univeter Road	10	Community Park	3 Youth Baseball / Softball Fields, Football / Soccer Field, 4 Tennis Courts, Playground, Concession Building, 2 Pavilions (1 with Grill), Restrooms
Lewis Park	Merchant's Glen in Wyngate	20	Community Park	Walking Trail, Outdoor Classroom, 3 Pavilions, Natural Areas
Lions Club Field	1375 Gilmer Ferry Road	2	Neighborhood Park	Baseball / Softball Field, Concessions Building, Restrooms
Recreation Center	7545 Main Street, Building 200	13	Special Use	3 Activity / Meeting Rooms, Gymnasium, Kitchen, Stage, Administrative Offices, Inline Hockey Rink, Playground, Running / Walking Track, Pavilion with Grill, Restrooms
Riverchase Park	Riverchase Drive	6	Neighborhood Park	Playground, Pavilion with Grill
Rubes Creek Park		36	Special Use	Not Accessible - Green Space
Sequoyah Park	7000 Vaughn Road	38	Community Park	2 Baseball / Softball Fields, 2 Football / Soccer Fields, Disc Golf Course, Playground, Running / Walking Trails, Concession Building, 3 Picnic Areas, Restrooms
Union Hill Community Center	1780 A. J. Land Road	2	Special Use	2 Activity / Meeting Rooms, Kitchen, Stage
Waleska Park	150 Ball Field Road	15	Community Park	3 Baseball / Softball Fields, Playground, Concession Building, Pavilion with Grill, Restrooms
Cherokee Mills	East Bells Ferry Road	85	Community Park	
Hickory Trails	Hickory Road	24	Community Park	Should Open Early 2006, Trail System, Pavilions, Picnic Area, Natural Areas
Priest Road Property		11	Neighborhood Park	Future Park
Ray Park		15	Community Park	Future Park
Weatherby Park		17	Community Park	Future Park

Based on 2005 estimated housing units of 68,426, parks are provided throughout Cherokee County at a level of service of 23.6 acres per 1,000 housing units.

County Park and Recreation Financing

The budget for FY 2005 was \$2,860,000, and another \$2,860,000 in FY 2006. Land acquisition remains a priority, since future recreation lands may not be available if land developers acquire the properties first. Delays in acquisition will also drive the purchase price of any available lands higher, especially in highly developed south Cherokee County.

In 2005 the CRPA received \$1,000,000 dollars from Cherokee County, as well as \$758,000 from Beer and Wine Tax funds. The vast majority of the CRPA's operating budget is generated through revenues created by user fees and program participation.

Through the County's impact fee program, 391 acres of new parks land will be added to the inventory.

City Recreation and Park Facilities

Ball Ground

There are currently three park areas within the City of Ball Ground. The Lion's Club Field is currently under lease to CRPA, along with a second park, located across the street from City Hall, which is the Ball Ground City Park (see Table 74). A third open space park is privately owned by the Roberts Family, and is principally used by children and adults as an open play area. Ball Ground Elementary School also has recreational facilities that include playground equipment and a gym. Proposed capital improvements to be funded through the local option sales tax are: lighting for the tennis and basketball courts, and air-conditioning for the community building.

Waleska

The City of Waleska's Park is leased and maintained by the CRPA (see Table 74). In addition, the R.M. Moore Elementary School has a gymnasium that can be used with special arrangements. Reinhardt College has two ballfields on campus and a swimming pool. The swimming pool is not open to the public, but can be used for swimming instruction through special arrangements.

Woodstock

Several parks are operated independently by the City of Woodstock, and are shown in the following table.

Park	Location	Acres	Type	Facilities
W. I. DuPree Park	Neese Road	25	Community Park	2 Softball Fields, 2 Tennis Courts, 2 Basketball Courts, 2 Covered Pavilions, Walking Trail, Pond/Fishing, Picnic Areas, Playground
Springfield Park	Springfield Dr/Hwy 92	4	Neighborhood Park	Picnic Areas, Playground
Rope Mill Park	Old Rope Mill Road	268	Community Park	Rock Pavilion w/ Fireplace, Decks overlooking Little River, Bike Walking Trails
Woodstock City Park	Downtown	6	Mini Park + trails	Gazebo and Fountain, Trails
Municipal Park	Woodlands	25	Community Park	
River Park North		32	Community Park	
Serenade Park		8	Neighborhood Park	
Mountain Brook		100	Community Park	

In all, the City's parks total 468 acres. In addition, the City leases approximately 132 acres from the Corps of Engineers for trails and open space activities.

In recognition of the need for additional recreation, the city added a requirement to the land development ordinance indicating residential development must include recreation and/or open-space areas. All subdivisions with 25 lots or more, all planned unit developments and all apartment developments with 10 units or more must set aside land for recreation areas.

Based on the 2005 estimate of 7,532 housing units in the city, City parks are provided by Woodstock at a level of service of 62.1 acres per 1,000 housing units.

Senior Citizen Facilities

Recreation programs are also available at the Senior Centers. Countywide senior services are administered from a central office at 1001 Univeter. The City of Woodstock operates a senior activity center in downtown Woodstock, which offers arts and crafts, bowling, ceramics, computer classes and bridge.

Community Clubs and Athletic Associations

Long before the Recreation Department or the Recreation and Parks Authority existed, local citizens supported recreation activities through their memberships with community clubs or athletic associations, and continue to do so today. The South Cherokee Recreation Association has been particularly active, and through a lease of 57 acres from the Corps of Engineers, has developed five lighted ballfields for baseball and softball. Other groups such as the Lions and Kiwanis clubs, as well as the American Legion, all contribute to local recreation. The following lists some of the active Community Clubs and Athletic Associations within Cherokee County.

- Free Home Community
- Hickory Flat Recreation Association
- Macedonia Community Park
- Avery Community Park
- Holbrook Campground
- Bells Ferry Church of God
- Brian Walker Park
- Reinhardt College
- S. Cherokee Recreation Association
- Rope Mill Historic Park
- Bascomb Church
- Big Springs Community Park
- Brady Field (American Legion)

Public Recreation at Cherokee County School Facilities

Generally, the use of school recreation facilities is negotiated individually with each school principal through a verbal agreement. Almost all gymnasiums, which most of the schools have, are the primary facilities used for basketball leagues in the county. Playgrounds are generally available on elementary school properties, but other facilities like ballfields and tennis courts are limited to middle and high schools. Etowah, Sequoyah, and Cherokee County High Schools are the best equipped, having a variety of recreation facilities.

Corps of Engineers

The U.S. Corps of Engineers is a principle land and water owner within Cherokee County. Lake Allatoona is primarily operated for flood control, power production and water supply, with recreation as a serious, but secondary benefit. Lake Allatoona is the second most visited Corps reservoir in the United States, exceeded only by Lake Sidney Lanier. The Corps has developed and manages several of its own recreational facilities located on part of the 17,753 acres that it owns, including boat ramps, campsites, hiking trails, group picnic shelters and a museum/nature interpretive center.

Through long-term leases, the Corps has allowed some private developments to be built near the lake. The privately developed Allatoona Landing includes a full service marina, beach, swimming pool, snack bar and restaurants, Marine railway and lift service, and RV and camping lots. Some quasi-public groups, many from outside Cherokee County, operate recreation facilities that are not available to local residents. The municipalities of Holly Springs and Canton lease parkland adjacent to the lake, and are responsible for maintenance

of the areas they lease. Private groups now pay market rates for leases, while local governments are allowed to lease the land for nominal fees.

In spite of Lake Allatoona’s popularity, the Corps-owned campgrounds only fill completely three or four times a year. The fluctuations in the reservoir levels throughout the year may be partly to blame, since major drawdowns often create the “bath tub ring” that is aesthetically unpopular. Corps-owned recreation facilities include camping facilities at Sweetwater Creek Campground, Victoria Campground and Payne Campground. Day use recreation facilities include Sweetwater (swimming), Know Bridge (boat ramp), Little River (boat ramp), Cherokee Mills (boat ramp), Victoria (boat ramp, swimming, fishing jetty), Kellogg Creek (picnic shelters, swimming), Payne (boat ramp), and Galts Ferry (picnic shelters, boat ramp, swimming, fishing jetty). Marinas are located at the Galts Ferry, Little River and Victoria campgrounds.

■ **Libraries and Cultural Facilities**

The Cherokee County Library System includes the R.T. Jones, Ball Ground, Woodstock, Hickory Flat, Rose Creek and Law Libraries that together provide a variety of services to Cherokee County’s growing population on a countywide basis. These libraries are part of the larger Sequoyah Regional Library System that serves Cherokee, Pickens and Gilmer Counties. Statistics for the County libraries are listed in the following table, which have 209,820 collection volumes, housed in a total of 82,000 square feet of facility space.

Table 76: Library Facilities			
Facility	Location	Square Footage	Collection Volumes
R.T. Jones Library	116 Brown Industrial Parkway	30,000	68,960
Ball Ground Library	435 Old Canton Road	9,000	29,374
Woodstock Library	7735 Main Street	20,000	34,300
Hickory Flat Library	2740 East Cherokee Drive	10,000	35,527
Rose Creek Library	4476 Towne Lake Parkway	10,000	37,159
Cherokee County Law Library	90 North Street	3,000	4,500

The regional headquarters for the Sequoyah System is the R.T. Jones Memorial Library, located near the Canton-Cherokee Business and Industrial Park off Highway 20 east of downtown Canton. The services provided at this location include bookkeeping, book ordering and processing, planning, and bookmobile assistance. Services provided at the other libraries include book check out, public meeting room space, public computers, career information, individual equipment checkout, books on tape, interlibrary lending, Internet access and reference services.

All of the libraries within the county are open to the public 57 hours a week. The system currently employs 37 full-time and 16 part-time employees.

There are plans for new libraries in the southwest and northwest portions of the county, an expansion of the R.T. Jones and Rose Creek facilities, a public relations program, and an expansion in library hours.

Based on 2005 housing unit estimate of 68,426, the levels of service provided by the Library System in Cherokee County are 1.2 square feet of library space and 3.1 volumes per housing unit.

■ Education Facilities

Public School System

The Cherokee County Public School System serves the entire county with 22 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 5 high schools and 3 specialized educational facilities. The school system's FY 2005-2006 budget of \$293 million reflects a \$28 million increase over the previous year.

The following table presents a listing of the county schools, their location, and the March 2006 enrollments, at which time there were 33,216 students in the Cherokee County school system.

Table 77: Cherokee County Schools and March 2006 Enrollment		
School	Location	2006 Enrollment
Arnold Mill Elementary School	710 Arnold Mill Road	1,067
Ball Ground Elementary School	480 Old Canton Road	428
Bascomb Elementary School	1335 Wyngate Parkway	1,350
Boston Elementary School	105 Othello Drive	909
Buffington Elementary School	4568 Cumming Highway	207
Carmel Elementary School	2275 Bascomb-Carmel Road	1,511
Chapman Intermediate School	6500 Putnam Ford Road	1,124
Clayton Elementary School	221 Upper Burris Road	423
Free Home Elementary School	12525 Cumming Highway	272
Hasty Elementary School	205 Brown Industrial Parkway	1,251
Hickory Flat Elementary School	2755 East Cherokee Drive	1,279
Holly Springs Elementary School	1965 Hickory Road	995
Johnston Elementary School	2031 East Cherokee Drive	967
Liberty Elementary School	10500 Bells Ferry Road	1,218
Little River Elementary School	3170 Trickum Road	803
Macedonia Elementary School	10370 East Cherokee Drive	889
Mountain Road Elementary School	615 Mountain Road	535
Oak Grove Elementary School	6118 Woodstock Road	786
R. M. Moore Elementary School	1375 Puckett Road	543
Ralph Bunche Center	400 Belletta Drive	113
Sixes Elementary School	20 Ridge Road	1,037
Woodstock Elementary School	8371 Main Street	919
Total—Elementary Schools		18,626
Creekland Middle School	1555 Owens Store Road	1,013
Dean Rusk Middle School	4695 Hickory Road	837
E. T. Booth Middle School	6550 Putnam Ford Road	1,165
Freedom Middle School	10550 Bells Ferry Road	889
Teasley Middle School	8871 Knox Bridge Highway	753
Woodstock Middle School	2000 Towne Lake Hills Drive South	1,004
Total—Middle Schools		5,661
Cherokee High School	930 Marietta Highway	1,960
Creekview High School	1555 Owens Store Road	322
Etowah High School	6565 Putnam Ford Road	1,879
Sequoyah High School	4485 Hickory Road	1,916
Woodstock High School	2010 Towne Lake Hills Drive South	2,221
Total—High Schools		8,298

School	Location	2006 Enrollment
Polaris Evening School (full-time)	2010 Towne Lake Hills Drive South	302
Mountainbrook Education Center	8 Glenwood Street	83
Crossroads Middle/High School	3921 Holly Springs Parkway	246
Total—Specialized Facilities		631
TOTAL—ALL SCHOOLS		33,216

School construction and additions have been undertaken at a heady pace. Recent new school construction projects and additions completed in the last five years are shown on the following Table 78. In addition, there are three new schools under construction, and land has already been purchased for three more.

Construction Completed in the Last Five Years	Schools Currently Under Construction	New Schools Programmed for Construction
New Carmel ES	New Creekview HS	New Ball Ground area (Hwy 372) ES
New Liberty ES	New Avery ES	New West Canton (Knox Bridge Hwy) ES
New/Replacement Woodstock ES	New/Replacement Little River ES	New East Woodstock (Arnold Mill) HS
New Hasty ES		
New Creekland MS		
New Freedom MS		
Chapman IS Renovations		
Mt. Road ES Classroom Addition		
Hickory Flat ES Gymnasium Addition		
Sequoyah HS Band Room Addition		
Cherokee HS Renovation and Gym Addition		
Etowah HS Addition and Renovation		

ES—Elementary School; MS—Middle School; IS—Intermediate School; HS—High School

There are currently an estimated 36,300 children in Cherokee County between the ages of 5 and 17. Most (more than 33,200) are enrolled in the public school system, while others attend private schools, are home schooled, too young to enroll this year or graduated early. By 2030, forecasts suggest that 43,000 more children aged 5 to 17 will be added to the county population. At the current enrollment percentage, this would project that almost 40,000 children will be added to the county school system—more than doubling current enrollment. Although many existing schools may be expanded and new schools will be constructed, this enrollment increase is the equivalent of adding 25 to 30 new schools to the system to accommodate projected growth.

The quality of education in the county used to be perceived by outsiders moving into the area to be less than that of other metro Atlanta school systems, but this perception is changing. Reading scores from standardized tests ranks Cherokee in the top 5 percent statewide, and math scores on standardized tests rank in the top 15 percent. The school system works with real estate agents throughout metro Atlanta to distribute information about the schools in Cherokee; the majority of requests for information come from people within the State of Georgia.

Teacher vacancies within the school system are responded to by a large number of applicants for all school subjects; the only positions difficult to fill are in the areas of foreign language and special education. The lo-

cal pay scale for Cherokee County teachers has increased significantly in recent years, helping to bring salaries more in line with those of other metro school systems. Raises at the state level have been passed on to Cherokee County teachers in their entirety; additional increases in the local salary scale have also been added.

In the past, the Board of Education has been able to negotiate with developers about donating land for new school sites. With the passage of the state impact fee law, this changed in April of 1992. Impact fees currently cannot be used to finance schools in Georgia.

Private Primary and Secondary Schools

There are a number of private schools in Cherokee County; the following table lists the institutions currently operating in the county.

Table 79: Private Primary and Secondary Schools in Cherokee County		
School	Location	Grades
American Heritage Academy	2126 Sixes Road	PK – 11
Cherokee Christian School	3075 Trickum Road	K – 11
Community Christian	260 Rolling Hills Avenue	PK – 8
Crossroads Christian	2861 Ball Ground Highway	K – 12
Furtah Preparatory School	5496 Highway 92	K – 12
Harvest Baptist School	3460 Kellogg Creek Road	K – 12
Rehobeth Christian Academy	154 Lakeside Drive	PK - 3

Reinhardt College

Reinhardt College is a private, coeducational, Methodist-related, four-year accredited college, offering a bachelor’s degree in business administration. Associates degrees are offered in liberal arts, fine arts, natural sciences and business administration. The main campus is located in Waleska, in Cherokee County; a satellite campus is located in north Fulton County. The 600-acre main campus has 30 buildings ranging from the Dobbs Science building, a native fieldstone structure built in 1927 to the Lawson Academic Center, a state-of-the-art classroom building finished in 1993. Lake Mullenix, athletic fields, four lighted tennis courts and the bowling alley offer additional study and recreational opportunities. The McCamish Broadcast Center, a video production and transmission facility runs the College-wide television system. The endowment now stands at approximately \$42.4 million.

