

# City of Dawsonville Comprehensive Plan 2008-2030

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## Community Assessment and Participation Program



*"Protecting our History and  
Providing for the Future"*

March, 2008

NOTE: This Community Assessment (CAss) was originally submitted to GADCA in a format that combined it with the Community Participation Program (CPP). The pages pertaining to the CPP have been extracted from this document to create a separate document focusing specifically on the CPP. It can be accessed on the same GADCA webpage as this CAss document.

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## **Purpose**

The Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program are the first two of three documents comprising the local comprehensive plan in Georgia. Enclosed herein are the Community Assessment, the Community Participation Program and all necessary supporting material for the City of Dawsonville, for the planning period between 2006 and 2030. This material will support the development of the third, and most important, element of the comprehensive plan: The Community Agenda.

The purpose of planning and community development is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by local government officials and other community leaders. To this end, the requirements for local comprehensive planning in Georgia emphasize involvement of stakeholders and the general public in preparation of plans that include an exciting, well-conceived, and achievable vision for the future of the community. When implemented, the resulting plan will help the community address critical issues and opportunities while moving toward realization of its unique vision for the community's future.

The Community Assessment presents a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the comprehensive plan is built. 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, such as an executive summary, for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda.

The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to ensure that the local comprehensive plan reflects the full range of community values and desires, by involving a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in development of the Community Agenda. This broad-based participation in developing the Community Agenda will also help ensure that it will be implemented, because many in the community are involved in its development and thereby become committed to seeing it through.

## **Profile of Dawsonville**

Dawsonville, Georgia is the civic seat and social center of Dawson County. The City was incorporated in 1959 and became the center for county government operations after the construction of a courthouse and jail in 1860. Over time the local economy has flourished and struggled with a mostly agriculture base, but Dawsonville's prevailing identity stems from its origins as a haven for the production and trade of moonshine. The popularity of this era remains with a cultural festival named after the illegal alcohol, while, more importantly, the production of fast cars used to transport moonshine lead to the community's fascination with auto racing that survives today within a local museum.

Together with Dawson County, Dawsonville also serves as the southern gateway to the Appalachian Mountains and the northern tip of metropolitan Atlanta. The southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail lies in Dawson County, which, combined with the abundant reserved forest within the area, has raised the profile of outdoor recreational activities for locals and tourists alike. But retail commerce and industry has grown in the region, as well, as suburban development and population growth has crept to and beyond the Dawson County line. Georgia Highway 400 and an outlet mall have raised the regional awareness of Dawsonville, and modern technology has helped permit the once small, rural community to blossom with potential for true urbanized amenities.

Today the city proper remains considerably small, with under 1,000 residents within the City boundaries. But Dawson County is growing rapidly, tripling in population to 15,000 between 1980 and 2000. Meanwhile, neighboring Cumming and Forsyth County, located immediately below Dawson County, have grown by almost 40,000 residents in the past 6 years alone. These trends plus recent changes in City limits and plans for economic development mean that Dawsonville will receive significant pressures to grow and evolve in the coming decades.

Location Map

*Copy of Signed Transmittal Resolution*

**Analysis of Development Patterns**

Land use management policies and programs represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. This section presents an inventory of existing land use patterns and development trends for the community, allowing the local government to produce the most effective policies needed to manage the demands from projected development.

*Existing Land Use*

Dawsonville is still the traditional social center of Dawson County but there has been an economic shift in commercial activity in the county away from Dawsonville east towards the Georgia 400 corridor where it intersects with SR 53. The downtown area is currently a mix of historic and new structures filled with commercial and institutional uses. Some of the historic structures have been renovated, while others have not been well maintained. Growth in local tourism and the increase in demand for institutional space have kept most of the buildings in the traditional town center occupied. However, residential and commercial activity is moving away from the downtown and city to outlying areas of the county and GA 400 corridor.

**Table – Land Use, 2007**

Land Use	City of Dawsonville			Dawson Co.
	Acres	Percent	Acres/Person*	Percent
Residential	3,657.32	75.5%	5.8	16.90%
Commercial	316.15	6.5%	0.5	0.50%
Public/Institutional	526.09	10.9%	0.8	0.50%
Industrial	237.97	4.9%	0.4	0.40%
Undeveloped	79	1.6%	0.1	0.20%
Agricultural/ Forestry	-	0.0%	0.0	52.80%
Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities	15	0.3%	0.0	2.80%
Park/ Recreation/ Conservation	10	0.2%	0.0	25.90%
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,841.53</i>	<i>100.00%</i>	<i>7.7</i>	

*Source: GMRDC, 2006*

*\* = Based on 2003 GOPB population estimate of 632 persons*

Most of the downtown and surrounding areas are classified as the Central Business District (CBD). This district features a variety of retail and service oriented uses that are commonly associated with small towns and generally smaller in scale. Most properties have older structures on modest lots with limited parking. The fabric of this area is common for small cities in rural Georgia.

Land use and development patterns adjacent to downtown involve more conventional land uses but to date the general forms have been, for the most part, compatible with the small-town scale

of Dawsonville. A significant portion of downtown accommodates public and semi-public facilities uses owned by government entities (schools, libraries, etc). These uses are also intended to serve as a buffer between more intensive non-residential and residential districts. The current City Hall and Thunder Road Museum Complex, just outside downtown on Highway 53, marks a transition to more modern, auto-oriented development on the eastern side of the city, while select industrial operations exist throughout the city.

Most of the land within the city limits is residential, particularly the most recently annexed properties reaching to the north and west. These include a variety of conventional subdivisions and rural single-family housing. There are some multi-family units and a manufactured home subdivision within the older portions of the city closer to downtown, as well as small neighborhoods that follow traditional urban block patterns around the historic downtown.

A private airport has also been recently annexed on the city's west side.



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*City of Dawsonville Comprehensive Plan: 2006 - 2030*

*Existing Land Use*

*Areas Requiring Special Attention*

Analysis of the prevailing trends will assist in the identification of preferred patterns of growth for the future. More specifically such analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention with regard to management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development.

- *Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur*

While the City of Dawsonville is not under extreme growth pressure within the City limits, there is a significant amount of development occurring immediately around the city and throughout eastern and southern Dawson County. The City's utilities have served as a new magnet for attracting growth, however, and the pace and volume of development has increased. There is a transition occurring as the county shifts in character from rural to suburban, meaning the City will grow but it will also change character as other focal points for commercial and service activity are developed.

- *Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation*

Within the City limits new development is readily provided basic public services, and few places operating without water or sewer. There have been calls for improvements in the areas of telecommunications and possibly increasing the availability of park space. The latter will occur as new development creates sufficient demand to justify new facilities.

- *Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)*

Select structures and commercial centers along the main arterials leading into the City should be encouraged for redevelopment and/or renovation. As the City contemplates reinvestment in the downtown area and around the former Thunder Road complex, those areas should be the primary targets for fostering redevelopment and, where possible, aesthetic compatibility.

- *Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated*

There are no sites within the City that are suspected of environmental contamination, however several larger commercial sites are in the throes of disrepair and minimal use. Pending trends with new development in the near future such structures may be outdated and too costly for their current use, leading to abandonment or a severe need for reinvestment.

- *Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)*

There are no large sites or concentrations of sites suitable for major infill development, however there are numerous properties throughout the city that are either vacant or contain derelict structures that perhaps should be demolished. The City is currently working on a Downtown Development Strategy in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan, which will begin to coordinate development policies, design guidelines and capital investments that foster context sensitive infill development.

- *Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole*

Dawsonville remains too small to have significant pockets of unemployment or poverty. There are clusters of manufactured housing with properties that would not be permitted under current codes, but most if not all of these structures remain viable and do not require immediate attention.

**Areas Requiring Special Attention**

<i>Central Dawsonville</i>	This includes downtown Dawsonville, the Thunder Road Museum/ City Hall site and immediately adjoining properties. This area is the focus of redevelopment efforts in the hopes of generating new commercial and civic activity.
<i>Arterial Corridors</i>	Dawsonville has several arterial roads that run through the City that must accommodate both outside access for through and tourist traffic as well as local traffic for residents and businesses alike.
<i>Shoal Creek Corridor</i>	Shoal Creek runs just outside the City’s western edge and is a major tributary to the Etowah River. Because of this it is also considered a priority stream in regards to environmental protection measures.
<i>Potential Bypass Corridor</i>	The completion of the Dawsonville bypass along the City’s western side is considered a long-range project with the GDOT. Development should be restricted within the projected impact area until the exact route is known and that development can be coordinated with the transportation improvements.
<i>Rural Transition Area</i>	This is the area within and immediately outside the northeastern city limits. Recent developments regarding the City’s plans for annexation and utility improvements management target this area as the preeminent receiving basin for new growth.

*Areas Requiring Special Attention*

### *Character Areas*

To further assist in identifying development needs and target areas it is crucial to understand not only the land use patterns but also the prevailing character and context of a community. It is possible to identify these sub-areas within the community defined by architectural scale and style, functions and roles, traffic flow, and other factors that differentiate one area from the next. These can include the areas requiring special attention identified above and/or existing community sub-areas for which plans have already been prepared.

*Central Dawsonville* – Because of the plans for redeveloping the site around the City Hall and Thunder Road Museum this area is larger than just the Dawsonville’s traditional downtown. Included are several of the surrounding and connecting blocks that for the most part maintain the smaller, urban block pattern and similar massing of structures. This also contains the bulk of Dawsonville’s commercial and civic sites that establish the City as a public destination. Many of these businesses rely on their collective volume to appeal to customers, playing off the urbanized nature of downtown as part of the attraction.

*Arterial Corridors* – The arterial roads within and around Dawsonville serve to connect the city with the outside world while also providing access for local traffic. By nature these roads must retain high levels of service while handling larger volumes of local and through traffic. Outside of downtown area most of the uses along the corridors are auto-oriented, with larger conventional parking lots, wider spaces and lower heights. Development along these corridors may not require architectural standards but must accommodate different standards for setbacks, accessibility and signage.

*Urban/ Rural Transition Areas* – Immediately outside downtown is a collection of residential, light industrial and other uses that can be distinguished from both the Central Dawsonville Area and from rural Dawson County. These areas include more modern subdivisions and commercial centers, lower densities, and properties and buildings of a larger scale. They are defined as transitional for both providing the transition from rural to urban forms and for receiving the bulk of new development coming into the City.

*Rural Transition Areas* – This area represents the northern fringe of the City that features several sites indicative of urban/suburban forms and scales but lacks the variety of uses and commercial centers that help define suburban development. This area is predominantly used for residential purposes and includes some properties viable for active farming. However there is water and sewer service available to provide for additional development and the possibility this area will evolve in density to become purely suburban.

*Rural Dawsonville* – This represents the remaining, outlying portions of the city that have been recently annexed. There are no immediate plans to alter their general form or land use, and long terms plans suggest these areas will remain predominantly residential. Present level of any agrarian activity is unlikely to continue due to expanding presence of utilities. This area will be fostered as a haven for larger residential uses and rural/conservation subdivisions to facilitate a buffer between the higher densities of Dawsonville and the rest of Dawson County.

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 her unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives 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 “you are here.” The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of positive responses for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. Negative responses may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives. Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective it may consider this assessment as a means of monitoring progress towards achievement.

**Development Patterns**

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.*

Statement	Comments
1. Our zoning code does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	Some mixed use allowed but not fully encouraged or provided "By right."
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.	There are subdivision and development regulations in place that encourage certain design types. These will be expanded upon completion of the Downtown Development Study.
3. We have a street tree ordinance requiring new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	In place.
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas to make walking more comfortable in summer.	In place.
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	There is a Clean and Beautiful effort and several community-wide clean up efforts.
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	Regularly monitored by public Works Department. Currently utilizing TE grant funds for select improvements.
7. In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if desired.	Within and around downtown this is possible. Encouraging new development closer to schools and library to include sidewalks.
8. Some children can and do walk/ bike to school safely.	Only possible for a few as a majority of the students live too far away.
9. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods.	Some residences nearby but most housing is in the County or divided from the schools by several blocks and major roads.

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.*

Statement	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	Regularly monitor vacancies for commercial sites.
2. We are actively working to promote Brownfield redevelopment.	Not applicable.
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	Not applicable.
4. We have areas that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road.)	Policies favor non-residential development within the central city or at major intersections.
5. We allow small lot development (<5000 SF) for some uses.	Allowed under certain conditions.



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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*

Statement	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	Scale of Central Dawsonville distinct from outlying areas; City remains distinct from rural county.
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.	Some work needs to be done but there are historic and environmental preservation regulations in place.
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	Some design guidelines have been developed, with possible additions/ modifications pending the results of the Downtown Development Study.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage.	Yes.
5. Our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.	Not applicable.

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.*

Statement	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.	There is no public or workforce transit available, however there are taxi services and 5311 shuttle services for the elderly and handicapped.
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	New development must do this where possible.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	In very early stages of expanding the network outside of the downtown area.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	Yes.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible	New development must do this where possible.
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	Not presently, but the city is included in the GMRDC Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X

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**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.*

Statement	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	Yes, Dawsonville does exhibit architectural and civic characteristics indicative of the Appalachian foothills region.
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	Within the region there are industries based on local resources and businesses. Dawsonville does coordinate tourism and education with neighboring communities, particularly Cumming, Dahlonega and Gainesville.
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal)	See above.
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	Yes.
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	Yes, particularly the area's ties to racing history, proximity to the mountains and local rivers and lakes. Select festivals, such as the Moonshine <i>Festival</i> , are based on distinct local history.
6. Our community contributes to, and draws from, the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, education.	Yes, and these ties are growing stronger as advances in communication and transportation allow people to travel and communicate more frequently and over greater distances. Dawsonville is subject to becoming part of a larger metropolitan region that includes Atlanta and Gainesville.

**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 local character.*

Statement	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	Yes, Downtown Dawsonville is a designated area protected with an overlay district.
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	A preservation commission was established in 1999, but it has not been meeting regularly and those powers and responsibilities have been transferred to the Planning Commission.
3. We want new development to complement historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure that happening.	This is encouraged, however the policies and regulations governing these conditions may be amended upon completion of the Downtown Dawsonville Study.

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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.*

Statement	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.	There is no formal plan, but greenspace is required alongside waterways.
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace – either through direct purchase, or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	Development policies require protection alongside waterways and encourages set-asides in new subdivisions.
3. We have a local land conservation program/ work with state or national land conservation programs to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	No active program in place at this time.
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	Subdivision regulations allow/encourage conservation design principles.

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.*

Statement	Comment
1. We have a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	There is an inventory of environmentally sensitive areas as monitored in the DNR Part V criteria (See <i>Natural Resources</i> section of <i>Analysis of Data</i> ). Soil information may require updating.
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	Existing policies restrict development within environmentally sensitive areas.
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and have taken steps to protect them.	Yes, as discussed above.
4. Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.	Yes, as discussed above.
5. Our community has and actively enforces a tree preservation ordinance.	Yes, such policies are included within the zoning regulations. Regulates protection of existing trees and re-planting requirements.
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	Yes, such policies are included within the zoning regulations. Regulates protection of existing trees and re-planting requirements.
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	For new development, yes.
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.)	Yes, through both planning and development policies.

**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.*

Statement	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	Have done this in the past and working to update this through the Comprehensive Plan process.
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.	Have <i>NOT</i> done this in the past but are working to amend this through the Comprehensive Plan process. Water Authority and School Board will be consulted throughout the process.
3. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	Not historically but will be considering this through the Comprehensive Plan process.
4. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth. These areas are based on the natural resources inventory of our community.	Currently working to guide development to areas with utilities and away from environmentally sensitive resources.

*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.*

Statement	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.	Several organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Better Hometown, Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority) have established missions and plans built around those missions.
2. Our ED organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.	Yes, the local economic development organizations coordinate business recruitment and retention based on their respective plans.
3. We recruit businesses that provide/ create sustainable products.	Recruitment efforts are in place, but this is not exclusive nor has the effort been in place for a substantial period of time.
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.	Dawsonville's economy is considered sound and is not overly dependent on a single employment sector.

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

Statement	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	Yes, support programs are available including nearby incubators and various avenues for resource and funding assistance.
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	Dawsonville/Dawson county is considered a strong, growing economy.
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	Yes, with strong growth in the service industry.
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	Yes.

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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 (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.*

Statement	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	This is permissible under certain conditions.
2. People who work in our community can afford to live here.	Yes, but there is a need for quality affordable housing.
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate, and above-average incomes)	There is a need for quality affordable housing.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and recommending smaller setbacks.	This is encouraged but not required.
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	Some options are available, but not in abundance.
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	Yes, including land immediately outside the City but served by utilities.
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	Yes.
8. We support community development corporations building housing for lower-income households.	Under certain conditions, yes, but existing corporate efforts are limited.
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	Yes, but only at a marginal level.
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	Yes, under certain conditions.

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.*

Statement	Comments
1. Our community provides work-force training options for our citizens.	There are programs to assist in job skills training, including specialized training for newly created jobs and new technology applications.
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	There are programs to assist in job skills training, including specialized training for newly created jobs and new technology applications.
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	Lanier Tech and Southern Catholic College have facilities within Dawson County, while Gainesville State College and North Georgia State College are within 20 miles.
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	Yes, Dawsonville/Dawson County is considered a strong, growing economy.

**Governmental Relation**

Local Self-determination - *Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.*

Statement	Comments
1. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	There is no formal campaign but civic matters are promoted and educational material is provided.
2. We have processes in place that make it simple for the public to stay informed on land use and zoning decisions, and new development.	Zoning and land use decisions are heavily promoted with copies of all pertinent material available for public review prior to formal hearings.
3. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	This is be included within the Community Participation Program.
4. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	Yes.
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.	For select types and conditions only.
6. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently and are sure that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	The development policies and regulations were reviewed in 2005.
7. We have a budget for annual training for planning commission members and staff, and we use it.	Yes.
8. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community	Elected officials are regularly provided education in community development procedures and policies.

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.*

Statement	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for Comprehensive Planning purposes	Coordination with Dawson County has been inconsistent, but there is a Service Delivery Agreement and recently the City has established new guidelines for annexation to improve coordination of community development with the County.
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies	Yes, but an update is in progress.
3. We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services (parks and recreation, E911, Emergency Services, Police or Sheriff's Office, schools, water, sewer, other)	Parks & Recreation, Emergency Medical Services, Sheriff's Office, and Board of Education.

## **Identification of Issues and Opportunities**

This section provides a summary listing and discussion of potential issues and opportunities identified during the Analysis of Data and Information. These items may be modified through additional analysis or require further study, but they must be considered as the City completes the Community Agenda. The elements discussed include:

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

Population

The foremost task of any government is to promote the welfare of the existing and future populations. This is the basis for all strategies involved in economic development, capital improvement projects, and land use regulation. The hope is that any changes can be managed such that opportunities exist for economic expansion without diluting the quality of services provided. Achieving this requires an understanding the characteristics of both the present and future populations of the region; their traits, needs, and capabilities. Much of this begins with identifying trends within the population, to help explain current conditions and gain insight into probable future conditions.

- *Managing potential growth* – While the majority of growth anticipated for Dawson County will occur in the unincorporated areas, the City of Dawsonville will continue to grow both naturally and through possible annexations. As it does so the City must work to ensure such growth is done in a manner that does not adversely impact the delivery of public services or greatly alter the character of the community.
- *Continuing positive social trends* – Both the City of Dawsonville and Dawson County are experiencing improvements with regard to levels of household incomes and the education levels for adult residents. As the community becomes more and more suburban it is imperative that Dawsonville continues to efforts that foster and support increased opportunities for education and work to diversify the economy.
- *Declining size of households* – Natural demographic and economic trends are increasing the volumes of smaller households within all of Dawson County. As the community moves to support traditional family and large-household programs and development types, Dawsonville must also ensure that a diversity of housing conditions and programs exist to support this variety of household types, particularly for younger residents looking to move into the city and elderly residents struggling to support themselves.



Economic Development

Economic development analyses inventory a community's functional conditions and achievements to identify the strengths, weaknesses and needs of native businesses. This portrait of a region's economic state is the foundation for assessing the performance of wages and job skills, employment and industry patterns, and the programs and efforts designed to improve local economies.