■ Public Health and Services

The primary source of medical care is provided by the Northside Hospital-Cherokee on the R.T. Jones Medical campus. The facility includes 84 beds and has 105 physicians with privileges (56-active, 49-courtesy) as well as a 24-hour emergency room. Medical services offered by the hospital are an eight bed critical care unit, delivery service, pediatric care, general and specialty surgery, physical, occupational and respiratory therapy, CT scanning, cancer treatment and orthopedics. Occupancy rate for the facility is 40% due to the close proximity of Kennestone Hospital in Cobb County and the North Fulton Hospital in Fulton County.

All medical services are provided and managed by the private sector and/or the State of Georgia. Cherokee County is not involved in the private services; thus, any addition or expansion will be determined by the evaluation of the parties within the private sector.

The main office of the Public Health Department is currently located on Univeter Road across from Kenny Askew Park. The facility was built on 1992 with grant funds. The health department staff provides services to approximately 17,500 people, some 15% of the county's total population. The services offered are community-oriented, rather than field-oriented as they were in the past. The services are provided where it is most convenient and beneficial for the client. There are services offered in the schools, homes and community, in addition to the clinic itself. Health and Human Services Facilities for Cherokee County are listed in Table 80.

The Woodstock facility, located at the County Annex on Hwy. 5 in the southern portion of Cherokee County, was opened in 1994. The services offered there are the same as the services offered in the Canton facility, with the exception of prenatal care. That is done at the Canton facility because of the proximity to R.T. Jones Hospital.

Table 80: Public Health Facilities	
Facility	Location
Cherokee County Health Department	7545 North Main Street, Suite 100, Woodstock
Cherokee County Health Department	1219 Univeter Road, Canton
Georgia Highlands Center for Mental Health	191 Lamar Haley Parkway, Canton / Cherokee Industrial Park
Cherokee County Senior Center	1001 Univeter Road, Canton
Cherokee County Department for Family and Children Services	105 Lamar Haley Parkway Canton / Cherokee Industrial Park
R.T. Jones Regional Hospital	201 Hospital Rd, Canton

■ Water Supply and Treatment

Water service in much of unincorporated Cherokee County is owned and operated by the Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority. The remainder of the county is served by the five different city water departments of Woodstock, Waleska, Holly Springs, Ball Ground and Canton. A private well water system serves the Lake Arrowhead development. Service extends to most parts of the county except the extreme northwest and northeast corners. There are two water treatment facilities in the county, one owned by the Authority and the other owned by Canton. Additional water is purchased from the Cobb/Marietta Water Authority. Ball Ground operates a system on wells. Holly Springs and Waleska purchase all of their water on a wholesale basis from Canton and the Cherokee Authority. Woodstock purchases their water from both the Cherokee Authority and the Cobb/Marietta Authority. The City of Nelson's water system is owned and operated by the Cherokee Authority.

Cherokee Water System

The Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority was first established in 1955, and was reestablished as a water and sewerage authority in 1973. It is governed by a seven-member board of directors, six members of which are appointed by the Grand Jury. The Chairman on the Board of Commissioners serves as the seventh member.

The Authority is funded by bonds backed by revenues from sales and services. No tax dollars can be used for operations or capital improvements. The system grows and expands as the customer base increases, in much the same way a private enterprise operates.

Water Supply and Distribution

At the present time, the Authority owns and operates an 18 million gallons per day (MGD) water treatment plant located on the Etowah River at 583 Cokers Chapel Road in the northern part on the county. The average daily flow in 2005 was 15.24 MGD. The Authority also purchases approximately 10% of its water from the Cobb/Marietta Water Authority and 2% from Canton on an “as need” basis.

The Authority owns and maintains 4,150,000 gallons of storage capacity in 10 tanks, operates 13 pump stations, and maintains approximately 500 miles of distribution lines. Storage tank and pump station service areas are shown in the following tables. Note that one pump station is currently out of service.

The Authority sells water to the Cities of Woodstock and Waleska, and the counties of Bartow and Forsyth.

The Cities of Woodstock, Waleska, Holly Springs, Canton and Ball Ground operate their own water systems within the county. The Authority has a customer base of over 30,000 water customers and adds an average of almost 200 new water connections per month.

The Water Authority is currently expanding its distribution service into the western and northeastern portions of the county. Other expansions are also planned within the county to coincide with residential and commercial growth patterns.

County Reservoirs

The Authority has a 420-acre reservoir on Yellow Creek that provides a drought contingency supply for the Etowah River. Water from the reservoir will be released at a rate of some 42 MGD into the Etowah to main-

Table 81: County Water Pump Station Service Areas

Pump Station	Service Area
Lower Bethany Road	Supply water to Land Road Water Tank
Old Canton Road	Supply water to Hwy. 5 tank in Pickens Co.
Highway 20	Not in Service
Sutallee Ridge Trail	Sutallee Ridge
Mountain Rd. & Arnold Mill Rd.	Mountain Rd. Elem. School
Bart Manous	S. to Hwy. 92 & W. to Univeter Tank
East Cherokee Drive	Macedonia & Free Home Tank
Holly Street & Ridge Road	Increase pressure on Ridge Rd.
Mountain Farm Road	Increase pressure on Mountain Farm Rd.
Univeter Road & Pine Crest Road	Increase pressure on Pinecrest Road
Eagle Drive	Pump Water to Bells Ferry Rd. Water Tank
Holly Springs	Pump to Holly Springs Water Tank
Yellow Creek	Pump to Yellow Creek Tank
New Mountain Road	Boost pressure on Mountain Rd.

Table 82: County Water Storage Tank Service Areas

Storage Tank	Service Area
Land Road	Clayton, Portion of Waleska
Highway 372 (Free Home Hwy)	Hwy 20 E. From E.Cherokee, N. to B.G
East Cherokee Drive	E. Cherokee Dr. S. of Hwy 20
Water Tank Road	Hwy. 20 W. of Water Tank
Bells Ferry Road (Rose Creek)	Bells Ferry Rd & surrounding area
Tyson Drive & Highway 92	Hwy. 92 W. of 575 to I-75
Univeter Road	Univeter Rd. Butterworth Rd,&
Nelson	From Tank S. on Hwy. 5 to
Holly Springs	City of Holly Springs Area
Yellow Creek	Yellow Creek Rd & surrounding area

tain the river’s 7Q10 flow (the lowest flow in the river for 7 days during worst drought condition in a 10-year period), which insures acceptable water supply and quality even during severe drought conditions.

The location of the reservoir is in the northeast corner of Cherokee County and southwest corner of Dawson County along Yellow Creek. Of the total 420 acres for the reservoir, only 80 acres are actually located within Cherokee County. The amount of water impounded by the dam is approximately 3.5 billion gallons of water at normal pool level.

Ball Ground’s Water System

Ball Ground operates a well system with a pumping capacity of 352 gallons per minute. The actual capacity is closer to 200 gallons per minute or 288,000 gallons per day (GPD). Although the well is currently pumping an average of 125,000 GPD, actual water usage is estimated to be between 80,000 to 90,000 GPD. The difference is what is being lost through leaks in the distribution system. Locating and correcting the leaks is a key problem that is being addressed by the City. Based on moderate population growth for Ball Ground, the well system will be sufficient for another five to ten years. The system also includes 210,000 gallons of water storage. There are currently about 450 water customers, the majority of which reside within the city limits.

Waleska’s Water System

The water system of Waleska consists of distribution lines and a 150,000-gallon storage tank. Over 5 million gallons per month is purchased wholesale from the Cherokee Water and Sewerage Authority; less than 1 million gallons per month is purchased through Canton. Waleska has a customer base of 620; 125 reside within the city and 495 are outside.

Woodstock’s Water System

Woodstock purchases an average of 1.6 million gallons per month from the Cobb/Marietta Water Authority. The city is also connected to the Cherokee Authority system. Woodstock has a customer base of approximately 4,300 customers; most reside within the city limits. Table 83 shows the location and average daily flows for the City’s water storage tanks. Note that one tank is currently out of service.

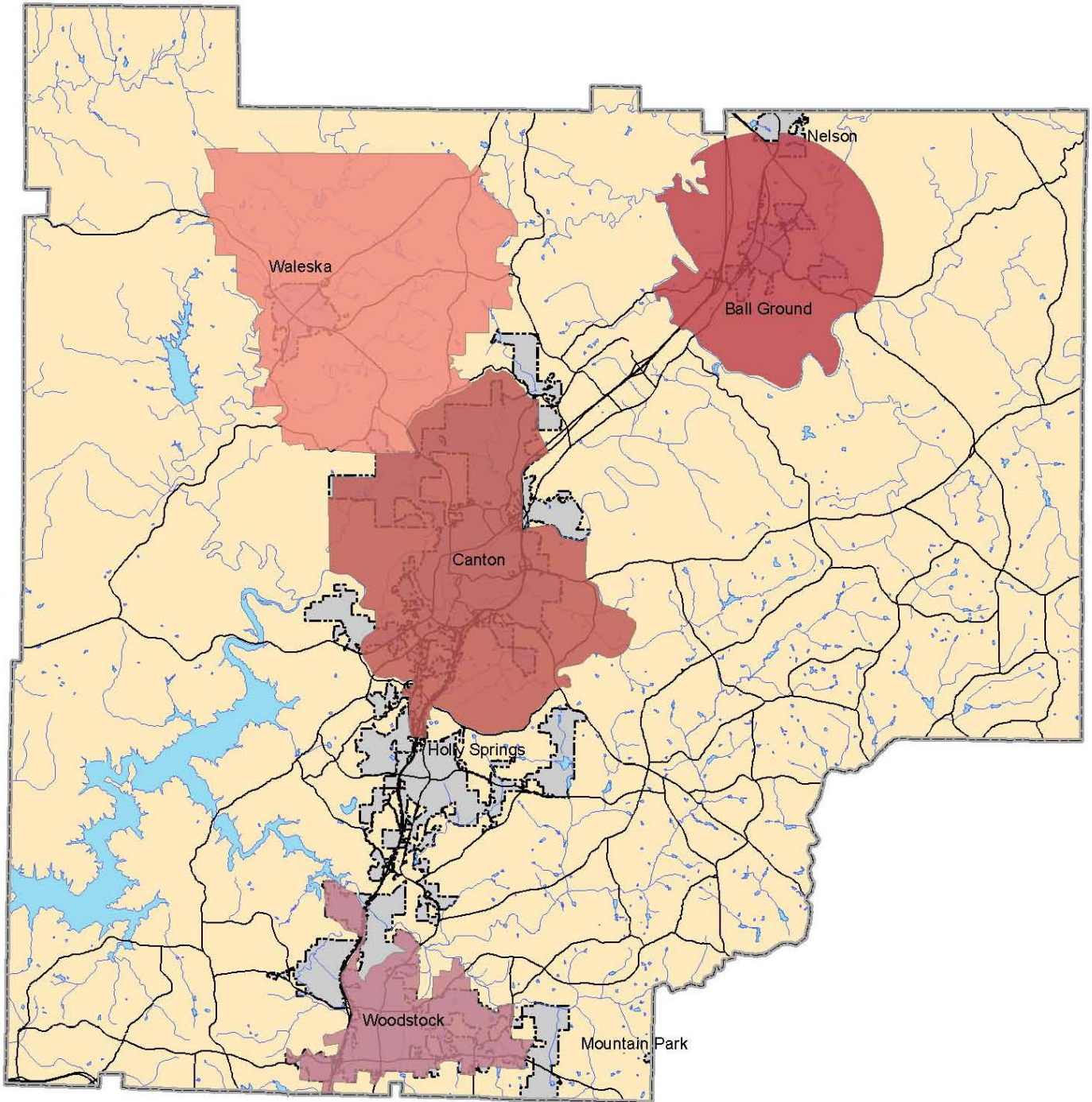
Storage Tank	Average Flow
Rope Mill Road	200,000 gal/day
Neese RD	300,000 gal/day
Dobbs Rd	Out of Service

A 1999 Water Distribution Study evaluated the city’s ability to meet current and future water demands. In addition to potential capacity issues, the study also identified old and potentially cast-iron pipe with leaded joints within the historic downtown, causing reduced flows and increased pressure losses within the area. In addition piping through the downtown is 6 inches in diameter.

Private Water Systems

The Lake Arrowhead community has its own private well water system to serve its residents. It has a capacity of 250,000 gallons per day; consumption averages 100,000 gallons per day. There are 466 customers in the development.

Cherokee Water and Sewer Service Areas

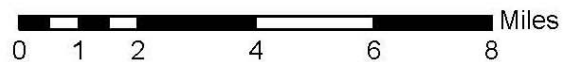


Service Areas

- Ballground
- Canton
- Waleska
- Woodstock
- Cherokee County

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■ Sewerage Systems and Wastewater Treatment

Sewerage service in Cherokee County presently exists in the southern 1/3 of the county, portions of the cities of Ball Ground, Canton and Woodstock, the Lake Arrowhead development, and Reinhardt College in Waleska.

Cherokee County Wastewater System

The Authority wastewater system includes four treatment facilities, 55 lift stations and approximately 50 miles of sanitary sewer and force main lines. There are presently approximately 7,000 wastewater customers using these facilities. This number is growing by about 100 new customers a month. Statistics for the four treatment facilities are shown in the following table.

Service Area	Current Facility Capacity (MGD)	Planned Facility Capacity (MGD)	Average Daily Flows (2005)
Southwest Cherokee County (south of hwy 20 and west of hwy 575)	6 MGD	15 MGD	3.909 MGD
Southeast Cherokee County (south of hwy 20 and east of hwy 575)	2 MGD	11.75 MGD	1.705 MGD
Northeast Cherokee County (east of Hwy 140 and north of Hwy 20)	NA	20 MGD	NA
Northwest Cherokee (North of Hwy 20 and West of Highway 140)	NA	10 MGD	NA

The Authority has agreements with several other municipalities for wastewater treatment. Cobb and Fulton Counties accept a small amount of wastewater depending on topography and the availability of the Authority's sewer lines. The Authority also has a contract with the City of Canton to treat 100,000 GPD, which is intended for the I-575 corridor north of Canton to the City of Ball Ground. The Authority also owns a 660-acre tract of land just north of Canton in the Shoal Creek Area. This parcel is planned for a land application system and facility to serve the north and west areas of the county.

Numerous other improvement projects are planned. The Little River Pump Station, to be located on the Little River near I-575, will relay flows from the east and north. A collection main will run along the Little River to extend from the pump station to the Land Application System Facility. Another collection main with pump stations will extend service from the Little River Pump Station up Blankets Creek, following I-575 toward Exit 7 between Canton and Holly Springs. Finally, a collection main is being extended from the Avery Creek lift station up Mill Creek to just north of Highway 140.

Other future wastewater collection system expansions will likely be along Mill Creek and Little River up to their headwaters in the eastern part of the county. Eventually, wastewater collection will be made available to the northern shores of Lake Allatoona to be treated at the Rose Creek Facility or the Shoal Creek Property.

Woodstock Wastewater Treatment System

Woodstock owns and operates one wastewater treatment plant and 17 lift stations that together provide about 2.5 MGD in treatment capacity. The treatment plant, located at 228 Arnold Mill Road, treated an average of 1.8 MGD in 2005. In 1996, a Wastewater Management Study identified wastewater collection and treatment needs and provided recommendations based on an analysis of alternative solutions, indicating that the city may need to further prepare for long-term sewer.

Private Wastewater Treatment Systems

The Lake Arrowhead community has its own private land application system to serve residents of the development. Permitted capacity is 300,000 GPD. The final stage of the land application process involves spraying treated wastewater onto the golf course, which acts as a natural fertilizer and irrigation system. Reinhardt College also has its own private sewerage treatment system.