**Issues:**

- *Need to review focus on tourism* – The nature of local tourism has moved from the Thunder Road Museum to the North Georgia Premium Outlet Mall, representing a literal and figurative relocation of economic and cultural activity within Dawson County. Prosperity at the Outlet Mall does not automatically translate into prosperity for the City, and at times the two outcomes are in competition with each other. Dawsonville must work with Dawson County in recognizing the aspirations and possibilities for tourism in the City, the Museum and downtown to ensure a level of economic prosperity.
- *Need for economic development within Downtown* – Regardless of the level of tourism desired for downtown Dawsonville, there must be an influx of reinvestment in the downtown area if it is to remain viable. Programs for revitalizing structures and businesses must be made available and promoted, while the City must finalize long term development plans for the area to begin coordinating capital improvements and implementing proper development policies.
- *Dealing with transition of economic base* – As Dawsonville and Dawson County become more suburban the nature of industrial development and employment opportunities will change. Some aspects of coordinated economic development have become more difficult as the characteristics of the labor force and regional consumer market experience fluctuation.
- *Increase in Service sector/ hourly-rate employees* – One aspect of the economy currently growing is the Service industry, a boon for local consumers but typically a weaker sector in terms of wages and benefits to local employees. Continued growth is encouraged but the City must monitor the overall changes to the economy to ensure a diverse range of employment opportunities available for residents.
- *Increased demand for educational* – Access to quality post-secondary education has become critical as the modern marketplace requires more and more skill sets than are typically available through high school. This requires not only the presence of education facilities and programs but regular monitoring of those programs to ensure they provide the level and types of education needed to compete in the work place.
- *Increased demand for a coordinated economic development strategy* – The growth of Dawsonville's economy is ensured by virtue of being in line with metropolitan Atlanta's expansion. A coordinated strategy is required, however, if the City, County and all

residents hope to achieve the most efficient and prosperous economic development possible. The modern market is more dynamic when dealing with business growth and recruitment, and the most successful communities are able to coordinate all resources across organizations to support economic growth.

***Opportunities:***

- *Impact of recent implementation measures* – The City stands to see immediate benefits from several actions designed to spur economic development:
  - Lanier Tech is planning an expansion with a new building and the introduction of new technological programs;
  - The City has hired a full-time Director of Economic Development;
  - The City is actively working with the property owner to redevelop the site around City Hall and the Thunder Road Museum, and will reopen the Museum pending several facility improvements.
- *Economic potential of downtown* – Dawsonville has enough businesses and attractions to remain a commercial destination for tourism and local consumers alike, while plans for redevelopment will serve to expand this potential. Proper implementation of these plans can provide not only economic balance and prosperity but also aid in the retention of local character and community identity.
- *Natural economic expansion* - Dawsonville is poised for growth of its labor force and consumer market as part of the continued expansion of metropolitan Atlanta. With proper planning this will provide the City with a wider range of opportunities to guide and receive economic growth and stability.
- *Proximity to regional resources* – The same metropolitan expansion will also introduce a greater variety of resources to aid in Dawsonville’s economic development, including additional technical and education facilities and stronger financial resources. Particularly with improvements in transportation and communication the City will be able to better draw upon these resources for promotion, recruitment and economic expansion.

Housing

Housing is a critical issue to every community as a primary factor of quality of life. The costs and availability of quality housing is a key gauge in calculating local costs of living and one measure in defining the long-term sustainability of the resident population. The housing element of the comprehensive plan is used to evaluate whether existing and projected development will meet the county's housing needs with respect to supply, affordability, and accessibility.

**Issues:**

- *Aging housing stock* – A notable portion of the City's current housing stock more than 30 years old. Many of these units may require structural maintenance or repair while many more may simply lack the amenities or features to remain economically viable in the face of a rapidly growing housing market. If the natural market and economy is not enabling the City's residents to maintain their homes there is a risk of seeing many units fall into disrepair and concentrations of impoverished units leading to social blight.
- *Lack of select housing types* - The recent growth Dawsonville is experiencing has produced an imbalance in the measure of two housing types; 1) Quality affordable housing for the area's workforce, and 2) special needs housing for the elderly and handicapped. While these sectors are recognized as among the least viable for private developers, failure to provide options within proximity of Dawsonville will only serve to increase the costs for those consumers and likely adversely impact the general economy and local quality of life.

**Opportunities:**

- *Natural expansion of the housing market* – While there is some uncertainty in the types of new housing development that will occur in Dawsonville, it is clear that new housing will come as part of the outward growth of metropolitan Atlanta. The opportunity exists to provide the City with higher standards of living and increased diversity of housing choices.
- *Potential for housing diversity within the City* – There is enough space and a number of existing properties within the city to develop alternative housing. Lofts and other units could be provided above shops within downtown, and mixed use and multi-family housing could be incorporated into the city without adversely impacting traffic, utilities or the character of the community.

Natural Resources

A community's natural resources are the native conditions and elements that contribute to the local character and livelihood. As the rivers and lakes supplying public water, mineral deposits that support local industry, or a scenic park serving locals and tourists alike, these resources can serve a community's health, culture and economy when properly managed. Because these sites and conditions are highly susceptible to disturbance from human activity, they are regarded environmentally sensitive and need to be preserved for public benefit.

**Issues:**

- *Need for greenspace* – As Dawsonville grows more suburban there is more pressure to not only provide greenspace but to do so in a way that retains the community's rural character, provides actual environmental benefits and coordinates with recreational uses where possible. This issue becomes more critical as new development reduces opportunities while increasing the level of demand for preserved greenspace. As a priority among the greenspace issues discussed above, the City must work to protect the ecology along local waterways to provide direct benefits with flood control, preserving water quality and providing natural buffers and scenic beauty.
- *Need for improved management of greenspace* – Dawsonville needs further measures to monitor the protection of preserved greenspace and to include preserved greenspace in recreation plans. Land set aside for natural resource protection should be monitored to ensure its protection, and the City should work to ensure that the lands pursued for preservation can provide the most benefit to local natural resources.
- *Need to review tree and landscaping policies* – As the level and variety of development increases the City should review existing policies regarding tree planting/preservation and landscaping requirements. Emphasis should be placed on benefiting the local ecology and targeting lands within environmentally sensitive areas.

**Opportunities:**

- *Incorporation of greenspace within new development* - The City does have regulations encouraging conservation design. These policies should be reviewed to make sure they emphasize protection of environmentally sensitive areas as recognized by the City.
- *Improved resources for natural resource management* - Advances in technology and environmental science now allow for more effective management policies. City efforts to protect the environment can outline definitive actions that build upon public awareness and utilize improved sources of information to better achieve preservation objectives.
- *Strong levels of public support* - The preservation of natural resources has become more critical to Dawsonville residents, the result of a strong links between area resources, the local economy and the community's character. Dawsonville is still regarded as a rural

town and is recognized for its proximity to popular lakes, rivers and mountains, and as a result these resources are considered vital to the community's well being.

### *Cultural Resources*

Cultural resources are those man-made sites, structures and resources that contribute to the identity of a community. Such resources are typically classified as historic or non-historic and are often viewed as having a worth beyond their direct economic value. Historic resources are typically defined as buildings, objects or sites that are listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places because of their associations with certain times and people in history. Non-historic resources are defined as popular civic or public resources that play a key part in local culture, such as new parks, a civic center or theatre halls.

#### ***Issues:***

- *Need to prepare an updated comprehensive survey* of the historic resources of Dawsonville, Georgia. This would include buildings, structures and sites deemed notable in the city's history prior to 1957.
- *Need to recognize existing resources.* Encourage the inclusion of all worthy historic buildings, structures, sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places and the Georgia Register of Historic Places.
- *Need to support local interest groups.* Encourage and support the Dawson County Historical Society's efforts to educate the general public on the importance and benefits of protecting cultural resources.
- *Need to take advantage of local sources.* Utilize regional, state, federal, and university programs that provide funding, staff, and services to enhance future historic preservation programs for the City of Dawsonville.
- *Need to encourage the adaptive reuse of existing resources.* Promote the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures.
- *Need to promote preservation through the use of municipal regulation.* Update the city's historic preservation ordinance in order to better protect downtown resources; establish a preservation commission which would solely oversee architectural and design reviews of new construction and external alteration of existing structures within the historic district.
- *Need to expand local qualifications.* Become a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Natural Resources.

**Community Assessment & Participation Program**

*City of Dawsonville Comprehensive Plan: 2006 - 2030*

- *Need to promote preservation Economics.* Encourage property owners to take advantage of Federal and State investment tax credits available for the substantial rehabilitation of historic structures.
- *Need for conferencing center* – Dawsonville does not have a civic center capable of hosting a variety of public functions and sizable crowds. Renovations to the Thunder Road Museum will provide improved meeting spaces but will not suffice as a central indoor gathering space for large-scale civic and cultural functions.
- *Need to redevelop the Thunder Road/City Hall site* – Plans for this are nearing completion, however the scale of the project suggest the need remains until the plans are realized. Completion of this effort will revitalize the central city’s economy and character, allowing Dawsonville to more aggressively pursue additional redevelopment efforts.
- *Need to continue plans to revitalize downtown* – Unlike the Thunder Road/City Hall redevelopment the City’s plans for downtown Dawsonville do not have the benefit of unified property ownership or financing. The existing plans require additional, more detailed implementation strategies and must be coordinated with several other specialty plans such as Corridor Improvement Studies and Historic Resource Protection policies. Yet the redevelopment of downtown is just as critical to the City’s economy and culture.
- *Need to coordinate new development within the existing community* - In order for Dawsonville to retain its identity and character, new development should be designed so as to compliment the existing community. This entails proper connectivity and access to transportation networks, comparable styles of architecture and, when involving infill development, matching the prevailing scale and massing of surrounding structures.

***Opportunities:***

- *Redevelopment plans for downtown and Thunder Road/City Hall* – While there has been little progress beyond the planning stage, there are completed plans with progressive implementation measures and the likelihood of immediate investment. The City knows what types and scales of development are desired and projected and now must merely follow through with the intentions.
- *Public support for maintaining the Dawsonville’s character* – The existing plans for redeveloping downtown and the Thunder Road/City Hall site were accomplished with strong levels of public input and prospective financial support. The plans try to build off the existing elements and character of Dawsonville, as directed by local residents. Such public buy-in suggests implementation will also be supported by residents and receive full cooperation.

- *Link downtown pedestrian and bicycle corridors* – The redevelopment of downtown should emphasize the use of alternate forms of travel. Biking and walking trails serve to lessen automobile traffic and can be linked to existing natural trail systems found within the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area.

### *Community Facilities and Services*

Public facilities and services are those elements vital to a population's health, safety, and welfare that are most effectively provided by the public sector, such as sewerage, law enforcement and school services. This element examines the community's ability to adequately serve the present and projected demands for such services, identifying concerns with the spatial distribution and conditions affecting service delivery. These assessments can then assist in projecting future demands and in planning future capital improvement projects.

#### ***Issues:***

- *Viability of water and sewer service* – Dawsonville is one of several communities purchasing its water and sewer service from the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority. In order for the City to properly plan for and attract quality growth it must ensure the quality and long-term viability of these services.
- *Demand for a Civic Center* – Dawsonville does not have a formal Civic Center for hosting a variety of indoor events. Renovations are planned for the Thunder Road Museum/ City Hall complex that will provide improved meeting space but there is demand for some small convention space to support local and tourist events.