■ **Solid Waste Management**

Solid waste is defined as any unwanted or discarded material that is not a liquid or a gas. Municipal solid waste from homes and businesses in or near urban areas, and consists mostly of paper products, metals and plastic. Disposable consumer products, excess packaging and yard waste are among the chief contributors to municipal solid waste. Solid waste is addressed in detail in the Solid Waste Management Plan.

Collection

Solid waste collection in Cherokee County is accommodated through a number of channels. Currently, the City of Canton has a municipal contract with a private waste hauler, and has instituted a citywide curbside recycling program. Garbage pickup in the unincorporated area and in Ball Ground, Waleska and Holly Springs is handled entirely by private haulers on a subscription basis. County residents currently pay between \$8 and \$10 per month for semi-weekly pick-up. Private waste haulers operating in Cherokee County include Georgia Waste Management, BFI, and several other small contractors. About 65% of the county's waste is brought to landfills by these companies, while 35% is delivered to landfills by individual citizens and businesses.

Disposal

At the current time, the County does not own any active landfill sites. All landfills within the county are owned by private companies, of which only one accepts solid wastes. In 1990, the county adopted an ordinance setting up permitting criteria and application requirements for landfills.

Waste Generation Rates

State law mandated a 25% reduction in solid waste (by weight) of 1992 levels by 1996. In 1992, Cherokee County generated a per capita daily average of 4.87 pounds, or 1,778 pounds per person per year. This amounted to 89,837 tons of solid waste. The county disposed of 104,102 tons of solid waste in 1996, an *increase* of 13.7% over 1992 levels, but (due to population growth) only 1,714 pounds per person, a 4 percent reduction.

Sanifill

Recycle and Recovery, Inc. has opened a facility located on East Cherokee Drive, between Highway 5 and Highway 20. This facility consists of a 753-acre site with a lined footprint of 230 acres. The lined portion of the landfill is composed of 12 different phases, and has a calculated waste volume of 12,000,000 cubic yards. The facility will accept waste from a service area of Cherokee, Cobb, Pickens, Bartow, and Fulton Counties and other areas within a 100-mile radius of the site. Waste taken from outside Cherokee County would reduce the amount of airspace available to Cherokee County, but for 10 years the county has exclusive disposal rights to this facility.

Closed Solid Waste Facilities

Several landfills in Cherokee County have filled up and closed in recent years. It has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to create new landfills as the county continues to develop. The implications of

this shortage will be that the county must either drastically reduce its waste stream volume, a difficult task in the face of rampant growth, or ship its waste elsewhere.

The Cherokee County Sanitary Landfill facility was located on Blalock Road two miles southeast of Holly Springs. The facility was a 277-acre site that, until 1992, accepted 130 tons of waste per day from the county and its municipalities. At the current time, it is in a post-closure phase of monitoring in accordance with federal Subtitle D Regulations. The future land use of this site has not been finalized at this time, but the potential exists for a public golf course to be developed here.

The Swim-SR 92 (Dixie) Landfill was located 2 miles west of Interstate 575 on State Highway 92. The five-acre site accepted only inert wastes from Cherokee County businesses and some of wastes from Cobb County. Household wastes were not permitted.

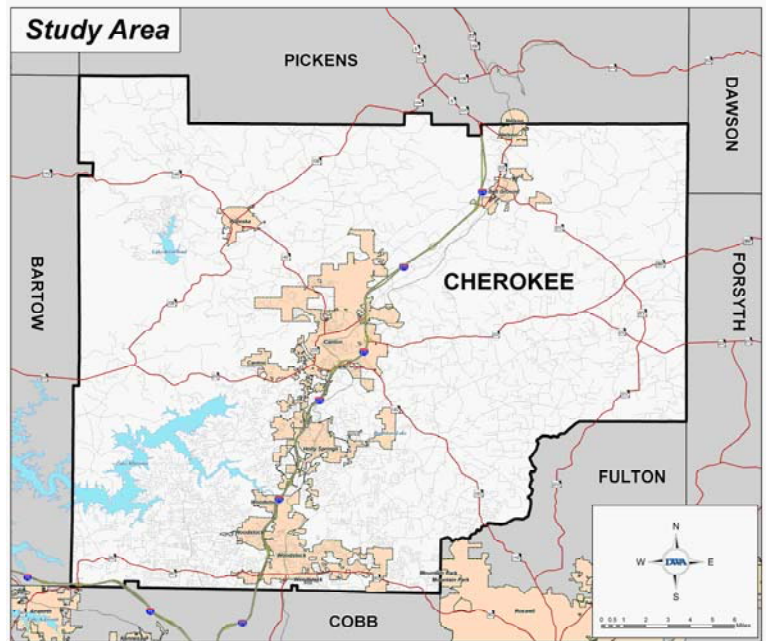
Solid Waste Planning

The Cherokee County Waste Management Plan will be updated in concert with this Joint Comprehensive Plan Update.

■ Transportation Planning Context

Regional and local planning context is necessary for understanding existing and future transportation needs in Cherokee County. The transportation system must be evaluated within the confines of the natural and built environment and within the communities it serves. The intensity of transportation infrastructure investment should match land development patterns: urban, suburban or rural. How people live, where they live, and who they are require varying transportation solutions. High-speed highways and heavy rail investments facilitate travel between home and work over longer distances and interregional travel. Conversely, pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks provide a safer travel environment for local, compact trip making between home and shopping areas, or from home to school. Various economic, social and land development considerations that impact travel demand are presented because they influence the planning environment and are essential to create a plan that reflects and meets community needs for an integrated transportation system.

Understanding Cherokee County demographics indicates types of transportation infrastructure and services may be needed. For instance, some population groups are more likely to need or use transit, including low-income persons, elderly persons, young persons, non-white persons and households without vehicle access. Residential and commercial density also dictates the effectiveness of transportation alternatives. The geographic distribution of population groups is also a component for meeting federal environmental justice guidelines and regulations established by Title VI, Executive Order 12898 and Section 450 of TEA-21. Environmental justice regulations require any federally supported investment—whether planning study or road widening—do not disproportionately affect minority and low-income communities. The investments should allow environmental justice groups to fully share in the benefits.



■ Commute Characteristics

Examining commuting patterns of Cherokee County residents helps to guide transportation improvement investments. Typically, a transportation plan addresses the movement of people and goods by each transportation mode within the area. In most urban areas, trips are accomplished via a system of highway, transit, rail, airport, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The appropriate level of analysis for each mode is related to its function within the area.

Table 85 shows county commuting patterns from the 2000 U.S. Census. As compared to the region and state, Cherokee residents are more dependent on personal vehicles for their daily commute. In 2000, 93 percent of

commuters drove alone or in carpools versus 89.8 percent region-wide or 92 percent statewide. The proportion of persons using public transportation for commute trips was less countywide (0.4 percent) than region-wide (4.3 percent) or statewide (2.3 percent). More people worked at home in the county (4.9 percent) than region-wide (3.6 percent) or statewide (2.8 percent).

Geography	Number of Commuters (Age 16+)	Drove alone	Car-pooled	Public Transportation	Walked	Other	Worked at home	Mean travel time to work (minutes)
Georgia	3,832,803	77.5 %	14.5 %	2.3 %	1.7 %	1.1 %	2.8 %	27.7
ARC 10-County Region	1,733,135	76.4 %	13.4 %	4.3 %	1.3 %	1.0 %	3.6 %	n/a
Cherokee County	74,075	81.2 %	11.8 %	0.4 %	0.6 %	1.1 %	4.9 %	34.4
Ball Ground	304	83.9 %	14.5 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	1.6 %	35.7
Canton	3,762	67.2 %	19.5 %	1.2 %	1.4 %	6.7 %	4.0 %	26.9
Holly Springs	1,675	84.0 %	11.2 %	1.4 %	0.0 %	1.7 %	1.7 %	40.4
Waleska	276	69.2 %	5.8 %	0.0 %	23.6 %	0.7 %	0.7 %	20.8
Woodstock	5,537	82.0 %	12.5 %	0.2 %	0.2 %	0.7 %	4.5 %	31.7

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

■ Commute Patterns

Local commute patterns have a significant impact on the location and intensity of the transportation system utilization. Census journey-to-work data was examined at a countywide and census tract level to understand local commute patterns. Table 86 and Table 87 summarize commute patterns by county level for 1990 and 2000 commuters residing in the county and those working in the county. As shown in Table 86, between 1990 and 2000, the number of commuters in Cherokee increased by 26,420 persons or 55.4 percent. In both 1990 and 2000, a majority of commuters left the county for work, 68.5 percent and 64.6 percent, respectively.

The top three destinations for Cherokee commuters outside the county were Cobb, Fulton and DeKalb counties. Between 1990 and 2000, the greatest total growth in commute trips was for trips staying in the county, which increased by 11,238 commuters or 74.9 percent. Trips to Forsyth County increased by the greatest rate (200.8 percent), increasing from 652 commuters in 1990 to 1,309 commuters in 2000. Overall, the commute patterns of Cherokee County residents indicate a propensity to use both the local and regional transportation network to travel to work outside of the county. Access and mobility between Cherokee and Cobb and Fulton counties are important for local residents. Roadways that facilitate this inter-county travel include I-575, I-75, Victory Drive, Bells Ferry Road, Wade Green Road, and Trickum Road to Cobb County and SR 92, SR 140/Arnold Mill Road, SR 372/Birmingham Highway to Fulton County.

County	1990		2000		Change from 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cherokee	15,001	31.5%	26,239	35.4%	11,238	74.9%
Cobb	12,862	27.0%	18,911	25.5%	6,049	47.0%
Fulton	11,715	24.6%	17,494	23.6%	5,779	49.3%
DeKalb	2,844	6.0%	2,898	3.9%	54	1.9%
Gwinnett	1,831	3.8%	2,037	2.8%	206	11.3%

County	1990		2000		Change from 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Forsyth	652	1.4%	1,961	2.7%	1,309	200.8%
Other	2,750	5.7%	4,535	6.1%	1,785	64.9%
Total	47,655	100.0%	74,075	100.0%	26,420	55.4%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census.

Table 87 summarizes commute trips destined for Cherokee County and the counties from which the trips are originating. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of persons commuting to or within the county increased by 19,110 persons or 88.4 percent. The number of Cherokee commuters staying in the county to work increased by 11,238 or 74.9 percent, though proportionally fewer commuters in the county were Cherokee residents in 2000 (64.4 percent) than 1990 (69.4 percent).

The county experienced an increase in commuters from outside the county. The number of commuters originating in Cobb County and destined for Cherokee increased by 2,438 persons (or 87.2 percent) and those originating in Pickens County increased by 1,109 (or 102.5 percent). Overall, a majority of employment in Cherokee County is filled by Cherokee residents, and the attraction of Cherokee as an employment center is growing somewhat for the region. Still, most Cherokee commuters are leaving the county to work.

County	1990		2000		Change from 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cherokee	15,001	69.4%	26,239	64.4%	11,238	74.9%
Cobb	2,796	12.9%	5,234	12.9%	2,438	87.2%
Pickens	1,082	5.0%	2,191	5.4%	1,109	102.5%
Bartow	617	2.9%	1,154	2.8%	537	87.0%
Fulton	486	2.3%	1,129	2.8%	643	132.3%
Paulding	196	0.9%	459	1.1%	263	134.2%
Other	1,429	6.6%	4,311	10.6%	2,882	201.7%
Total	21,607	100.0%	40,717	100.0%	19,110	88.4%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census.

To develop a better understanding of commute trip origins and destinations in the county, journey-to-work data by census tract was examined. Table 88 lists the tracts generating over 3,000 daily commute trips in 2000. The nine tracts shown represent approximately 50 percent of the county's commute trips, and these tracts are largely concentrated in the southwest corner of the county, concentrated around Woodstock south of Sixes Road and SR 140/Arnold Mill Road. Cobb County is the top employment destination for these commuters, followed by Cherokee and Fulton Counties.

Table 89 illustrates where Cherokee residents are working by census tract. The area attracting the greatest number of work trips is central Woodstock (tract 910.01), followed by the Town Center area of Cobb County (tract 302.05) and central Canton (tract 904.00). Although seven of ten tracts are in Cherokee County, Cherokee residents have a widely dispersed commute pattern, with destinations covering the entire Atlanta region.

Census Tract	Location Description	Work County						Total
		Cherokee	Cobb	Fulton	DeKalb	Gwinnett	Forsyth	
910.04	Woodstock/Towne Lake west of I-575	2,074	2,193	1,373	247	157	45	6,089
908.01	Holly Springs east	2,038	1,193	1,673	231	175	190	5,500
909.03	Woodstock, east of Main Street	1,323	1,398	1,166	181	195	48	4,311
909.02	Southeast Cherokee, south of Little River	830	691	1,962	241	180	165	4,069
910.05	West of Woodstock, south of Towne Lake Parkway	1,378	1,187	953	229	65	8	3,820
911.03	Southwest Cherokee, north of SR 92, west of Woodstock Road	958	1,790	553	181	14	0	3,496
910.03	South Cherokee, east of Bells Ferry Road, west of I-575	963	1,418	831	112	87	35	3,446
907.01	West of I-575 between Woodstock and Holly Springs	1,375	1,000	685	215	30	100	3,405
911.02	Southwest Cherokee, west of Bells Ferry Road, east of Woodstock Road	1,082	1,236	675	122	166	35	3,316
Total		12,021	12,106	9,871	1,759	1,069	626	37,452

County	Census Tract	Location Description	Total
Cherokee	910.01	Central Woodstock, east of I-575 and west of Canton Road	3,359
Cobb	302.05	I-75/I-575 Town Center area	3,225
Cherokee	904.00	Canton, north of SR 20	3,215
Cherokee	906.02	SE Canton, north of SR 140 and south of SR 20	1,994
Fulton	116.05	SR 400 North Point/Alpharetta area	1,844
Cherokee	906.01	South Canton, south of SR 140	1,620
Cherokee	910.04	Woodstock/Towne Lake west of I-575	1,564
Cobb	306.00	Northwest Marietta, south of Cobb Parkway and north of Roswell Street	1,559
Cherokee	910.03	South Cherokee, east of Bells Ferry Road, west of I-575	1,495
Cherokee	908.01	Holly Springs east	1,481
Total			21,356

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, Census Transportation Planning Package Part 3

■ Modal Inventory and Conditions

To determine existing and future multimodal transportation needs in Cherokee County, it is important to understand the character of the transportation system, how it operates and where the deficiencies occur. The following section presents the various multimodal elements of the transportation network in Cherokee County, including roadways, public transportation system, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, airports, and rail for moving people and freight. The characteristics of each element are presented as well as existing and future conditions, if identified.

■ Roadways

The roadway system provides the backbone for the transportation system in Cherokee County, providing access and mobility for residents, businesses and visitors. The siting of major roadways in the county has been influenced by the geology and terrain of the county; the Blue Ridge and Piedmont geologic regions meet southeast of Canton. Red Top Mountain State Park and Lake Allatoona are in the southwest corner of the county. The Etowah River runs northeast to southwest, and numerous creeks traverse the area including Blankets, Canton, Little River, Long Swamp, Rubes, Settingdown, Sharp Mountain, Shoal and Smithwick Creeks.

Functional Classification

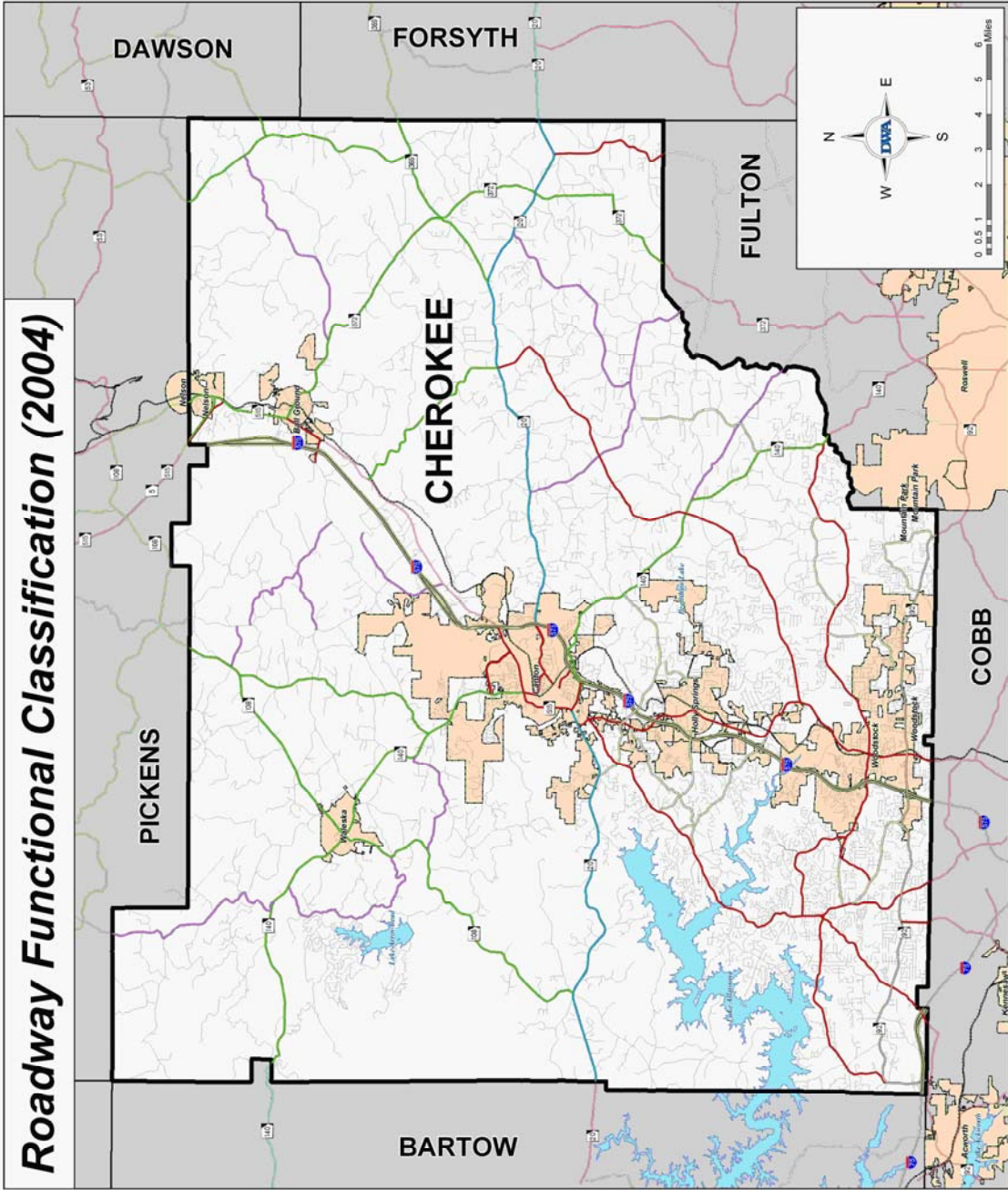
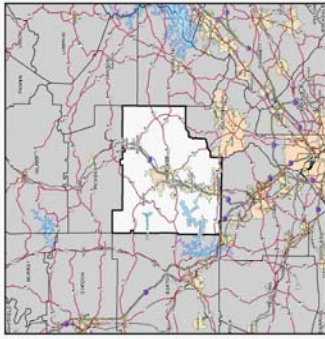
Cherokee County has 1,194 centerline miles of existing roadway network. Classifying the roadway system according to function allows for analysis and evaluation of roadway effectiveness within the system. Roadways are described by the federal functional classification system, which defines a roadway based on its accessibility and mobility. On one end of the spectrum are expressways or interstates, which provide the greatest mobility but the least accessibility. On the other end are local roads that provide the greatest accessibility but the least mobility. Cherokee's roadway system by major functional classification category is described below; the functional classifications and roadway jurisdiction are depicted on the following maps. State routes in Cherokee are SR 5 Business, SR 20, SR 92, SR 108, SR 140, SR 369, and SR 372. Federal highways include I-575 (SR 417) and I-75 (SR 401). The majority of the roadway network is county-owned.

- Interstate Principal Arterial/Urban Freeway and Expressways – provide the greatest mobility because access is generally limited to intersections with the network at defined interchanges and permit high-speed movement. Interstates and expressways in Cherokee County, including I-75 and I-575, account for 26 centerline miles (two percent) of Cherokee's total roadway network. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on these roadways averaged 62,082 vehicles per day (vpd).
- Urban Principal Arterial and Minor Arterial Streets – provide the essential network and connect activity centers. Arterials carry large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. The only principal arterial in Cherokee County is SR 92. Examples of minor arterials include SR 5 and SR 20. The arterial system in Cherokee County comprises 123 miles (10 percent) of the total roadway miles, of which 15 miles are classified principal arterials and 108 miles are classified minor arterials. The AADT on arterial roadways in Cherokee County averages 29,735 vpd on principal arterials and 11,622 vpd on minor arterials.
- Collector Streets – connect activity centers and residential areas. Their purpose is to collect traffic from streets in residential and commercial areas, distribute it to the arterial system, and carry traffic at low to moderate speeds. The collector system in Cherokee County comprises nearly 163 miles (14 percent) of the total roadway network. The AADT on collector roadways in Cherokee County averages 5,911 vpd.
- Local Streets – have the greatest access but the least mobility. Local streets feed the collector system from low volume residential and commercial areas at low speeds. The local roadway network comprises 882 miles (74 percent) of the total roadway network. The AADT on local streets in Cherokee County averages 1,074 vpd.

Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



Roadway Functional Classification (2004)



Legend

Roadway Functional Classification (2004)

- Interstate Principal Arterial (RURAL & URBAN)
- Minor Arterial (RURAL)
- Major Collector (RURAL)
- Minor Collector - NFA (RURAL)
- Urban Principal Arterial (URBAN)
- Urban Principal Arterial (URBAN)
- Collector Street (URBAN)
- Local (RURAL & URBAN)

Other Layers

- Railroads
- City Limits
- Lakes
- Other County Boundary
- Cherokee County, GA Boundary

Source: Cherokee County, GDOT, & Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.
This map is intended for planning purposes only. Preliminary Draft.

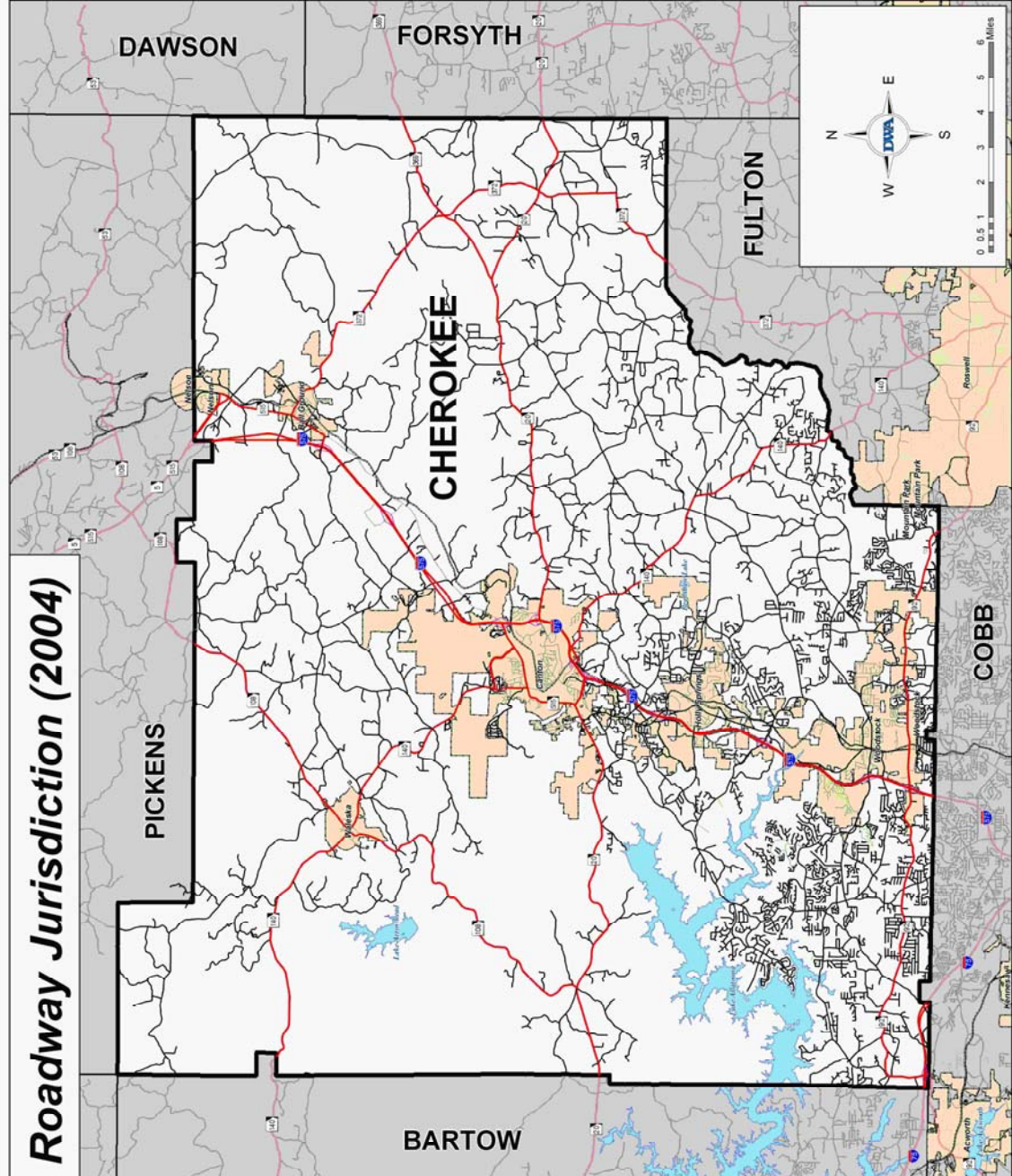
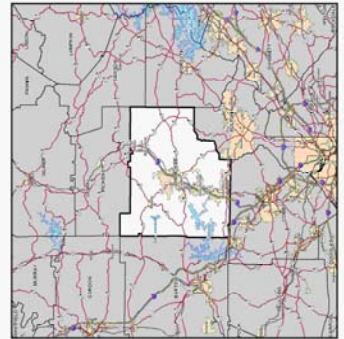
May 2005



Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



Roadway Jurisdiction (2004)



Legend

Roadway Jurisdiction (2004)

- State Route
- County Road
- City Street
- Unofficial Road
- Ramp
- Public Road

Other Layers

- Railroads
- City Limits
- Lakes
- Other County Boundary
- Cherokee County, GA Boundary

Source: Cherokee County, GDOT, & Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.
 This map is intended for planning purposes only. Preliminary Draft.

May 2005



Existing Conditions

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) maintains annual average daily traffic (AADT) count information for all counties statewide. Historic countywide traffic count data was examined to gauge historic traffic trends within Cherokee County. The evaluation included 119 traffic count locations with at least 12 years of annual data. For the 10-year period from 1993 to 2003, all but one location monitored by GDOT experienced an increase in traffic volume. The increase in traffic ranged from 300 vehicles per day (vpd) to over 69,000 vpd. The growth rate ranged from 2 percent to 480 percent. Half of the locations experienced a growth exceeding 2,900 vpd.

Table 90 and Table 91 list the locations with the greatest growth by percent and total volume. The greatest overall growth has occurred on the Interstate system, on I-75 in southwest Cherokee and on I-575 through central Cherokee. Sixes Road has experienced the greatest growth rate, while I-75 experienced the greatest total volume growth. On I-575, traffic volumes have increased on the southern end north of the Cobb County line by 34,240 vpd to 76,460 in 2003 and on the northern end (south of the Pickens County line) by 12,050 vpd to 21,970 in 2003. A table showing traffic volume change for all 119 traffic count stations is included in the appendix at the end of this Transportation Chapter.

Traffic Station No.	Location Description	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT*	Total Change	Percent Change
221	Sixes Road, east of Ridge Road (Holly Springs)	1,390	8,060	6,670	480%
219	Sixes Road, west of I-575 (south Holly Springs)	2,860	14,410	11,550	404%
154	I-575, north of SR 140 (Canton)	15,200	45,500	30,300	199%
247	I-575, south of Airport Road (north Canton)	9,960	26,770	16,810	169%
249	I-575, south of Howell Bridge Road (south Ball Ground)	9,660	25,010	15,350	159%
209	Victory Drive, south of SR 92 (southwest Cherokee)	1,500	3,710	2,210	147%
245	I-575, south of SR 5 Business (Canton)	14,800	36,360	21,560	146%
86	SR 108/Fincher Road north of Deer Track Drive (West central Cherokee)	680	1,650	970	143%
175	E. Cherokee Road, south of Coker's Chapel Road (northeast Cherokee)	920	2,180	1,260	137%
171	E. Cherokee Road, south of Beavers Road (east Cherokee)	1,590	3,620	2,030	128%

*Note: AADT reflects a rolling 3-year average, due to fluctuation in annual count data.
Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Traffic Station No.	Location Description	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT*	Total Change	Percent Change
148	I-75, east of SR 92 (southwest Cherokee)	59,110	128,670	69,560	118%
150	I-75, west of SR 92 (southwest Cherokee)	54,210	116,970	62,760	116%
235	I-575, north of Cobb County line (Woodstock)	42,220	76,460	34,240	81%
237	I-575, south of Towne Lake Parkway (Woodstock)	37,100	69,230	32,130	87%
239	I-575, south of Sixes Road (Woodstock)	26,640	58,310	31,670	119%
154	I-575, north of SR 140 (Canton)	15,200	45,500	30,300	199%
241	I-575, south of Holly Springs Parkway (Holly Springs)	22,600	44,590	21,990	97%
152	I-575 south of SR 140 (Canton)	17,400	39,290	21,890	126%

Traffic Station No.	Location Description	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT*	Total Change	Percent Change
243	I-575, south of SR 140 (Canton)	19,130	40,890	21,760	114%
245	I-575, south of SR 5 Business (Canton)	14,800	36,360	21,560	146%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Table 92 lists the locations that experienced the least change over the 10-year period. One location, Marietta Street north of Hickory, had experienced a decline in daily traffic. Countywide, traffic volumes on roadways in downtown Canton have remained relatively stable.

Traffic Station No.	Location Description	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT *	Total Change	Percent Change
288	Marietta Street, north of Hickory (Canton)	12,300	11,000	-1,300	-11%
7	SR 754/Canton Highway, north of SR 92 (Woodstock)	18,060	18,490	430	2%
287	Marietta Street, north of Kennett Street (Canton)	7,230	7,520	290	4%
46	SR 20, west of Canton Road (Canton)	10,920	11,380	460	4%
104	SR 140, north of SR 5 Business (north Canton)	10,750	11,440	690	6%
277	Hickory Street, east of Marietta Street (Canton)	6,820	7,310	490	7%
283	SR 140, south of SR 5 Business (Canton)	13,930	15,290	1,360	10%
4	SR 754/Canton Highway, South of SR 92 (Woodstock)	17,820	20,250	2,430	14%
24	SR 20, north of Marietta Street (Canton)	19,960	22,730	2,770	14%
162	Arnold Mill Road, west of Mountain Road (southeast Cherokee)	5,880	6,740	860	15%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Future Conditions

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) travel demand model, adopted in December 2004 for the Mobility 2030 long-range regional transportation plan, was applied to evaluate existing and future capacity needs for the county. Capacity needs are identified using measures such as daily volume to capacity (v/c) or level of service (LOS) that can be expected on that roadway. A v/c ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that a road can handle additional volume and remain within capacity, an acceptable LOS in an urban environment. A v/c ratio of 1.0 indicates that a road has reached its capacity, and additional traffic volume will result in a less-than-acceptable LOS. A v/c ratio of more than one indicates that a road's traffic volume exceeds its capacity to handle that traffic, resulting in an unacceptable LOS. The computation and analysis of roadway v/c allows system-wide analysis of the transportation network and provides an approximation of the LOS of roadways or corridors, based on information such as lane configuration, observed roadway speed, and traffic volumes.