#### ***Opportunities:***

- *Planned renovations to Thunder Road/ City Hall* – This facility is scheduled for several modifications in the near future to accommodate both the reopening of the Museum and improvements for the City offices and meeting spaces.
- *New/ Expanded schools* – The Dawson County Board of Education does have plans for at least one new school and several facility expansions that should accommodate increases in enrollment and allow for the use of modern technology.
- *New Parks and Recreation Plan* – The County adopted a new Parks and recreation Master Plan in 2005 that will guide new land purchases and facility improvements through the next 20+ years. Parks and recreation management is done on behalf of both the County and the City.

### *Transportation*

Transportation plays a large role in shaping the development patterns and options within a community and must often be assessed independently because it functions as part utility, part facility and part service. The demands for transportation facilities and services vary by land use, demographics and other factors, giving the issue of accessibility a very dynamic nature and requiring multiple measures for determining functional performance.

- *Balancing local traffic and commercial traffic* – As Dawsonville and Dawson County grow more suburban the major corridors will become viable for multiple uses. Uses that, at times can lead to competing priorities, particularly in balancing through and tourist traffic with that of local residents. The City must balance its overall priorities for growth, character and land use management to ensure clear priorities for all major roadways to ensure an efficient transportation system.
- *Maintaining the access corridors* – Connectivity to Hwy 400 is a chief priority for residents and businesses alike. Yet this also causes the greatest blend of uses and competing demands as discussed above. For example State Route 53 could serve as a commercial destination, gateway, scenic corridor or simple rural arterial. Management of these routes will be critical to determining a vision for the community and the effectiveness of measures to achieve that vision.
- *Improving access to mass transit* – Few opportunities exist for alternative modes of transportation, either as a local service or as commuter service into metropolitan Atlanta. Though demand is not high for such modes at present, both the rate and styles of growth projected for the near future suggest a strong need for such alternatives in order to mitigate transportation concerns for the City.
- *Long-Range Road Improvement Plan* - The city is served by many of the county's roads, specifically Burt Creek Road, and State Routes 53, 9, 142 and 136 located in the north section of the city, also serves as a major corridor. The expansion to the north will prompt development and increased travel demand. There is a need to develop a focused road improvement program to guide public investment in the future, and to connect future land use planning with transportation planning.
- *Burt Creek/Shoal Creek/Dawsonville Bypass area* - This intersection area brings together three major transportation routes. A focused transportation study is needed to determine alternative road designs and locations. Findings from this study can guide future public investment in corridor preservation.

### **Opportunities:**

- *Establishment of Pedestrian and/or Bike Planning* - The city has begun steps to improve pedestrian infrastructure with a long-term master plan that coordinates pedestrian interconnectivity between the historic downtown district and the newer development along Ga. Hwy 53, Ga. Hwy. 9, Allen Street, and Dawsonville By-Pass. There is an opportunity to build connectivity to State Bicycle Highway 90. The development of bicycle and pedestrian routes in the near term may prove beneficial by allowing for coordination with future road improvement projects and establishing a plan before land becomes too scarce or costly.



- *Proposed Dawsonville Bypass* - Completion of this perimeter road will reduce congestion in the historic district, improve freight movement within the city and county, and safety for local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists sharing the road. A focused transportation study is recommended to determine alternative routes. Findings from this study can guide future public investment in corridor preservation.

### *Intergovernmental Coordination*

Neighboring jurisdictions share environmental features, coordinated transportation systems and many socio-economic ties. In order to provide the efficient and effective delivery of governmental services such relationships require coordinated planning between counties, cities and all public sector organizations. This element will assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of the community and begin to articulate issues and goals surrounding community policies and objectives that, in many cases, involve multiple governmental entities.

### *Issues:*

- *Service Delivery* – The Service Delivery Strategy will be updated as part of this planning process, which is critical to ensure the provision of these services is accurate, consistent and done efficiently.
- *Annexation and growth management* – The City is under pressure from development to expand boundaries and service areas. This requires not only coordination as part of the Service Delivery Agreement but also effective planning by the City to ensure the proper quality of growth introduced to the area.
- *Coordination with affiliated organizations* – As Dawsonville and Dawson County experience rapid growth and change it becomes more important that the governments are coordinating their actions with those of all affiliated support organizations such as the School Board, Development Authority and others.

### *Opportunities:*

- *Existing City/ County cooperative actions* – Measures such as the Service Delivery Agreement and the Special Purpose Local Option Tax (SPLOST) provide an existing framework for expanding cooperation and communication between governments.
- *The City's proposed annexation policies* – The City of Dawsonville has adopted policies for guiding future annexation and land management that will aid discussions with the County regarding these processes.
- *Expanded economic opportunities* – Projections for the area suggest a growing and more diversified economy and an overall increase in the quality of life for area residents. While there will be pressures to capitalize on these trends, the City and County will also have a greater array of resources to aid in all facets of community development, especially with planning, communication and education.

*Land Use*

Land use regulations represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. An assessment of land use conditions allows governments to produce the effective land use regulations needed to serve projected development demands generated from other comprehensive plan elements.

***Issues:***

- *Attracting quality infill development* – Dawsonville has select properties suitable for infill development but must work to ensure they're developed in ways compatible with the existing and proposed context of the City.
- *Incompatible land uses* – Dawsonville will be subject to competing land uses and development interests along the arterial corridors within the City and in the transition areas between the rural county and the established, urban portions of the city.
- *Accommodating new growth* – Dawsonville will have to plan for incorporating new development into the City via annexation, requiring more studies concerning the expansion of utility service areas and monitoring of trends outside the City limits.

***Opportunities:***

- *Downtown properties available for infill/ redevelopment* – Dawsonville does have land and properties available for (re)development within the central City that can contribute to the revitalization of downtown.
- *Downtown redevelopment plans* – Redevelopment plans have already been completed for Downtown and the Thunder Road Museum/ City Hall site, and now the City is working on a similar plan for the central city that will connect the two areas. As these are completed the City will have guidance for attracting and managing development and capital improvements contributing to the revitalization of the central city.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF DAWSONVILLE APPROVING THE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT DRAFTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING CRITERIA RELATIVE TO DEVELOPING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Dawsonville is a municipal corporation established on December 10, 1859; and

**WHEREAS**, the City provides Planning and Zoning services for its residents on all property located within the incorporated city limits; and

**WHEREAS**, in an effort to comply with the requirements of the Department of Community Affairs, the City has contracted with the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Council to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the City; and

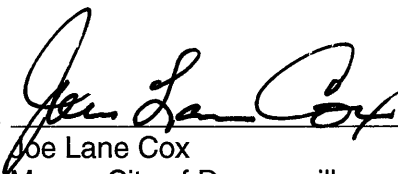
**WHEREAS**, the City Council duly advertised a meeting and public hearing to be held on Monday, March 3, 2008 for the purpose of seeking public input on the Community Assessment portion of the Comprehensive Plan as drafted by Georgia Mountains Regional Development Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council voted unanimously to approved and adopt the Community Assessment upon completion of the public hearing.

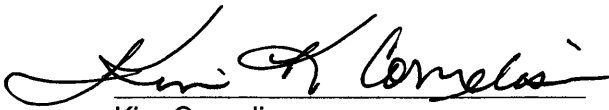
**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it hereby resolved by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Dawsonville that the City approves and adopts the Community Assessment criteria presented during a public hearing of the City Council's March 3, 2008 meeting.

SO RESOLVED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED, this 3<sup>RD</sup> day of March, 2008.

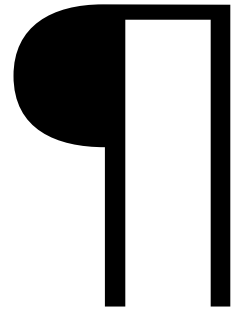
**CITY OF DAWSONVILLE**

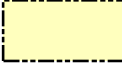



By:   
Joe Lane Cox  
Mayor, City of Dawsonville

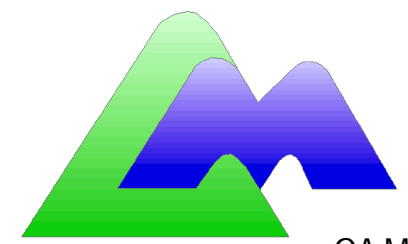
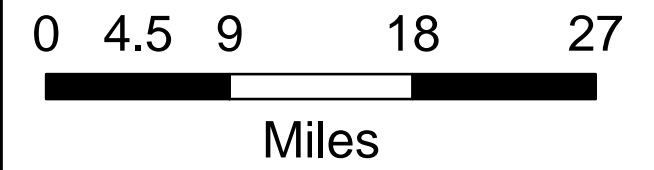
Attested to:

  
Kim Cornelison  
City Clerk, City of Dawsonville

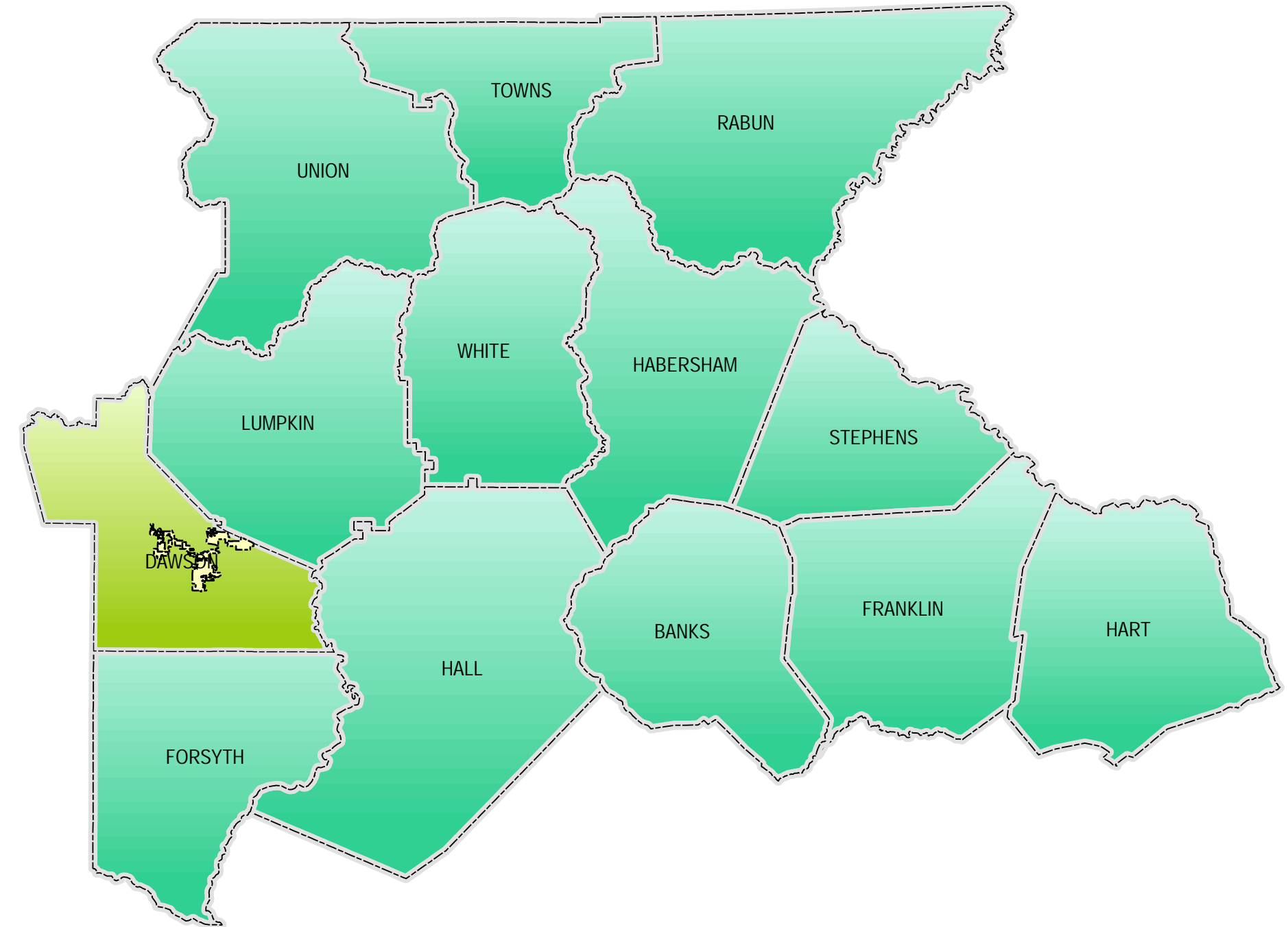
# Regional Context Dawsonville, GA



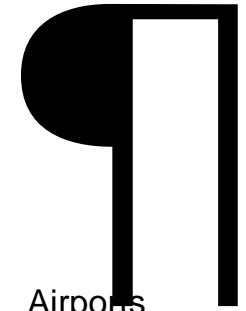
-  Dawsonville Boundary
-  Dawson County
-  GMRDC Region
-  City Limit





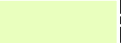




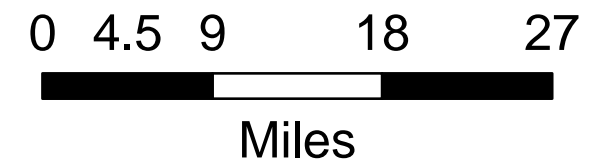
GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007



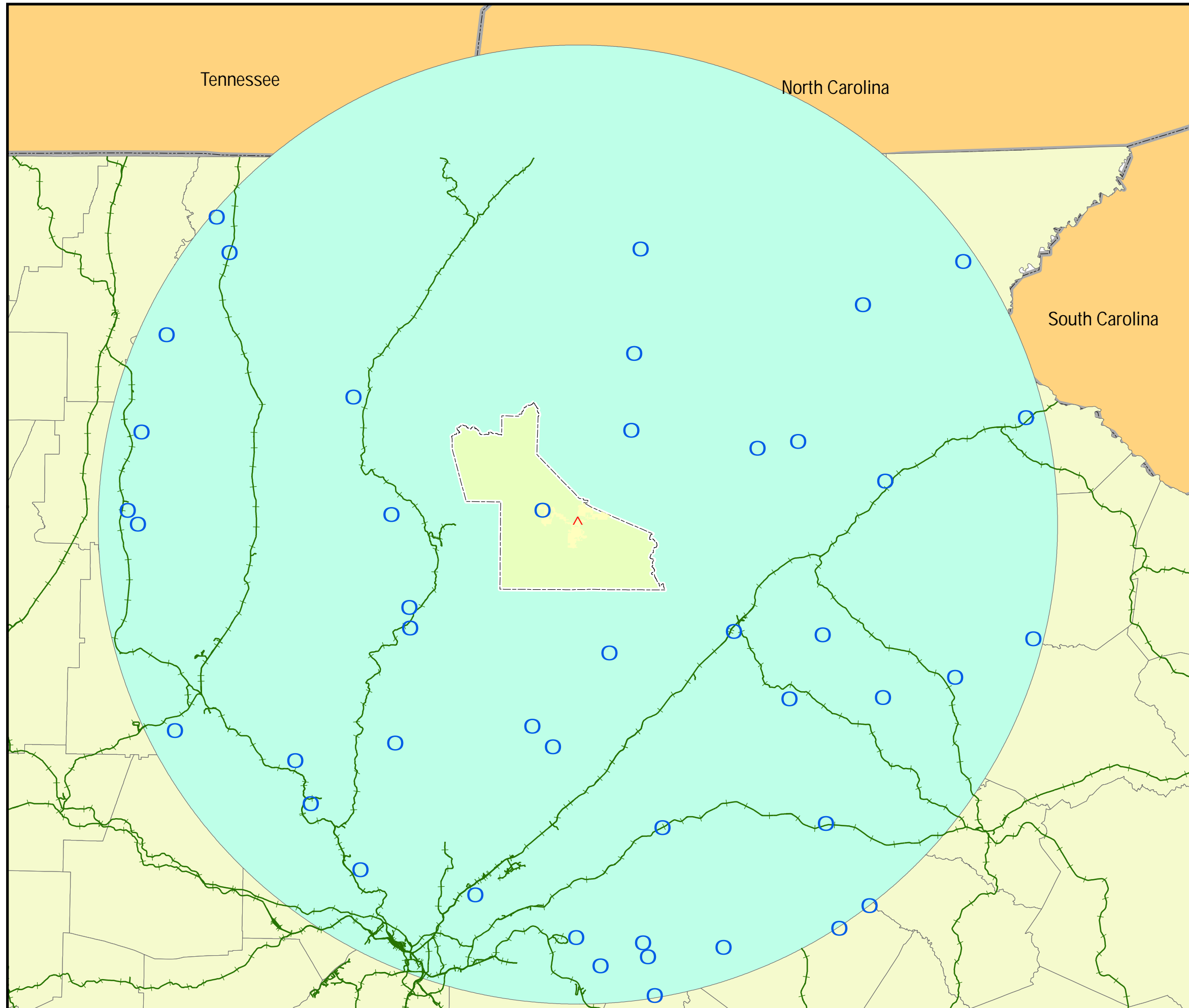
# Air and Rail Service Vicinity of Dawsonville, GA



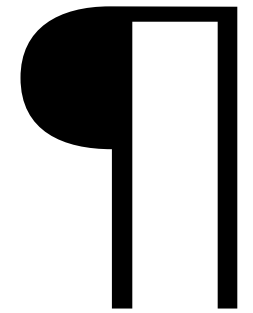
-  Airports
-  Dawsonville
-  Existing Rail Lines
-  City Boundary
-  Dawson County Boundary
-  50 Mile Radius
-  Other States


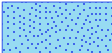








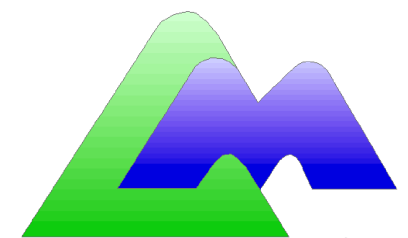
GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007