V/C ratios are linked to LOS to provide an easier way to communicate roadway operations. LOS is a user-based assessment of conditions. Roadways are given a letter designation, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F representing the worst. The 2001 Highway Capacity Manual provides the following LOS guidelines:

- LOS A, B and C indicate conditions where traffic can move relatively freely.

- LOS D describes vehicle speed beginning to decline slightly due to increasing flows. Speed and freedom of movement are severely restricted.
- LOS E describes conditions where traffic volumes are at or close to capacity, resulting in serious delays.
- LOS F describes breakdown in vehicular flow. This condition exists when the flow rate exceeds roadway capacity. LOS F describes traffic downstream from the bottleneck of breakdown.

For the Cherokee County comprehensive plan, the following LOS criteria were used to determine congestion levels on roadway segments:

- LOS A through C is equivalent to a v/c less than 0.7.
- LOS D is equivalent to a v/c of 0.7 to 1.00.
- LOS E is equivalent to a v/c of 1.0 to 1.25.
- LOS F is equivalent to a v/c of 1.25 and greater.

The following maps illustrate locations experiencing afternoon peak period congestion levels for 2000, 2010, 2020 and 2030. The congestion shown is that which remains after implementation of improvements programmed in the ARC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which are listed in Table 93 and Table 94, and shown graphically on the ARC 2030 RTP Projects map.

Planned Transportation Projects

ARC Project Number	Description	Type	Network Year	Cost
CH-003	SR 92 from west of Wade Green Road to Cherokee Trail	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 4.7 miles	2007	\$11,644,000
CH-004	SR 92 from I-75 to Wade Green Road	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 4.5 miles	2010	\$30,943,000
CH-010A1	Bells Ferry Road Traffic Signal Upgrades from Bells Ferry Place to Victoria Road	ITS improvement, 5.0 miles	2010	\$216,040
CH-010A2	Bells Ferry Road: Segment 1 from Southfork Way to Little River north of N. Victoria Road	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 2.76 miles	2015	\$22,454,000
CH-010B	Bells Ferry Road: Segment 2	Bridge widening from 2 to 4 lanes, less than 1 mile	2010	\$6,315,000
CH-010C	Bells Ferry Road: Segment 3 from Little River to north of Sixes Road	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 2.42 miles	2015	\$6,576,000
CH-020A1	SR 20 Truck climbing lanes and intersection improvements from I-575 to CR 238	Operational upgrades, 4.9 miles	2010	\$17,524,000
CH-020B	SR 20: Segment 2 from I-575 to SR 369	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 8.6 miles	2025	\$72,400,000
CH-140D1	SR 140 at Mauldin Lane and Univeter Road	Operational upgrades, <1 mile	2010	\$300,000
CH-140E1	SR 140 at Batesville Road and Hickory Street	Operational upgrades, <1 mile	2010	\$2,065,000
CH-140E2	SR 140 at Sugar Pike Road	Operational upgrades, <1 mile	2010	\$310,000
CH-140F	SR 140: Segment 6 at Mountain Road, Earney Road, and Arnold Mill Road	Operational upgrades, 1.72 miles	2010	\$2,929,000
CH-165	SR 372 at SR 5 Business and SR 20	Operational upgrades, 9.88miles	2020	\$3,154,000
CH-181	Old SR 5 from Holly Springs city limits to Woodstock city limits	Operational upgrades, reconstruct intersections, 3.67 miles	2020	\$3,500,000
CH-190	Sixes Road from I-575 to Old SR 5	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 0.35 miles	2007	\$885,000
CH-199	Howell Bridge Road at Sharp Mountain Creek	Bridge upgrade	2010	\$1,361,000

Table 93: Planned Projects—ARC TIP for FY 2005-2010

ARC Project Number	Description	Type	Network Year	Cost
CH-203A	SR 20 at Etowah River	Bridge upgrade	2010	\$4,434,000
CH-203B	SR 20 at Etowah River	Bridge upgrade	2010	\$2,307,000
CH-204	SR 372 at Etowah River	Bridge upgrade	2015	\$3,702,000
CH-205	Old SR 5 at Hickory Street/Holly Street	Operational upgrades	2010	\$453,750
CH-206	Marietta Road at Hickory Flat Road	Operational upgrades	2010	\$400,000
CH-207	SR 5 Business at SR 140 Connector, Canton Mill Lane and Old Ball Ground Highway	Signal coordination/ITS	2010	\$1,080,000
CH-208	Towne Lake Parkway at 13 locations within ½ mile of the I-575 interchange	Signal interconnection and coordination/ITS	2010	\$252,000
CH-209	SR 20 at SR 108, White Road, and Upper Sweetwater Trail	Operational upgrades	2015	313,000
CH-216	East Main Street at Dupree Street	Pedestrian lighting	2010	500,000
CH-AR-108	I-75 at SR 92	Interchange upgrade	2010	5,850,500
CH-AR-229	I-575 from SR 92 to Towne Lake Parkway	Operational upgrades, auxiliary lanes, 1.21 miles	2010	\$2,026,337
CH-AR-230	I-575 from SR 20 to SR 5 Business	Operational upgrades, auxiliary lanes, 1.1 miles	2010	\$597,981
CH-AR-231	I-575 at SR 20	Interchange capacity	2010	\$2,850,000
CH-AR-260	I-575 at Towne Lake Parkway	Interchange upgrade	2010	\$870,000
CH-AR-261	Canton Intermodal Facility	Transit facility	2010	\$800,000
CH-AR-BP010	Main Street from Woodstock Library to Cherokee County Government South Annex	Pedestrian facility, 0.25 miles	2010	\$220,000
CH-AR-BP011	Marietta Road from Marietta Highway to Hickory Flat Road	Pedestrian facility, sidewalks, 0.8 miles	2010	\$1,500,000
CH-AR-BP019	Towne Lake Parkway from Main Street to I-575	Pedestrian facility, 0.25 miles	2010	\$510,000
CH-AR-BP042	Putnam Ford Drive from Bascomb Carmel Road to Eagle Drive	Pedestrian facility, sidewalks, 1 mile	2010	\$247,000
CH-AR-BP043	Woodstock Road from SR 92 to Oak Grove Elementary School	Pedestrian facility, sidewalks, 0.25 miles	2010	\$90,000

Source: ARC Mobility 2030, TIP FY 2005-2010

Table 94: Planned Projects—ARC 2030 RTP

ARC Project Number	Description	Type	Network Year	Cost
CH-010D	Bells Ferry Road: Segment 4 from North of Sixes Road to SR 20/Knox Bridge Highway	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 3.9 miles	2025	\$13,650,000
CH-020A2	SR 20: Segment 1 from I-75 in Bartow County to I-575 in Cherokee County	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 15.4 miles	2025	\$64,552,000
CH-140C	SR 140/Reinhardt College Parkway: Segment 3 from Lower Burris Road to SR 5 Business	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 3.1 miles	2020	\$21,562,000
CH-140D2	SR 140/Hickory Flat Road: Segment 4 from I-575 to East Cherokee Drive	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 5.6 miles	2025	\$18,201,000
CH-140E3	SR 140/Hickory Flat Road: Segment 5 from East Cherokee drive to Mountain Road	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 2.9 miles	2025	\$31,802,000
CH-167	Arnold Mill Road Extension/Connector from Main Street to Arnold Mill Road	New roadway 2 lanes, 2.7 miles	2020	\$12,878,000
CH-168	Arnold Mill Road Extension/Connector from Main Street to Arnold Mill Road	Roadway widening from 2 to 4 lanes, 2.7 miles	2030	\$12,918,000

Table 94: Planned Projects—ARC 2030 RTP

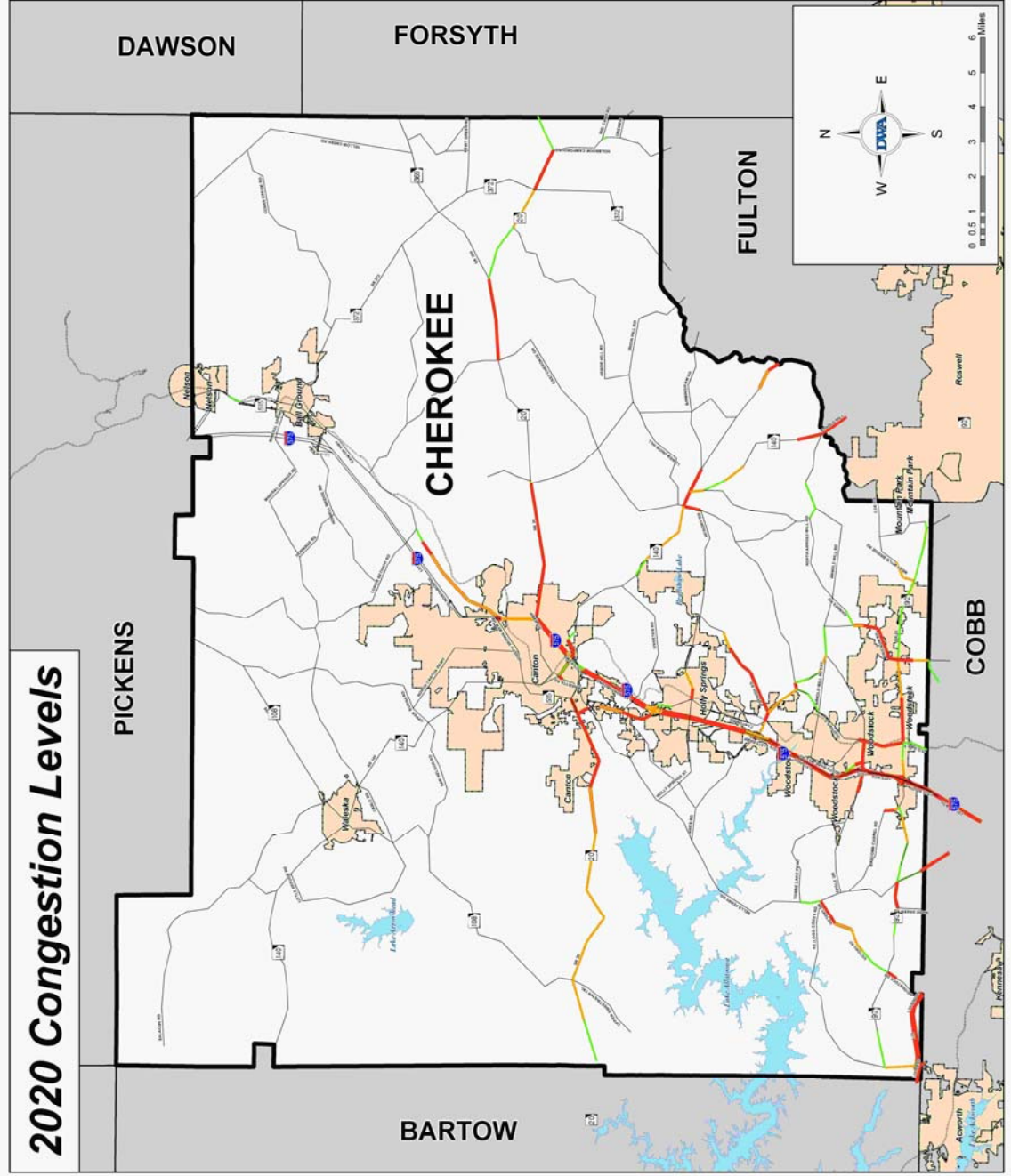
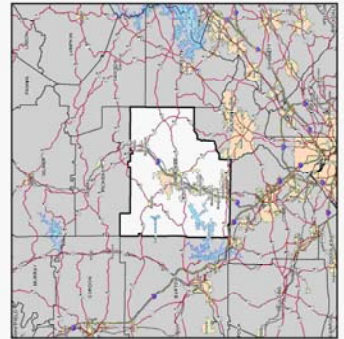
ARC Project Number	Description	Type	Network Year	Cost
CH-180	SR 372 Spur (Ball Ground Bypass) from SR 5 Business to SR 372	New roadway 4 lanes, 1.5 miles	2030	\$10,205,000
CH-189	Sixes Road at I-575	Bridge widening from 2 to 4 lanes	2015	\$5,850,000
CH-202	Hickory Flat Road extension from Marietta Road to Waleska Street	New roadway 2 lanes, 2 miles	2020	\$3,871,000
CH-211	SR 5 Southbound flyover ramp over end of I-575 near Cherokee/Pickens county line	Interchange capacity	2030	\$7,025,000
CH-214	North Canton Parkway from Lower Burriss Road to SR 140/Reinhardt College Parkway	New roadway 4 lanes, 2.7 miles	2020	\$14,000,000
CH-215	Industrial drive extension from Holly Springs Extension to Hickory Road	New roadway 4 lanes, 0.6 miles	2025	\$5,040,000
CH-AR-225	I-575 - Rope Mill Connector (new interchange)	New interchange	2030	\$12,845,000

Source: ARC Mobility 2030

Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



2020 Congestion Levels



Legend

2020 Congestion Levels

- High-Level Congestion (LOS F)
- Medium-Level Congestion (LOS D)
- Low-Level Congestion (LOS D)
- No Congestion (LOS A-C)

Other Layers

- Cherokee County, GA Boundary
- Other County Boundary
- City Limits
- Lakes
- Railroads

Source: ARC & Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.
This map is intended for planning purposes only. Preliminary Draft.

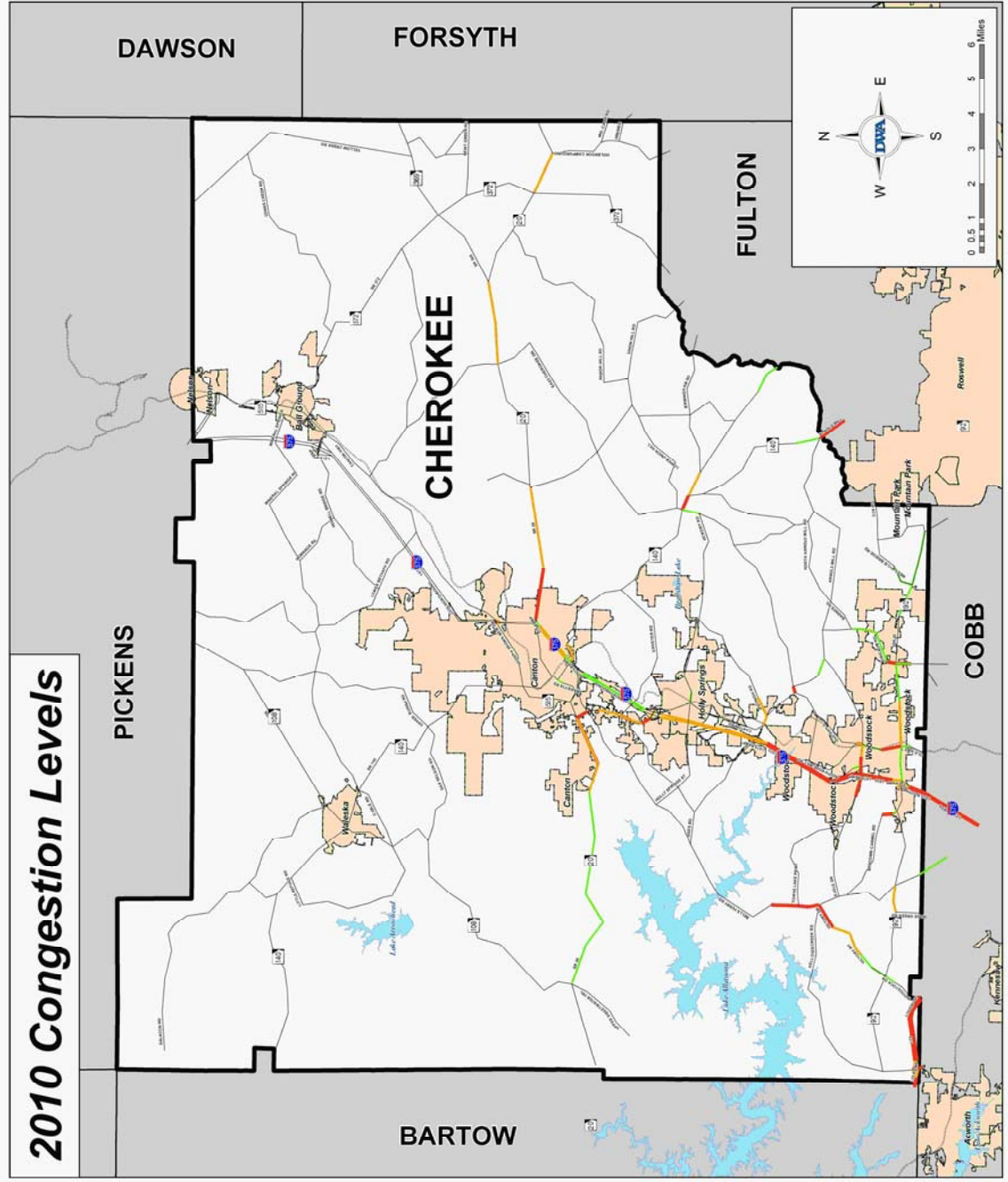
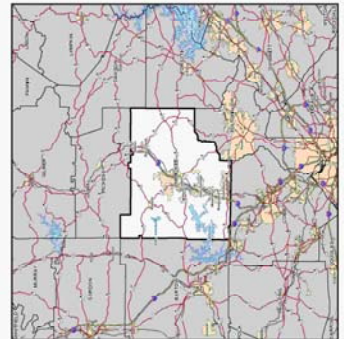
May 2005



Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



2010 Congestion Levels



Legend

2010 Congestion Levels

- High-Level Congestion (LOS F)
- Medium-Level Congestion (LOS E)
- Low-Level Congestion (LOS D)
- No Congestion (LOS A-C)

Other Layers

- Cherokee County, GA Boundary
- Other County Boundary
- City Limits
- Lakes
- Railroads

Source: APC & Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.
This map is intended for planning purposes only. Preliminary Draft.

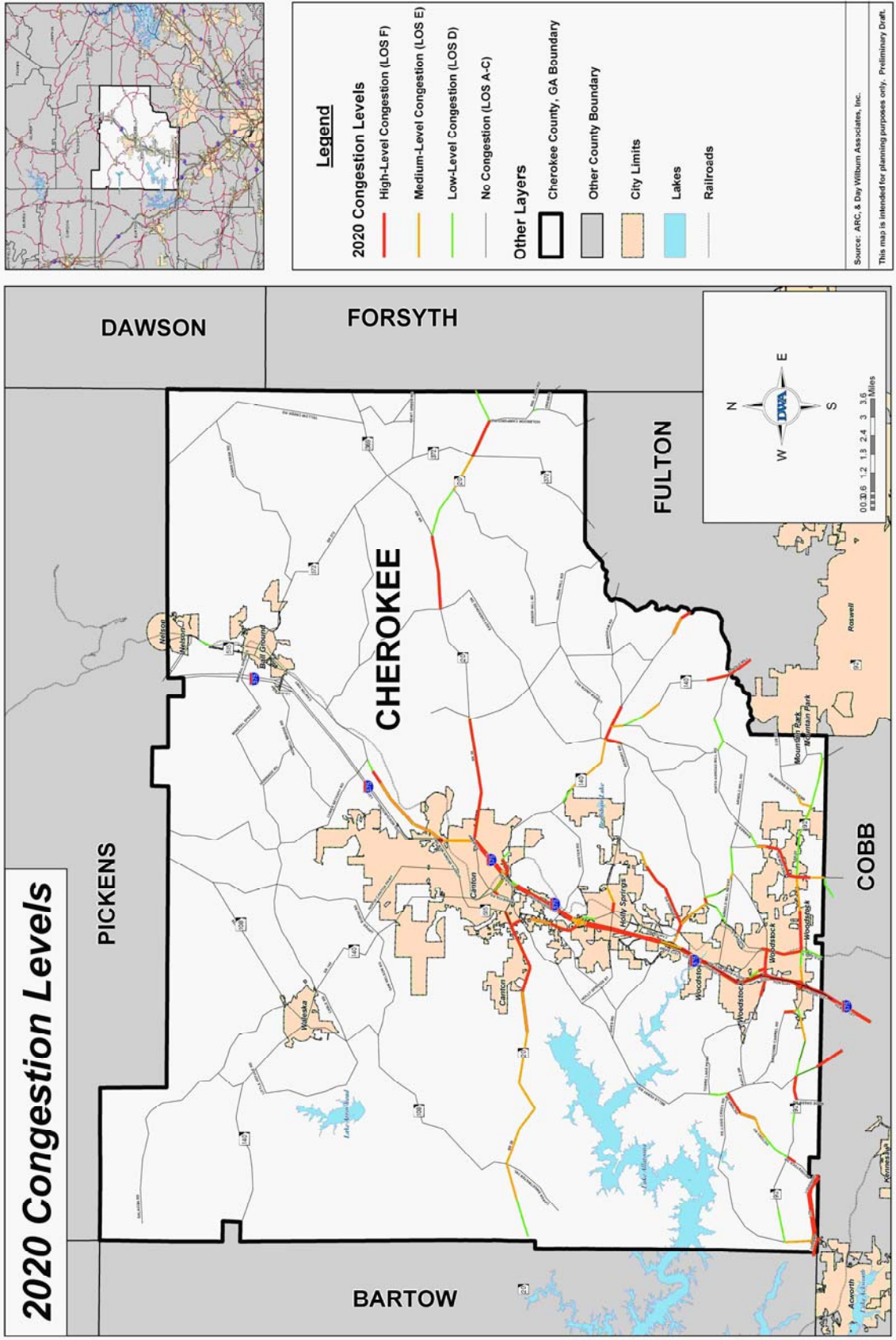


May 2005

Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



2020 Congestion Levels



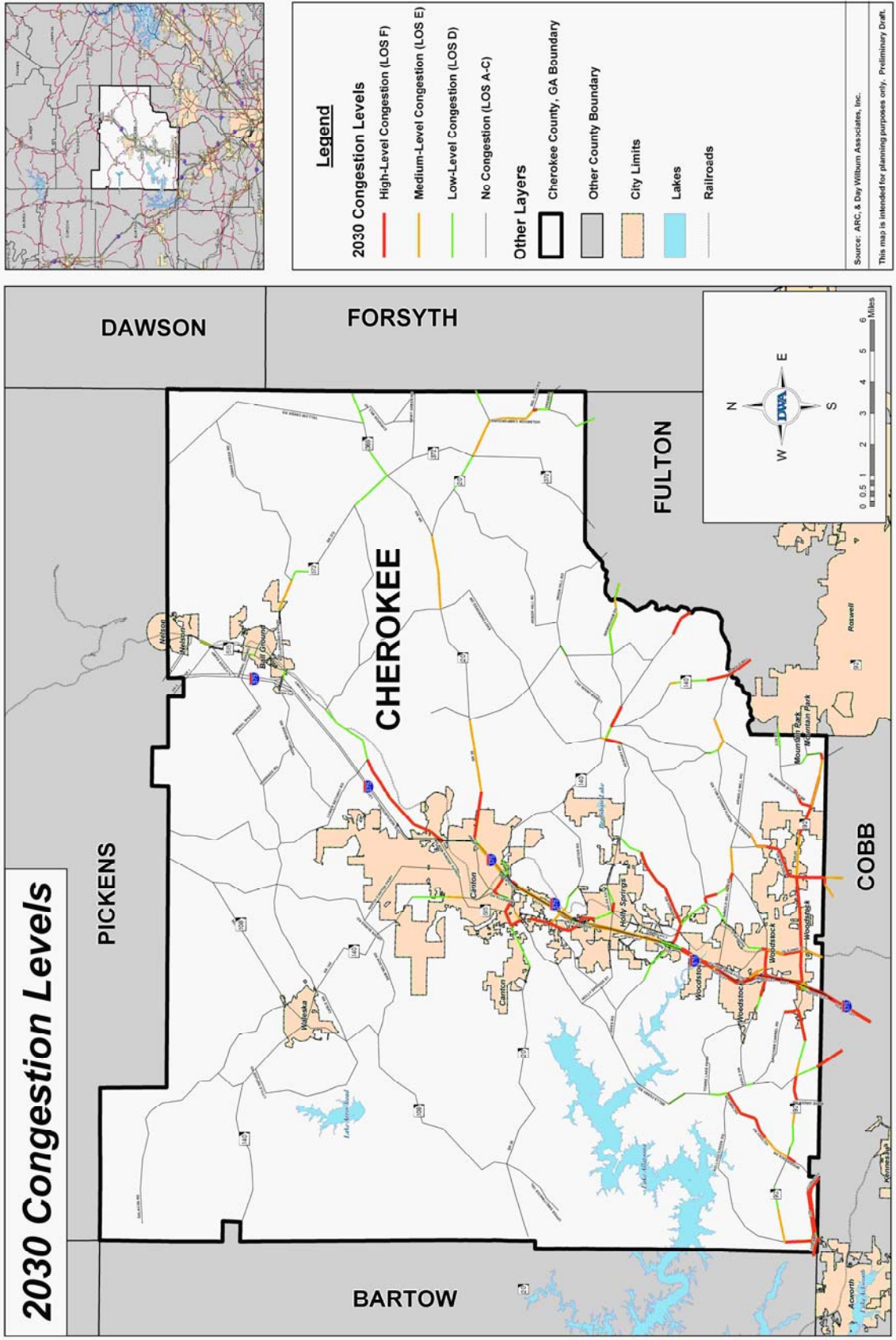
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Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



2030 Congestion Levels



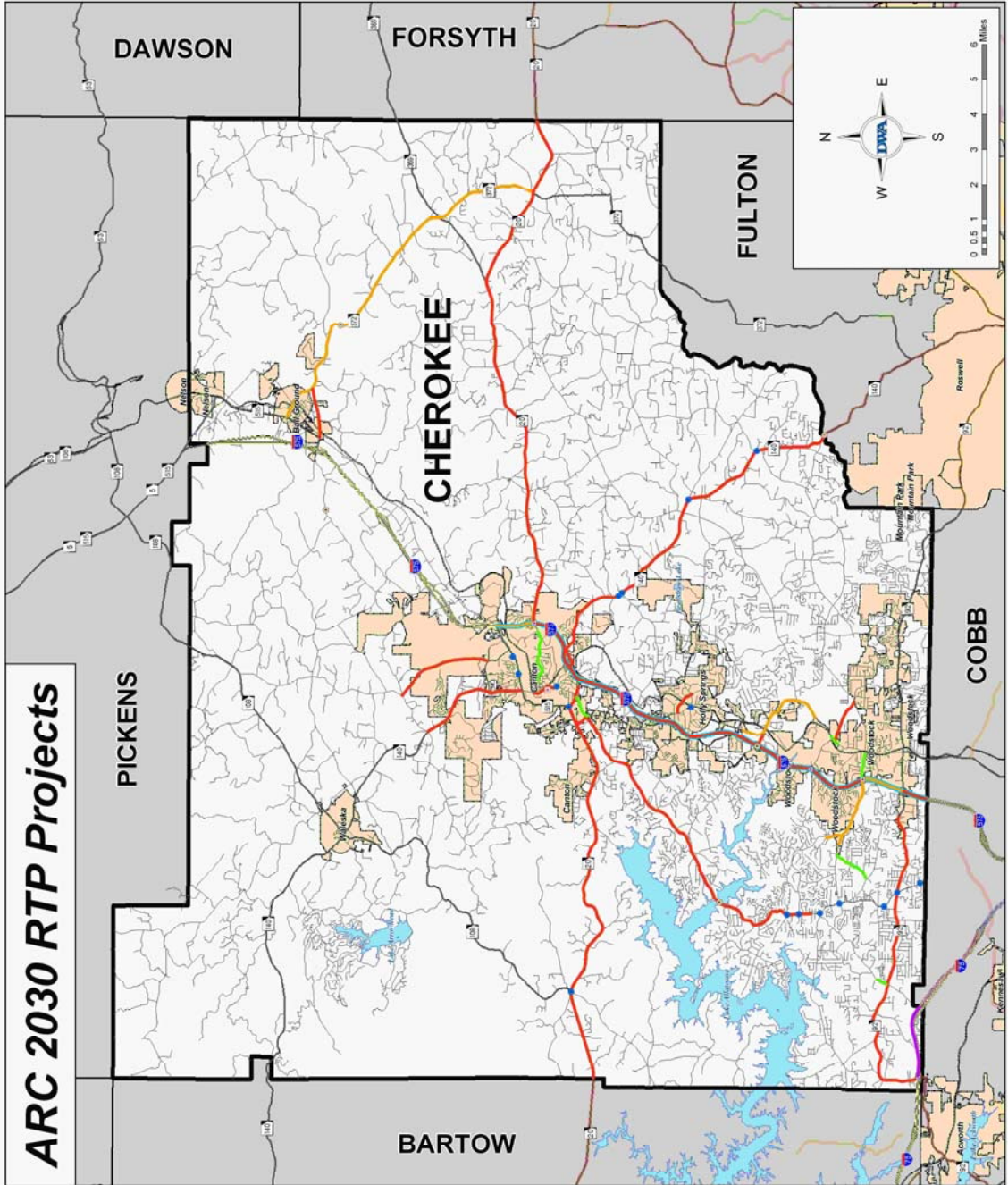
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Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



ARC 2030 RTP Projects



Legend

ARC 2030 RTP Projects

- Bridge Capacity / Upgrade
- Interchange Capacity / Upgrade
- Roadway Operations
- Transit Facility
- Roadway Capacity
- Roadway Operations
- HOV Lanes
- Other Roadway Project
- Pedestrian Facility

Road Network

- Interstate Highway
- State Route
- Other Roads

Other Layers

- Cherokee County, GA Boundary
- Other County Boundary
- City Limits
- Lakes
- Railroads

Source: GDOA, GDOT, ARC, & Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.
This map is intended for planning purposes only. Preliminary Draft.



May 2005

Congestion Management System

Congestion levels are identified by LOS. In 2000, congestion occurred primarily in the southern edge of the county. By 2030, it is anticipated that congestion will be a daily occurrence through to the core of the county. In 2000, the roadways experiencing the greatest congestion included I-75, the southern portion of I-575 from Woodstock to the Cobb County line, and portions of SR 92, west of I-575. By 2010, congestion is anticipated to increase on I-575, with congested conditions experienced from SR 20 in Canton to the Cobb County line. SR 20 heading east and west out of Canton, and Victory Road from the Cobb County line to north of Towne Lake Parkway, are forecasted to experience congestion. By 2020, major roads connecting Cherokee to Cobb and Fulton Counties will be congested near the county lines. By 2030, much of the major roadway network on the southern edge of the county is anticipated to experience congestion. The northwest corner of the county, including Waleska, is not expected to have congested roadways in the ARC model. The northeast corner, including Ball Ground, is also unlikely to face severe congestion; however, the Canton Highway and SR 372 near Ball Ground are expected to experienced low to moderate congestion levels.

The ARC maintains a congestion management system (CMS), as required by federal regulations to document, monitor, evaluate, and identify solutions for congested facilities throughout the region. Cherokee roadways included in the ARC CMS are shown in Table 95. According to the CMS, each facility listed for the county experiences heavy peak period volumes.

Roadway	Description
Arnold Mill Road	From Main Street (Woodstock) to Fulton County line
Bells Ferry Road	From Cobb County Line to Marietta Road
Eagle Dr.	From Bells Ferry Road to Towne Lake Parkway
Hightower Road	From Ball Ground Road to Lower Creighton Road
I - 575	From Cumming Highway to Cobb County line
Kellog Creek Road/Cherokee Road	From I-75 North to Bells Ferry Road
Main Street (Woodstock)	From Cobb County line to South Rope Mill Road
Marietta Highway	From I-575 to Bells Ferry Road
Sixes Road	From Bells Ferry Road to North Rope Mill Road
SR 140	From SR 108 to I-575
SR 140/Hickory Flat Highway	From I-575 to Univeter Road and from Univeter Road to Arnold Mill Road
SR 20/Cumming Highway	From I-575 to SR 369/Hightower Road
SR 372/Ball Ground Highway	From SR 5/Howell Bridge Road to SR 20/Cumming Highway and from Dodd Lane to Hightower Road/SR 369
SR 92	From Kellog Creek Road to Cobb County Line
SR 92/East Alabama Road	From I-75 to Main Street (Woodstock)
Towne Lake Pkwy.	From Eagle Dr. to Main Street (Woodstock)
Wade Green Road	From SR 92/Alabama Road to Cobb County Line

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission Congestion Management System

Traffic Operations

In 2005, Cherokee County maintained 35-37 traffic signals and two coordinated signal systems.