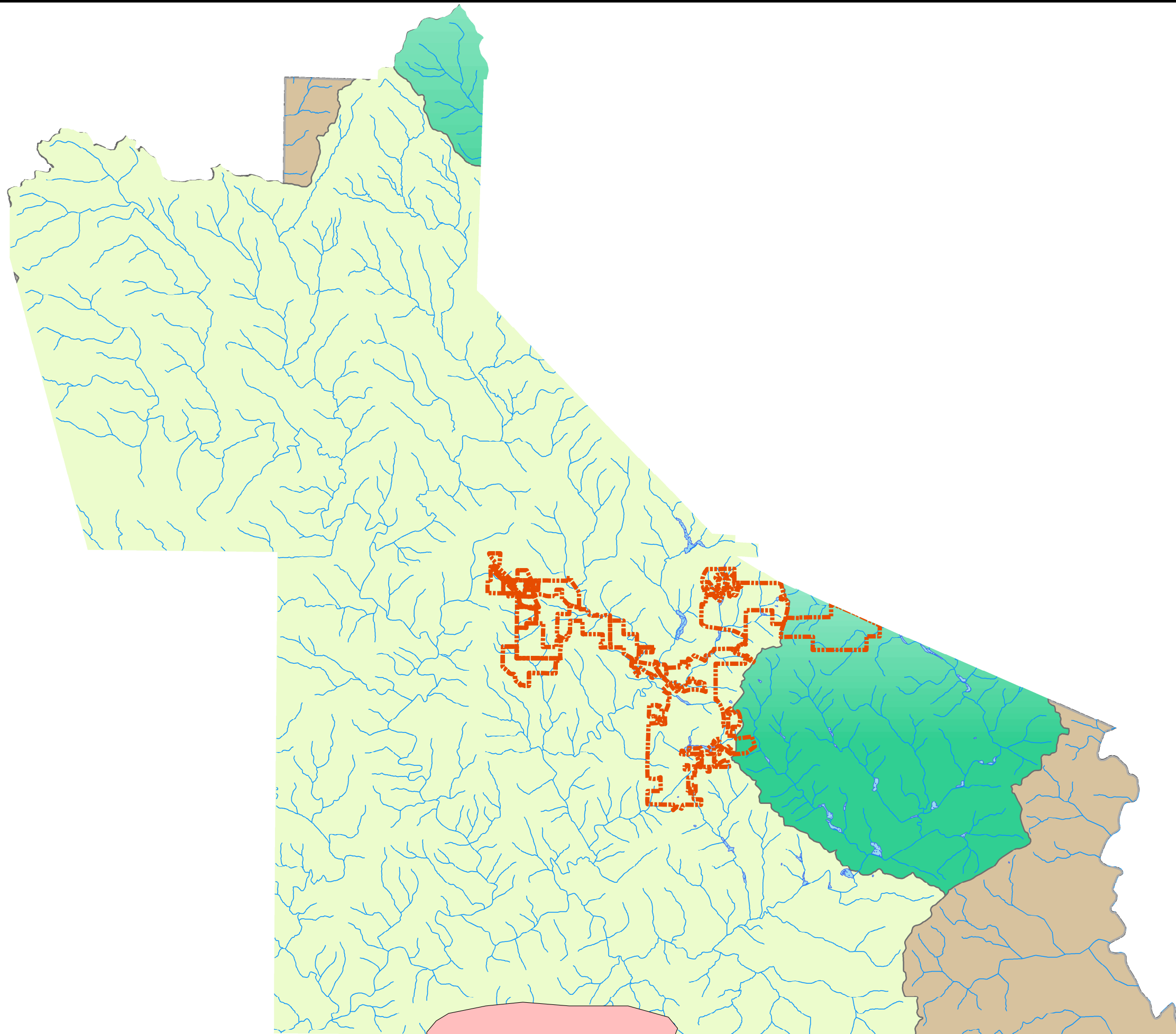
# Aquatic Resources Dawsonville, GA



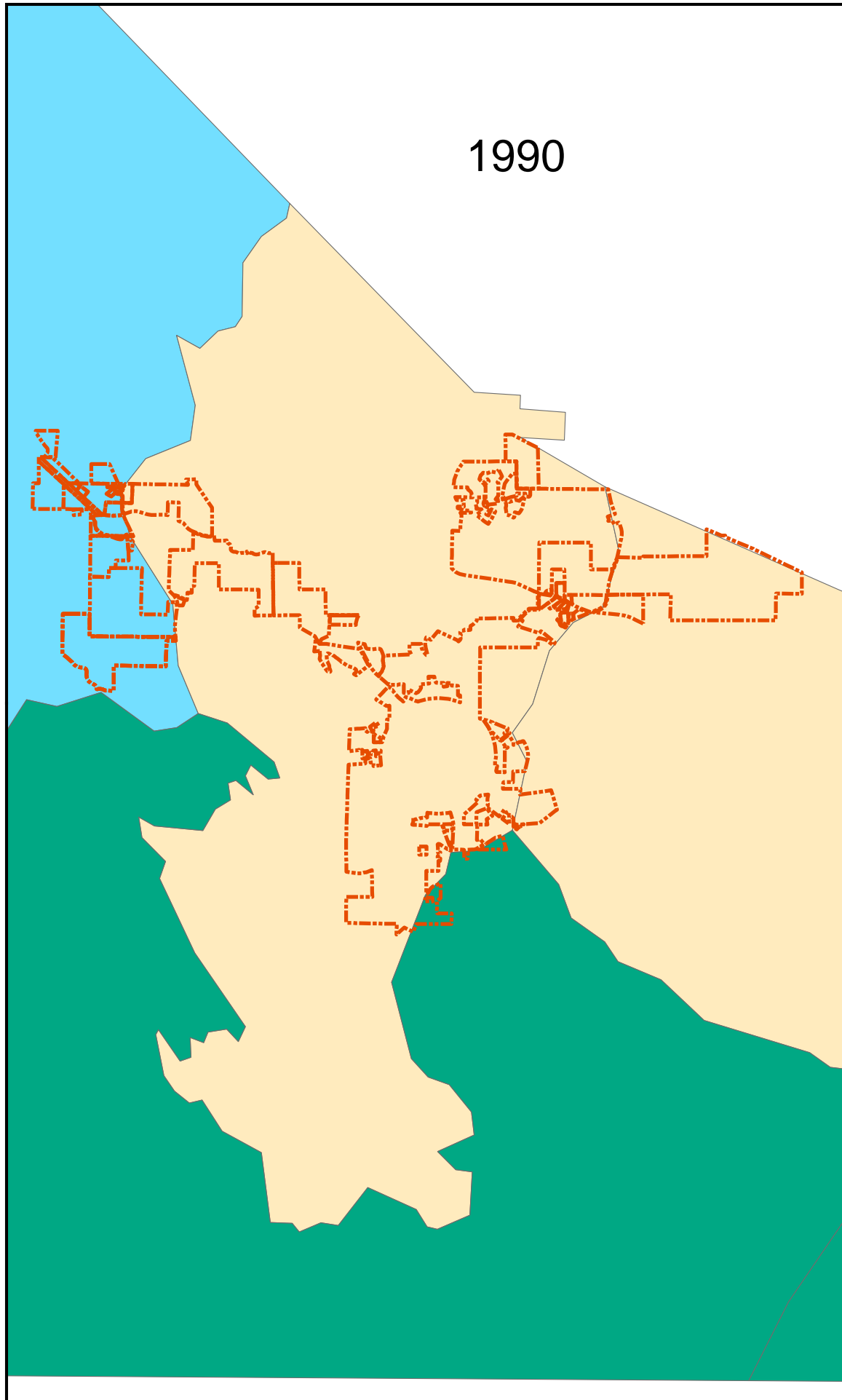
-  Groundwater Recharge Area
-  Wetland
-  Streams
-  Cherokee County, Inner Management Zone
-  Etowah, Inner Management Zone
-  Canton, Inner Management Zone
-  Dawsonville City Limits
-  County Boundary



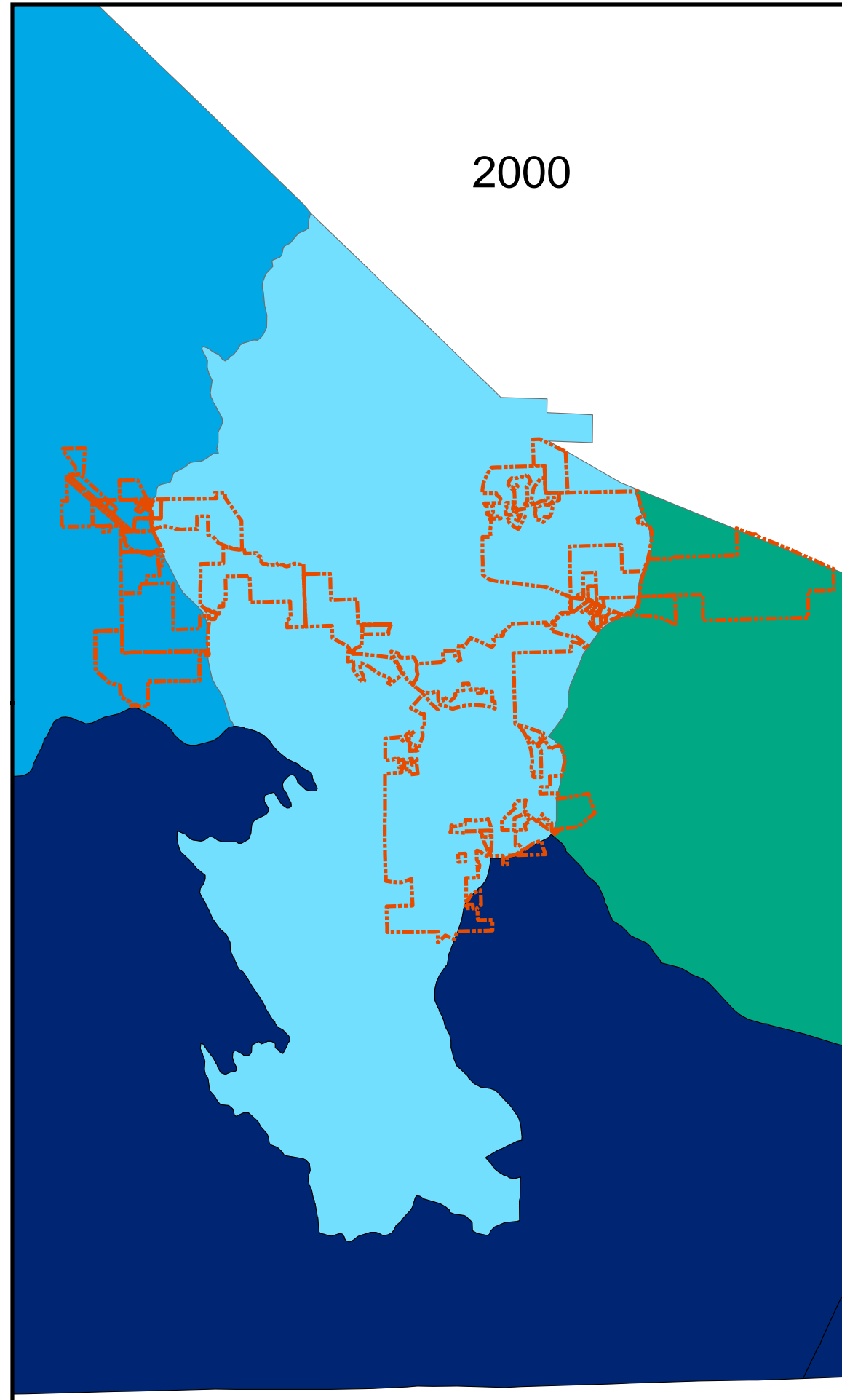
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JGD, December 2007



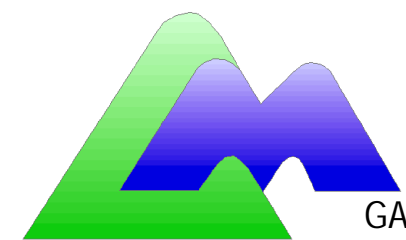
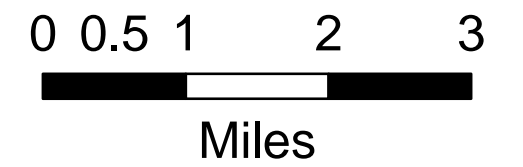
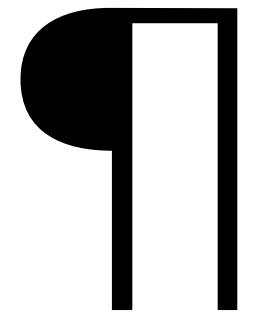
1990



2000

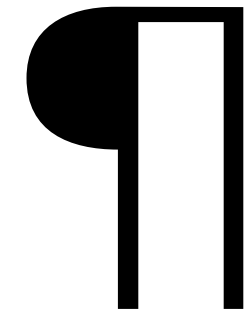







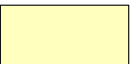




# Population Density Dawsonville, GA

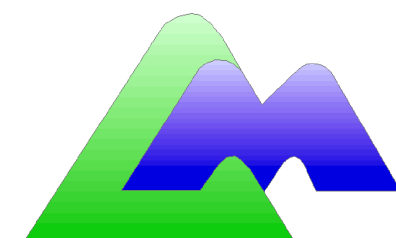
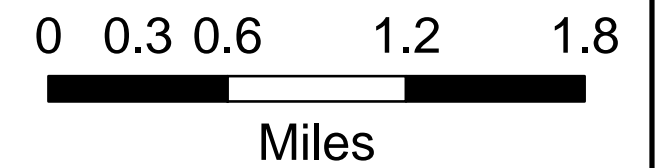


GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007

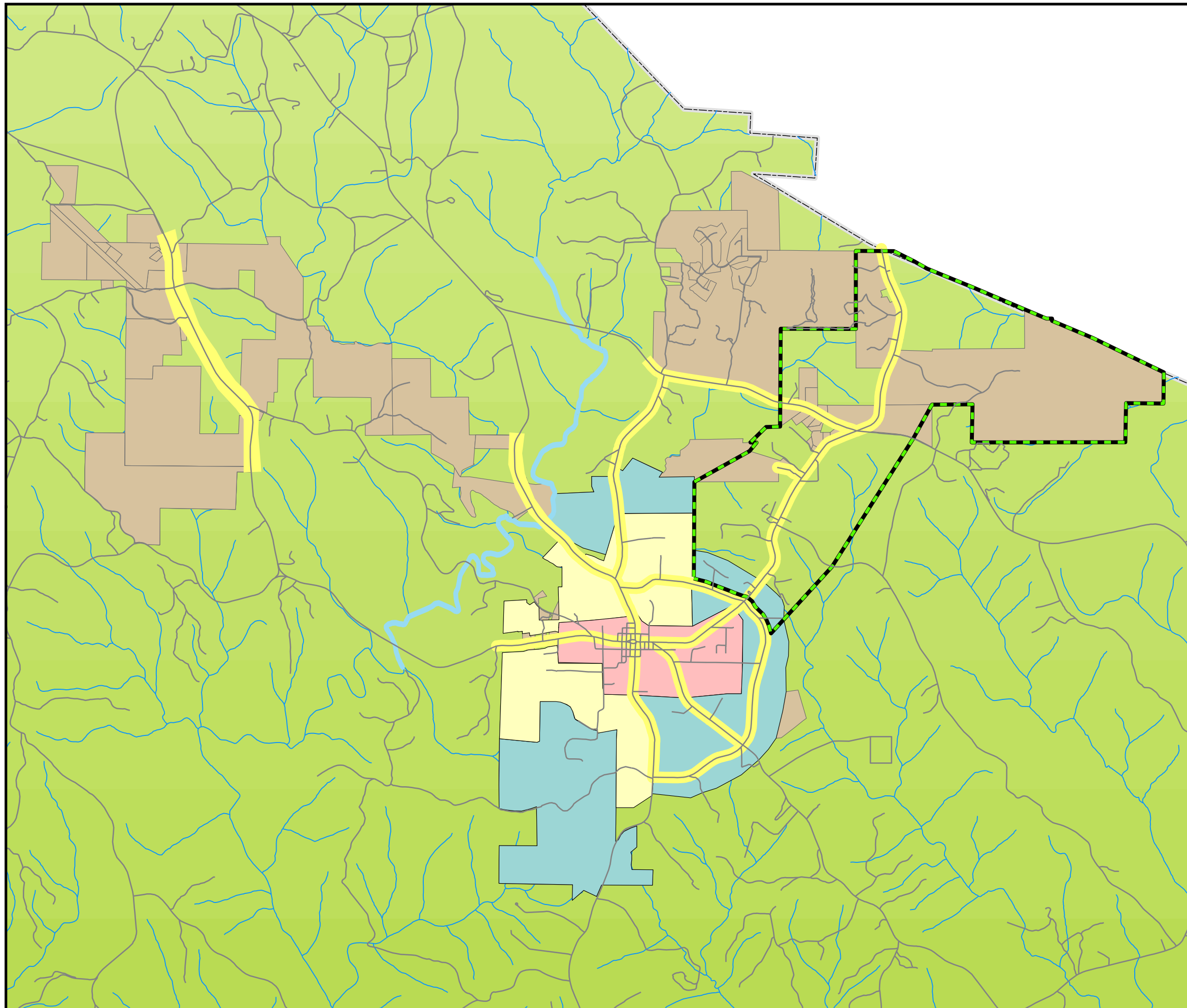
# Character Areas Dawsonville, GA



-  Roads
-  Rural Transitional Corridor
-  Arterial Corridors
-  Shoal Creek
-  Central Dawsonville
-  Urban Neighborhood
-  Urban/Rural Transitional
-  Rural Dawsonville
-  Streams
-  Dawson County Boundary

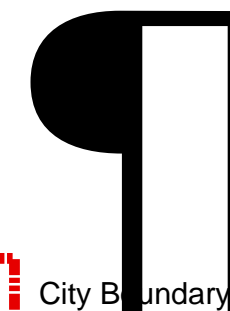



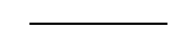








GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007



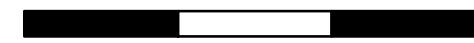


# Existing Land Use Dawsonville, GA



-  City Boundary
-  Major Roads
-  Manufactured Home Subdivision
-  Residential
-  Multi-family Residential
-  Office
-  Institutional
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  County Boundary

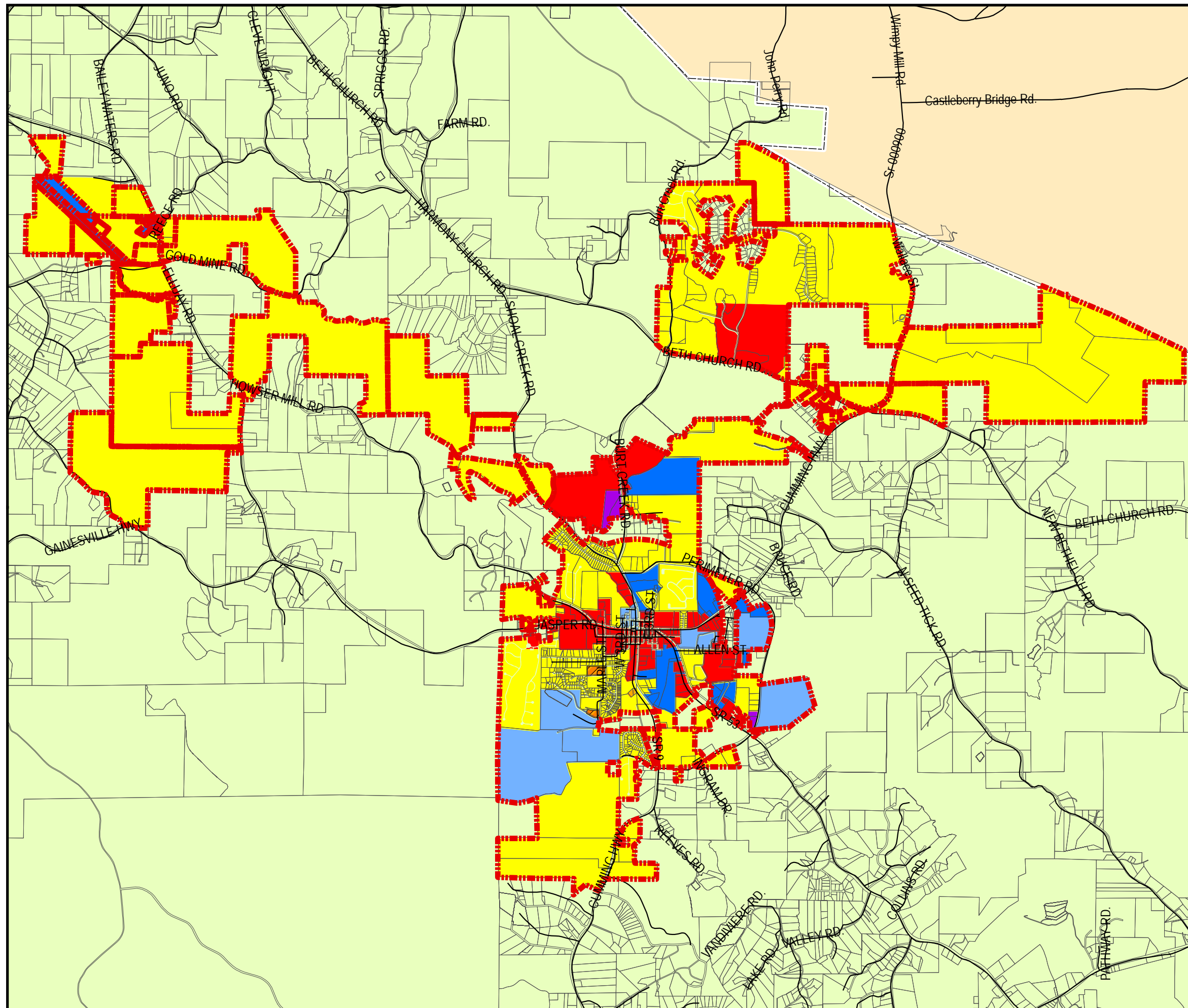
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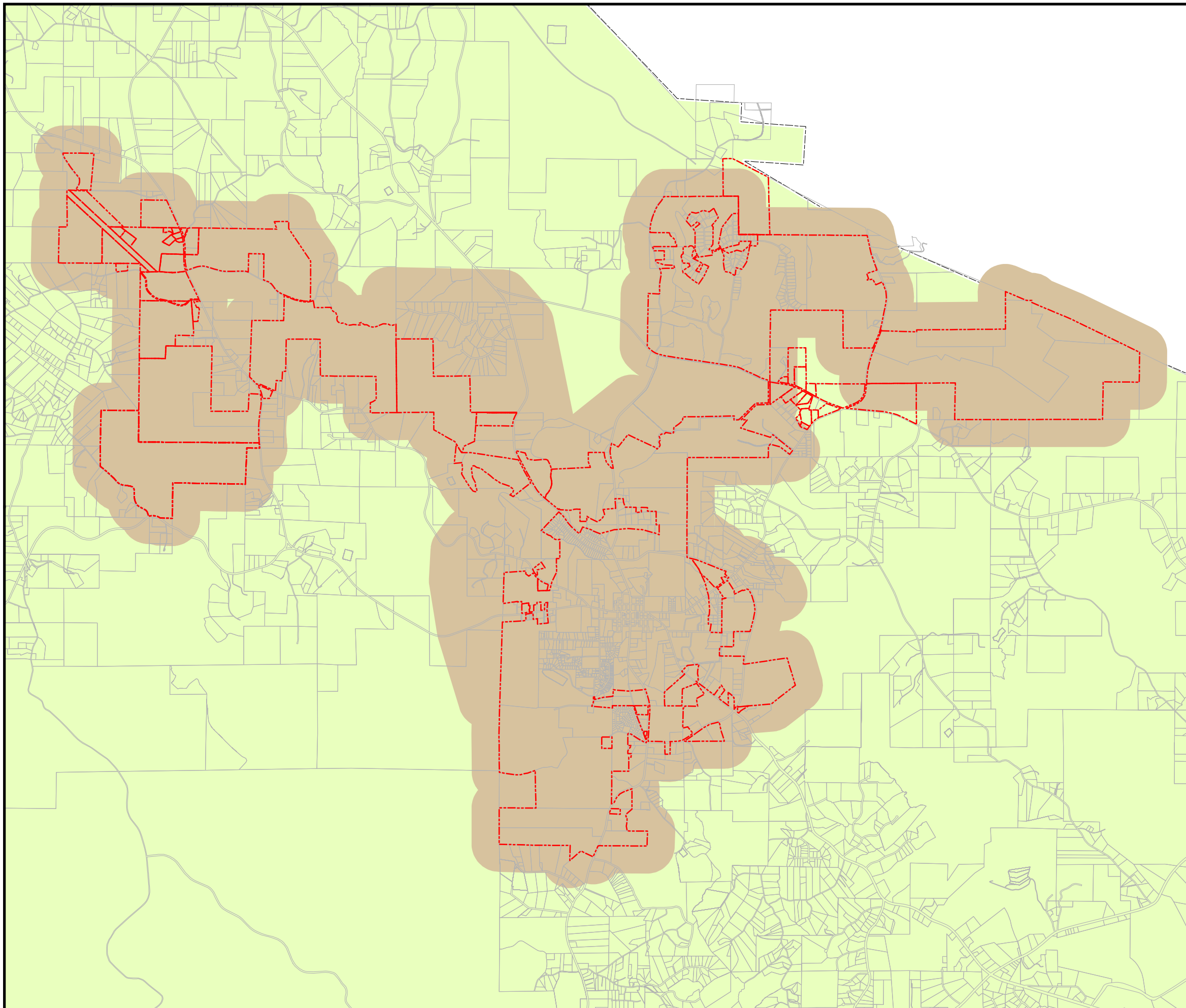
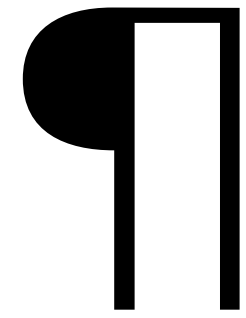
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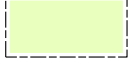