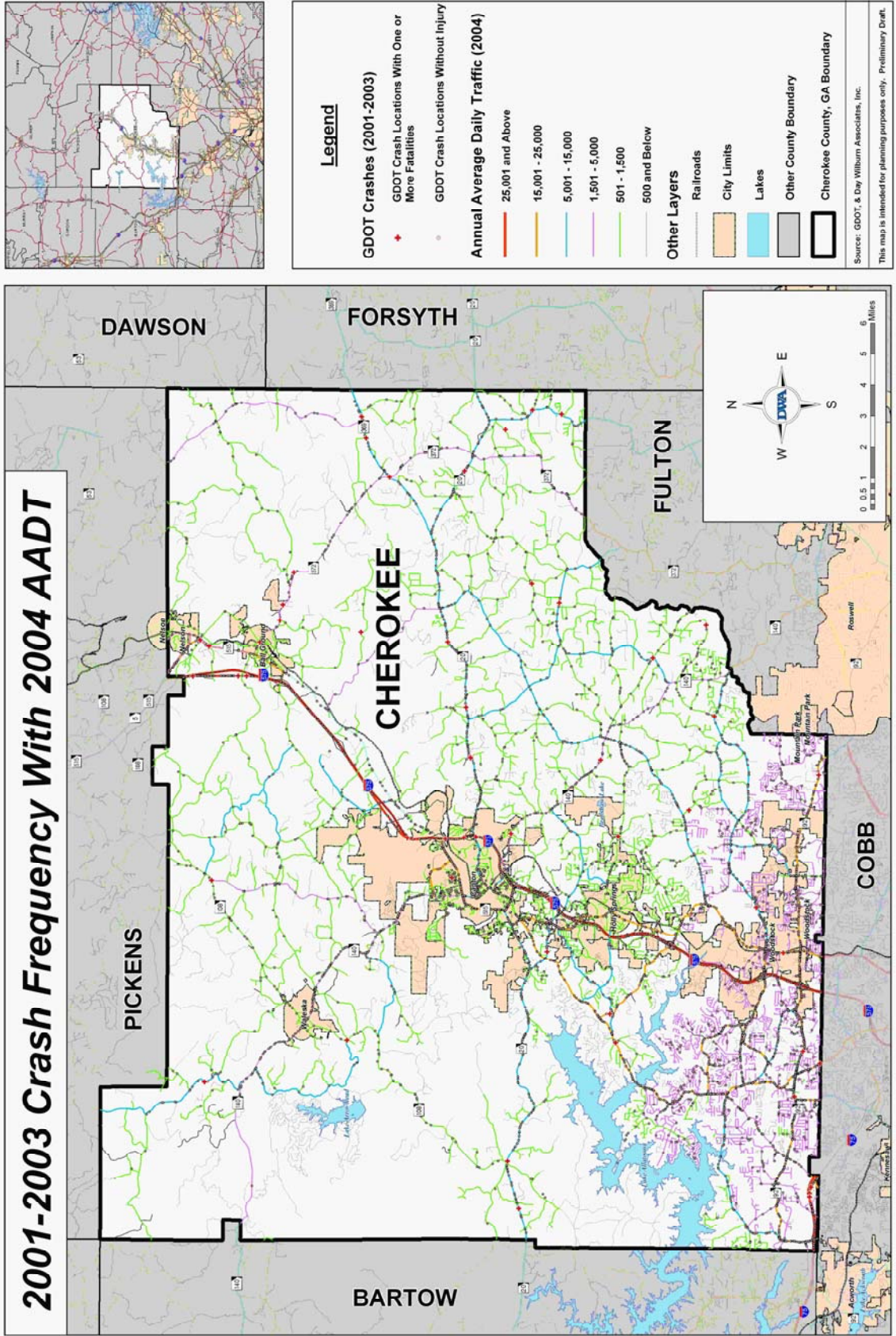
Roadway Safety

Annual roadway crash data from GDOT from 2001 through 2003 was reviewed. The following map shows the frequency of crashes and crashes involving fatalities during this period.

Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Element



2001-2003 Crash Frequency With 2004 AADT



May 2005

■ **Public Transportation**

Mountain Area Transportation System

Cherokee County currently contracts with the North Georgia Community Action Agency to operate a limited form of public transportation, the Mountain Area Transportation System (MATS). Five vans operate on a fixed-route/demand-response schedule Monday through Friday from 8:30 until 5:00 p.m., excluding holidays. The vehicles provide curb-to-curb and shared-ride service; individual fare service is available after regular operating hours and on weekends. Transportation service is provided to the general public, including social service agencies, the Senior Center, medical facilities, day care centers, shopping areas, banks, work sites, social activities, and educational facilities. Charter, contract service and farebox services are available to destinations outside the county within insurance, route, and schedule constraints.

City of Canton Transit

A fixed route trolley bus service operates within the City of Canton. The City operates two routes with four buses with one-hour frequencies. The service operates Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The City of Canton does not charge a fare for the trolley. For the latest reporting year (2003) to the National Transit Database (NTD), the annual operating cost was \$186,400 to serve approximately 18,600 passenger trips at a cost per trip of \$10.04.

Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)

A county-sponsored vanpool program was initiated in 2004. A private operator (VPSI) is administering the program. In June 2005, nine vanpools were in operation, all south of SR 20. Routes include origins at Allatoona Lake in the southwest and East Cherokee Dr. in the eastern portion of the county.

GDOT Park and Ride Lots

Utilized only sparingly, GDOT offers a park and ride lot on SR5 in Canton with 173 spaces.

Public Transportation Study

The county initiated a public transportation study in 2005.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

One of the primary elements of a successful community transportation network is a system of interconnecting bicycle/pedestrian pathways. It allows free movement among spatial area (i.e. greenway corridors, residential neighborhoods, and commercial sectors), thus contributing to the overall well being of the community. It is recommended that Cherokee County incorporate a network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways into its roadway improvement program that would be coupled with commuter rail corridors. The recommendation specifies pedestrian and bicycle pathways on both sides of an arterial classified roadway, whereas pathways would be located on only one side of major and minor collector streets.

County subdivision regulations require four-foot sidewalks on at least one-side of each new subdivision street.

The suitability of a roadway for bicycling depends on several factors including traffic volumes, travel speeds and functional classifications. Most of Cherokee County's arterial roadways are too highly traveled to offer a comfortable bicycling environment but much of the system provides the cyclist sufficient connectivity to not only enjoy effective transport but also access Cherokee County's natural beauty and many attractions.

■ Airports

The Airport Authority is completing phase two of a three-part redevelopment of the Cherokee County Airport. Part of the multi-modal planning includes the evaluation of a linkage to the short line rail system running parallel to I-575 from the City of Ball Ground through the airport, and the cities of Canton, Holly Springs, Woodstock, Marietta, the Galleria and into Atlanta. In conjunction with the Development Authority of Cherokee County, the Authority is also reinventing itself as a vertiport hub with southeastern city connections. This southeastern vertiport network is viewed as an economic system linking high technology areas of the southern U.S. to North Atlanta via the tilt rotor (Osprey) planes now under construction.

The Cherokee County Airport (47A) was originally constructed in 1959. It is located on a ridge seven miles northeast of Canton near I-575. The ridge has been graded and improved to provide a single paved runway 3,414' x 75', designated 4/22 with a stub taxiway. The runway is equipped with lights, approach indicators, nondirectional beacons, rotating beacons and automated weather observation systems. The Fixed Base Operations services include repair facilities and refueling stations. The landside facilities consist of a 900-square foot terminal, automobile parking, three conventional storage hangars, and a 5,000-square yard-parking apron.

The activity forecast for the Cherokee County Airport indicates that there will be dramatic increases in airport traffic. As of 1992 there were 47-based aircraft with 15,500 annual flight operations. By 2012, it is projected that there will be an increase of based aircraft to 79 with 33,000 annual flight operations. Of the 33,000 total operations, 21,290 are expected to be local in nature, with the remaining 11,710 representing itinerant operations.

In an effort to provide a level of service that is capable of handling this increase in air travel, the Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan was developed to study the overall needs of individual airports around the state. The study suggested a series of improvements for the Cherokee Airport that will help the airport handle the increase in flight operations. The study recommended the addition of 1086 feet to the existing runway, which will result in a total runway dimension of 4500' x 75', and the construction of a full-lighted parallel taxiway to replace the current stub taxiway. Other improvements include a 13,920-square yard apron, and specific navigational and weather instrumentation. Landside improvements for the airport include a new terminal, an increase of 12 parking spaces, 6 more conventional storage hangars, and the addition of 38 T-hangars. Such improvements would necessitate the acquisition of approximately 45 acres. The estimated cost associated with the development of the improvements would total \$8,242,740. The improvements would be done in stages, thus spreading the cost over a longer time.

Because the topography of the airport confines expansion to the ridgeline, the airport planners are investigating tilt-rotor, and helicopter technology for future use at the facility. This would involve the use of Global Positioning Satellite Systems and the application of NASA technology to the existing airport. This would also include the evaluation of vertiport concepts and developing linkages to other Southeast USA Airports.

The location of the Cherokee County Airport is of strategic importance to metropolitan Atlanta and north Georgia. As the Atlanta area continues to grow northward, the "reliever" airports are beginning to reach capacity. The term "reliever" refers to an airport that accommodates private and/or smaller commercial airplanes that have been diverted from larger airports. Reliever airports are usually located within a certain radius of a major airport facility. It is believed that the Cherokee Airport is already functioning as a reliever airport, but has not received an official designation. The Cherokee Airport is also important to north Georgia because of the economic benefits it provides. The aircraft services and the visiting passengers add \$926,200 to the economy annually. The airport provides 17 local jobs, which pay a total of \$306,000 in wages.

Financing airport runway improvements is underway.

According to AirNav in 2005, the Cherokee County Airport had 73-based aircraft. Daily operation averaged 82 take offs and landings per day. Airport operations are reported as 66 percent local operations, 33 percent transient general aviation and less than 1 percent military operations.

■ **Rail Freight**

Cherokee County has one Class III rail provider, the Georgia Northeastern Railroad (GNRR), which traverses the county from south to north, passing through Woodstock, Holly Springs, Canton, and Ball Ground.

The GNRR operates 59 rail crossings, of which 37 are public at-grade crossings. Woodstock has the greatest number of public, at-grade rail crossings (11), followed by Ball Ground (10), and Canton (8). Only one rail crossing crash has been reported to the Federal Railroad Administration within the previous five-year period in Woodstock at Bell Parkway.

■ **Land Use/Transportation Connection**

The fact that the county is conducting an update of its Comprehensive Plan with an emphasis on the transportation element demonstrates that it understands the nexus between land use and transportation and continues to exploit the interaction between land use and transportation planning. This recognition is further demonstrated by the county's taking recent advantage of ARC funding of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan in 2006 that will interface with the ongoing Comprehensive Plan development process.

■ Appendix—Traffic Volumes

Table 96: Change in Countywide AADT from 1993 to 2003

Traffic Station No.	Route Type and Number	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT *	Total Change	Percent Change
1	CR 1063	3,750	4,860	1,110	30
4	CS 67413	17,820	20,250	2,430	14
7	CR1061	18,060	18,490	430	2
10	CR 1061	9,070	13,770	4,700	52
12	CR 1061	6,550	10,860	4,310	66
14	CR 1061	4,350	6,550	2,200	51
16	CR 1061	7,550	11,110	3,560	47
18	CR 1061	9,840	14,690	4,850	49
20	CR 1061	13,170	15,420	2,250	17
22	CR 1061	13,530	15,830	2,300	17
24	SR 20	19,960	22,730	2,770	14
26	SR 5 BU	16,280	22,300	6,020	37
28	SR 5 BU	10,190	18,920	8,730	86
30	CR 1062	5,850	8,340	2,490	43
31	SR 5 BU	2,620	5,640	3,020	115
32	CR 1062	3,010	4,810	1,800	60
33	CR 1062	2,800	3,410	610	22
34	SR 5 BU	4,270	6,870	2,600	61
36	SR 5 BU	5,210	9,470	4,260	82
38	SR 5 BU	6,640	9,050	2,410	36
40	SR 5 BU	1,770	3,580	1,810	102
42	SR 20	5,540	9,590	4,050	73
44	SR 20	5,600	11,290	5,690	102
46	SR 20	10,920	11,380	460	4
49	SR 5 BU	11,650	16,960	5,310	46
54	SR 20	12,010	19,980	7,970	66
56	SR 20	9,450	18,090	8,640	91
58	SR 20	8,070	14,330	6,260	78
60	SR 20	7,420	13,090	5,670	76
62	SR 20	5,010	9,010	4,000	80
64	SR 20	6,770	11,140	4,370	65
66	SR 20	7,190	13,130	5,940	83
68	SR 20	7,100	12,200	5,100	72
70	SR 92	14,420	21,620	7,200	50
72	SR 92	12,510	15,430	2,920	23
74	SR 92	16,120	22,230	6,110	38
76	SR 92	20,050	28,910	8,860	44
78	SR 92	19,650	26,020	6,370	32
80	SR 92	30,480	50,150	19,670	65
82	SR 92	18,040	36,450	18,410	102
84	SR 92	16,220	27,410	11,190	69
86	SR 108	680	1,650	970	143
88	SR 108	1,280	1,710	430	34

Table 96: Change in Countywide AADT from 1993 to 2003

Traffic Station No.	Route Type and Number	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT *	Total Change	Percent Change
90	SR 108	2,160	2,500	340	16
92	SR 108	1,530	3,080	1,550	101
94	SR 140	1,190	2,120	930	78
96	SR 140	3,430	5,820	2,390	70
98	SR 140	5,680	8,940	3,260	57
100	SR 140	8,590	12,160	3,570	42
102	SR 140	9,570	14,050	4,480	47
104	SR 140	10,750	11,440	690	6
106	SR 140	6,780	8,210	1,430	21
108	SR 140	7,180	10,890	3,710	52
110	SR 140	6,500	10,740	4,240	65
112	SR 140	7,250	11,020	3,770	52
114	SR 140	9,950	13,430	3,480	35
117	CR 770	13,370	21,720	8,350	62
119	CR 770	9,980	14,700	4,720	47
121	CR 770	3,370	7,330	3,960	118
123	CR 770	2,820	6,330	3,510	124
125	CR 770	2,180	3,720	1,540	71
128	SR 369	3,100	5,030	1,930	62
130	SR 369	4,090	8,860	4,770	117
132	SR 369	3,230	6,730	3,500	108
134	SR 372	1,630	3,260	1,630	100
136	SR 372	1,670	3,300	1,630	98
138	SR 372	3,470	5,840	2,370	68
140	SR 372	2,910	5,530	2,620	90
142	SR 372	3,160	6,540	3,380	107
144	SR 372	3,620	6,530	2,910	80
146	SR 372	4,160	6,360	2,200	53
148	SR 401	59,110	128,670	69,560	118
150	SR 401	54,210	116,970	62,760	116
152	SR 417	17,400	39,290	21,890	126
154	SR 417	15,200	45,500	30,300	199
156	CR 777	8,840	13,650	4,810	54
158	CR 777	6,610	8,810	2,200	33
160	CR 777	1,880	2,170	290	15
162	CR 777	5,880	6,740	860	15
165	CR 765	3,850	6,630	2,780	72
167	CR 765	5,090	6,650	1,560	31
169	CR 765	2,290	4,580	2,290	100
171	CR 765	1,590	3,620	2,030	128
173	CR 782	1,320	2,300	980	74
175	CR 782	920	2,180	1,260	137
177	CR 775	500	1,120	620	124
179	CR 775	610	1,010	400	66
190	CR 764	1,570	2,900	1,330	85
192	CR 764	1,630	3,160	1,530	94
194	CR 781	390	690	300	77

Table 96: Change in Countywide AADT from 1993 to 2003

Traffic Station No.	Route Type and Number	1993 AADT*	2003 AADT *	Total Change	Percent Change
196	CR 763	2,810	4,070	1,260	45
198	CR 763	3,490	5,810	2,320	66
205	CR 762	1,600	1,950	350	22
207	CR 769	11,500	17,510	6,010	52
209	CR 768	1,500	3,710	2,210	147
211	CR 768	2,030	4,230	2,200	108
213	CR 772	4,600	5,970	1,370	30
215	CR 772	3,250	5,950	2,700	83
219	CR 779	2,860	14,410	11,550	404
221	CR 779	1,390	8,060	6,670	480
229	CR 51	1,670	2,570	900	54
231	CR 51	1,200	2,210	1,010	84
233	CR 51	1,000	1,560	560	56
235	SR 417	42,220	76,460	34,240	81
237	SR 417	37,100	69,230	32,130	87
239	SR 417	26,640	58,310	31,670	119
241	SR 417	22,600	44,590	21,990	97
243	SR 417	19,130	40,890	21,760	114
245	SR 417	14,800	36,360	21,560	146
247	SR 417	9,960	26,770	16,810	169
249	SR 417	9,660	25,010	15,350	159
251	SR 417	9,920	21,970	12,050	121
273	CR 770	13,750	26,590	12,840	93
275	CS 68203	3,340	4,000	660	20
277	CS 68103	6,820	7,310	490	7
283	CS 68403	13,930	15,290	1,360	10
285	CS 68403	5,080	8,020	2,940	58
287	CS 67803	7,230	7,520	290	4
288	CS 67803	12,300	11,000	-1,300	-11

Intergovernmental Coordination

■ Introduction

Coordination and communication efforts between local governments are essential to the success of Comprehensive Planning in this region. The Intergovernmental Coordination section describes and analyzes the existing relationships between jurisdictions within and outside of Cherokee County to serve the current and future needs of the community. These coordination mechanisms should allow the community to articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of their policies and objectives with multiple governmental entities.

■ Adjacent Local Governments

Cherokee County includes all or part of seven municipalities; Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Mountain Park, Nelson, Waleska and Woodstock. Mountain Park and Nelson are partly within Cherokee County and partly within Fulton and Pickens Counties respectively. Recognizing the importance of coordinated planning, this joint planning effort includes Cherokee County and the cities of Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock. Cherokee County is surrounded by Bartow, Cobb, Dawson, Forsyth, Fulton and Pickens Counties. Continued coordination with all of these local governments will be very important to a successful Comprehensive Plan.

Current Service Delivery Strategy

Coordination mechanisms with the 5 primary Cities within Cherokee County (Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Waleska and Woodstock) are essential to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. All levels of staff and elected officials are involved in the coordination process that is outlined in the Service Delivery Strategy, dated June 10, 1999. The specific services covered in this agreement are listed below:

- Animal Control / Animal Shelter (County-wide)
- Building Inspections
- Fire Operations
- Library Services (County-wide)
- Planning and Zoning
- Parks & Recreation
- Uniform Patrol / Jail Operations

Animal Control and the Animal Shelter are one of the two services shared throughout the county. This is based on a joint ordinance that was passed in 1990 by the County and all five cities for a uniform Animal Control regulations and countywide enforcement by Cherokee County.

Library Services are also provided countywide through the Sequoyah Regional Library System, which operates 6 libraries throughout unincorporated and incorporated areas of Cherokee County. The cities of Ball Ground, Canton and Woodstock make financial contributions to the library system.

Since the combination of services provided by each city or by the County is not uniform across the county and the services offered by the cities have changed, the current details of the individual cities are described in the subsequent sections. This agreement is up for renewal at the same time as this Comprehensive Plan. Meetings and Negotiations are expected to begin soon.

Ball Ground

The table below reflects the distribution of services within the boundaries of the City of Ball Ground:

City of Ball Ground	Cherokee County
	Animal Control / Animal Shelter
	Building Inspections
	Fire Operations
	Library Services
	Planning and Zoning
	Parks and Recreation
Daytime Police Patrol	Uniform Patrol (Nighttime) / Jail Operations

Cherokee County provides most of the seven services within the limits of the city of Ball Ground. Officials from the city of Ball Ground have begun to perform some of the inspections required during construction.

Ball Ground maintains its own zoning code and maps but rezoning applications within the city limits are heard by the Cherokee County Planning Commission and then referred back to city council for a decision. County Planning and Zoning staff also provide assistance as needed on specific Ball Ground concerns. This arrangement allows a considerable amount of informal coordination between the city and the county on planning issues. Efforts are underway to share GIS map data to enhance coordination.

Canton

The table below reflects the distribution of services within the boundaries of the City of Canton:

City of Canton	Cherokee County
	Animal Control / Animal Shelter
Building Inspections	
Fire Operations	
	Library Services
Planning and Zoning	
Parks and Recreation	Parks
Uniform Patrol	Jail Operations

The City of Canton has assumed primary responsibility for five of the seven services. Since the creation of the Service Delivery Strategy, Canton has taken over providing most of the Parks and Recreation services. Cherokee County continues to be involved in the provision of parks and the operation of the Adult Detention facility.

Holly Springs

The table below reflects the distribution of services within the boundaries of the City of Holly Springs:

City of Holly Springs	Cherokee County
	Animal Control / Animal Shelter
Building Inspections	
	Fire Operations
	Library Services
Planning and Zoning	
Parks and Recreation	
Uniform Patrol	Jail Operations

The City of Holly Springs has assumed primary responsibility for four of the seven services. Since the creation of the Service Delivery Strategy, Holly Springs has taken over providing Parks and Recreation services. The city also has a contract with Cherokee County to provide Fire Operations from a new station built in Holly Springs. The County continues to be involved in the operation of the Adult Detention facility.

Waleska

The table below reflects the distribution of services within the boundaries of the City of Waleska:

City of Waleska	Cherokee County
	Animal Control / Animal Shelter
	Building Inspections
	Fire Operations
	Library Services
	Planning and Zoning
	Parks and Recreation
	Uniform Patrol / Jail Operations

Cherokee County provides almost all of the seven services within the limits of the City of Waleska.

Waleska maintains its own zoning code and maps but rezoning applications within the city limits are heard by the Cherokee County Planning Commission and then referred back to city council for a decision. County Planning and Zoning staff also provides assistance as needed on specific Waleska concerns. This arrangement allows a considerable amount of informal coordination between the city and the county on planning issues. Efforts are underway to share GIS map data to enhance coordination.

Woodstock

The table below reflects the distribution of services within the boundaries of the City of Woodstock:

City of Woodstock	Cherokee County
	Animal Control / Animal Shelter
Building Inspections	
Fire Operations	
	Library Services
Planning and Zoning	
Parks and Recreation	
Uniform Patrol	Jail Operations

The City of Woodstock has assumed primary responsibility for five of the seven services. Since the creation of the Service Delivery Strategy, Woodstock has taken over providing almost all of the Parks and Recreation services. Cherokee County continues to be involved in the operation of the Adult Detention facility.

Growth Boundary Agreements

The County and the Cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock have entered into an agreement concerning annexations and the boundaries of each city that is in place until December 31, 2006. These agreements are structured to promote cooperation in planning for land use and infrastructure. The county solicits input from the cities for development applications within the growth boundary areas. The cities provide the county with information about pending annexations. In general, this has helped to keep informed on projects that are pending that will affect both jurisdictions.

Cities of Mountain Park & Nelson, Bartow, Cobb, Dawson, Forsyth, Fulton, and Pickens Counties

The communities that surround Cherokee County are very diverse, although there are a few critical areas where cooperation and coordination are important. Land use and development are the most common area where local governments need to work together. The impact of major developments is evaluated through the Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) process that is managed by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). The DRI process provides an opportunity for surrounding local governments to coordinate on land use and infrastructure. This process will be discussed later in the Regional Partners section. Occasionally, there are proposed developments that do not qualify as DRI projects and/or that cross-jurisdictional boundaries. Since these are unique situations, the coordination between Cherokee County and the adjacent local governments is generally on an as needed basis.

■ **School Board**

Cherokee County Board of Education

■ **Independent Authorities & Districts**

Development Authority of Cherokee County

The Development Authority of Cherokee County was created by statute in January 1981 under the Development Authorities law (Chapter 62 of the Georgia Codes). The mission of the Authority is "to develop and promote trade, commerce, industry and employment opportunities for the public good and general welfare, and to promote the economic welfare of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia." The Development Authority provides a wide range of services in Cherokee County designed to facilitate the location of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones. The Authority has nine members, eight appointed by the Cherokee County Commission with the ninth member being the chairperson of the County's constitutional development authority (Cherokee County Development Authority). The two authorities work in partnership with the county commission and local municipalities to support quality development in the county.

Information and services offered:

- Demographic and development data
- Site selection assistance
- Assistance evaluating site and building needs
- Local development/permit process assistance
- Industrial revenue bonds
- Georgia Appalachian Region Revolving Loan Program Lender
- State industrial loan and grant program information
- Information on Georgia Income Tax Credits for business development
- Georgia QuickStart - free employee training for qualified industries
- Existing Industry Incentive Program
- New Industrial Development Incentives

Downtown Development Authorities (*Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock*)

Cherokee County strives to assist the DDAs within the county through a variety of types of support, both directly and indirectly. The county has provided direct funding for several downtown projects through the specific agreements. Cherokee County is also involved in several transportation projects that are in or near the downtown areas. When needed, the county provides letters of support for DDA projects.

Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority

Cherokee Parks and Recreation Authority

Cherokee Airport Authority

The Airport Authority works closely with the Development Authority as part of Cherokee County's Economic Development efforts.

■ Other Organizations

Cherokee Chamber of Commerce

Strong leadership guides the Chamber into the 21st century. Financed by the voluntary membership investments of its members, the Chamber funds a full-time staff, who speaks on the behalf of the community to new businesses, industries and residents.

The staff provides many services and resources—some of these are available to the public, others to Chamber members. Business and community leaders volunteer hundreds of hours each year, reviewing challenges, seeking solutions and exploring new ideas together—to make Cherokee County a progressive, prosperous and imminently livable community.

The political leadership of Cherokee County is heavily involved in the Chamber of Commerce programs and activities. Meanwhile, the Chamber has a representative on the Citizens' Roundtable committee for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Chamber has also provided a place for county officials to speak about new initiatives such as the Bells Ferry LCI Plan.

Historical Society of Cherokee County

The Cherokee County Historical Society (CCHS) was founded in 1975 by a group of concerned citizens interested in preserving local history. CCHS is dedicated to Historic Preservation and education. CCHS is the sole organization in Cherokee County engaged in collecting, preserving and interpreting all aspects of its history from the Cherokee Indians to its present, diversifying population. CCHS is a member of the Georgia Historical Society (2004 Affiliate of the Year), American Association for State and Local History (Awarded \$3,000 grant in 2005), Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and a Forum Member and Local Partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Regular programs include a Historic Preservation Awards Banquet, quarterly membership meetings, educational field trips, and assisting researchers and residents with historical data.

Cherokee County Farm Bureau

The Cherokee County Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental organization tied to the statewide Georgia Farm Bureau Federation. The membership is mainly composed of farm families in rural communities and people who want successful agricultural in the County. The Farm Bureau provides a wide range of services to its members that include social outings, educational workshops, community forums and financial services. A representative from the Cherokee Farm Bureau has been appointed to the Citizen's Roundtable so that the issues and concerns of the agricultural community can be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

■ Regional Partners

Developments of Regional Impact Review

The fact that Cherokee County is surrounded by six counties and three municipalities makes coordination efforts even more critical to successful Comprehensive Planning. The table below contains a list of the counties and cities bordering or overlapping with Cherokee County. These jurisdictions are also organized into four different Regional Development Centers (RDC); Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Mountains, North Georgia and Coosa Valley RDCs.

Surrounding Counties	Adjacent Cities
Bartow	
Cobb	Acworth
Dawson	
Forsyth	
Fulton	Mountain Park
Gilmer	
Pickens	Nelson

These local governments actively participate in the review process for any development project that qualifies as a Development of Region Impact (DRI). Coordination within the DRI review process is typically focused on the County or City planning staffs. We receive DRI information primarily through the Atlanta Regional Commission because of the tremendous development of counties in and around Atlanta.

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) performs regional planning, service coordination and local government support for the metropolitan Atlanta Area. There are currently 10 counties in the ARC area. The commission is dedicated to unifying the region's collective resources to prepare the metropolitan area for a prosperous future. It does so through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information and the involvement of the community in collaborative partnerships that encourage healthy economic growth compatible with the environment, improve the region's quality of life and foster leadership development.

Workforce Investment Board

The Atlanta Regional Commission coordinates the operation of the Atlanta Regional Workforce Board (ARWB). This regional WIA area includes Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale Counties. The following workforce services are provided in this region: Basic Skills, Intensive Services, Job Readiness, Job Search and Occupational Skills Training. A One Stop Shop in downtown Canton serves the Cherokee area.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water District

With a finite water resource and a population of nearly 4 million and growing, the need to carefully and cooperatively manage and protect the Atlanta region's water resources has become a priority. Created in 2001, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is charged with developing regional and watershed specific plans for stormwater management, wastewater management and water supply and conservation in a 16-county area: Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale and Walton Counties. These plans will protect water quality and public water supplies, protect recreational values of the waters, and minimize potential adverse impacts of development on waters of the region.

Cherokee County has adopted the following required ordinances that relate to protecting water resources:

- Post-Development Storm Water Management for New Development and Redevelopment
- Floodplain Management / Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
- Conservation Subdivision / Open Space Development Ordinance
- Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection Ordinance
- Litter Control Ordinance
- Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance

Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan

The unique physical characteristics of the Etowah River watershed make it one of the most biodiverse river systems in the U.S. Its proximity to one of the country's most rapidly growing urban areas makes it one of the most threatened. The Etowah Basin lies on the north edge of the Atlanta metropolitan area. The suburban counties that comprise the lower portion of the system have been among the fastest growing counties in the nation over the last decade, including Cherokee County.

Ten imperiled aquatic species are known to inhabit the Etowah basin, and five others are believed extirpated. Small-stream habitat in the developed portion of the basin is generally poor, due in large part to upland development. Agricultural lands and forests are being converted to subdivisions, industrial parks, shopping malls, and other developments at a rapid rate. As a result, riparian vegetation necessary for stabilizing stream banks and protecting water quality is being cleared; runoff from upland areas has increased and is of poorer quality; and streams being altered by filling, piping, channelization, altered stream flows and other modifications. These changes in land use frequently cause accelerated erosion that covers streambeds with silt and reduces foraging and spawning success of aquatic species. It is likely that unmanaged development along Etowah tributaries will lead to degradation of habitat and water quality in the main stem and the further imperilment of these species.

Since eight of the 15 aquatic species are federally listed as endangered or threatened, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations will apply to future development in the Etowah basin. Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) under the ESA are crafted to allow development in areas where imperiled species occur, while conserving enough habitat to ensure that those species persist. Without a joint HCP for the whole watershed, each individual development project must create a HCP in order to apply for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP). This application and review process through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can take up to 6 months. The cost of developing the HCP and the time delay involved is a significant burden for individual developers.

The Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan provides a basin-wide HCP that gives the local government the authority to approve development plans instead of the lengthy FWS review. The HCP planning process is overseen by a steering committee composed of representatives from each of the counties and municipalities within the watershed. The steering committee is assisted by a team of scientists, policy analysts and educators from the University of Georgia, Kennesaw State University and the Georgia Conservancy, funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

■ State and Federal Government Entities

Cherokee County works hard to coordinate efforts with government agencies at the State and Federal level. Below is a list of the agencies that the county is currently working with. To the right of each agency is a list of the primary areas of coordination with Cherokee County.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Comprehensive Planning
Georgia Department of Transportation	Transportation Planning & Projects
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Wildlife Management Areas &
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Lake Allatoona
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Etowah HCP
U.S. Department of Agriculture	Cooperative Extension Program & Rural Housing Programs
U.S. Housing and Urban Development	CDBG funded housing programs
U.S. Federal Emergency Management Authority	Emergency Preparedness Planning