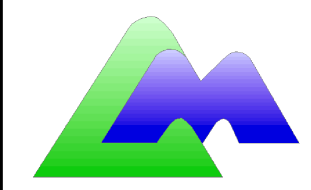
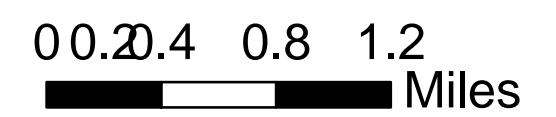
GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007



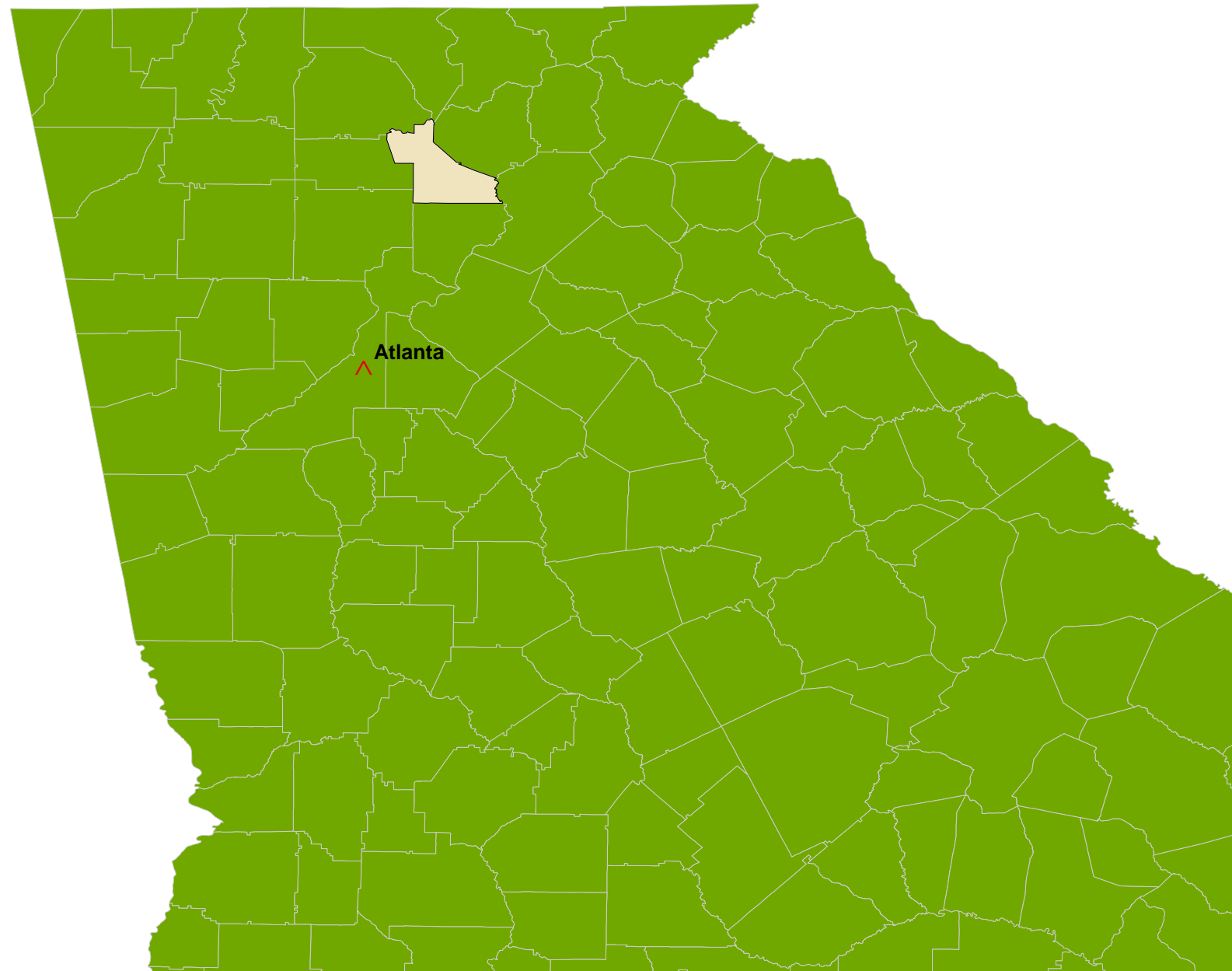
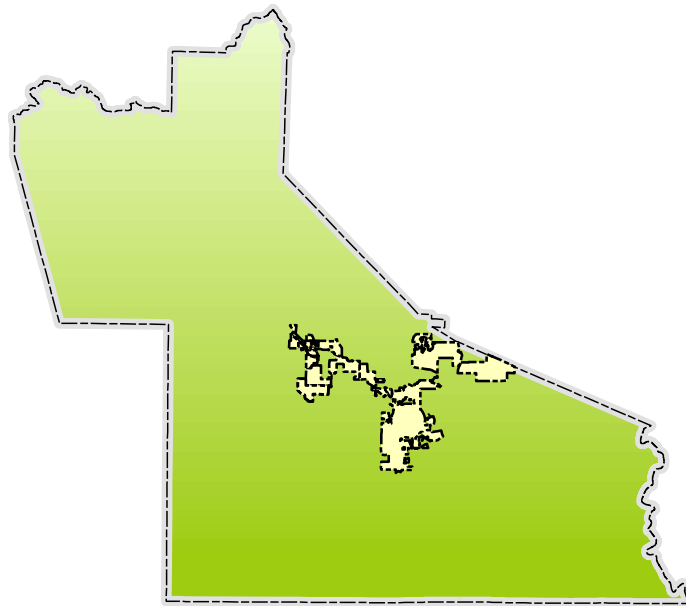
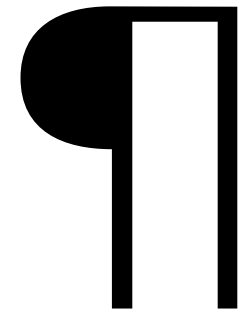
# Future Growth Boundary Dawsonville, GA

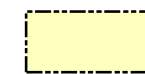

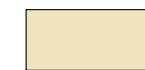


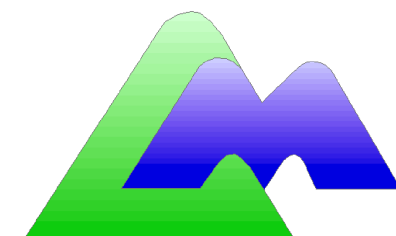
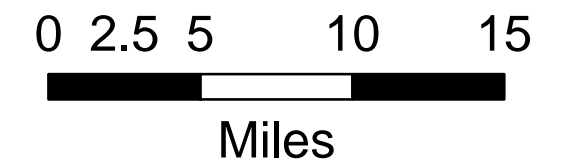
-  Dawsonville City Limits
-  Parcels
-  Future Growth Boundary
-  County Boundary



# General Location Dawsonville, GA

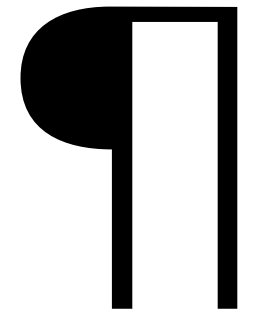





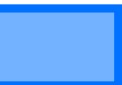

-  Dawsonville City Limit
-  Georgia County Boundary
-  Dawson County

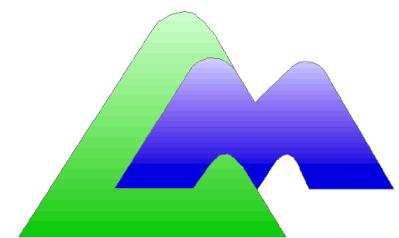
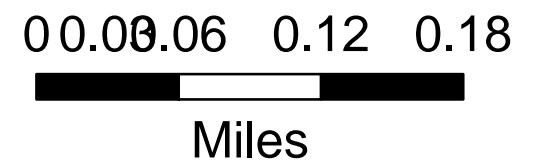


GA Mountains RDC  
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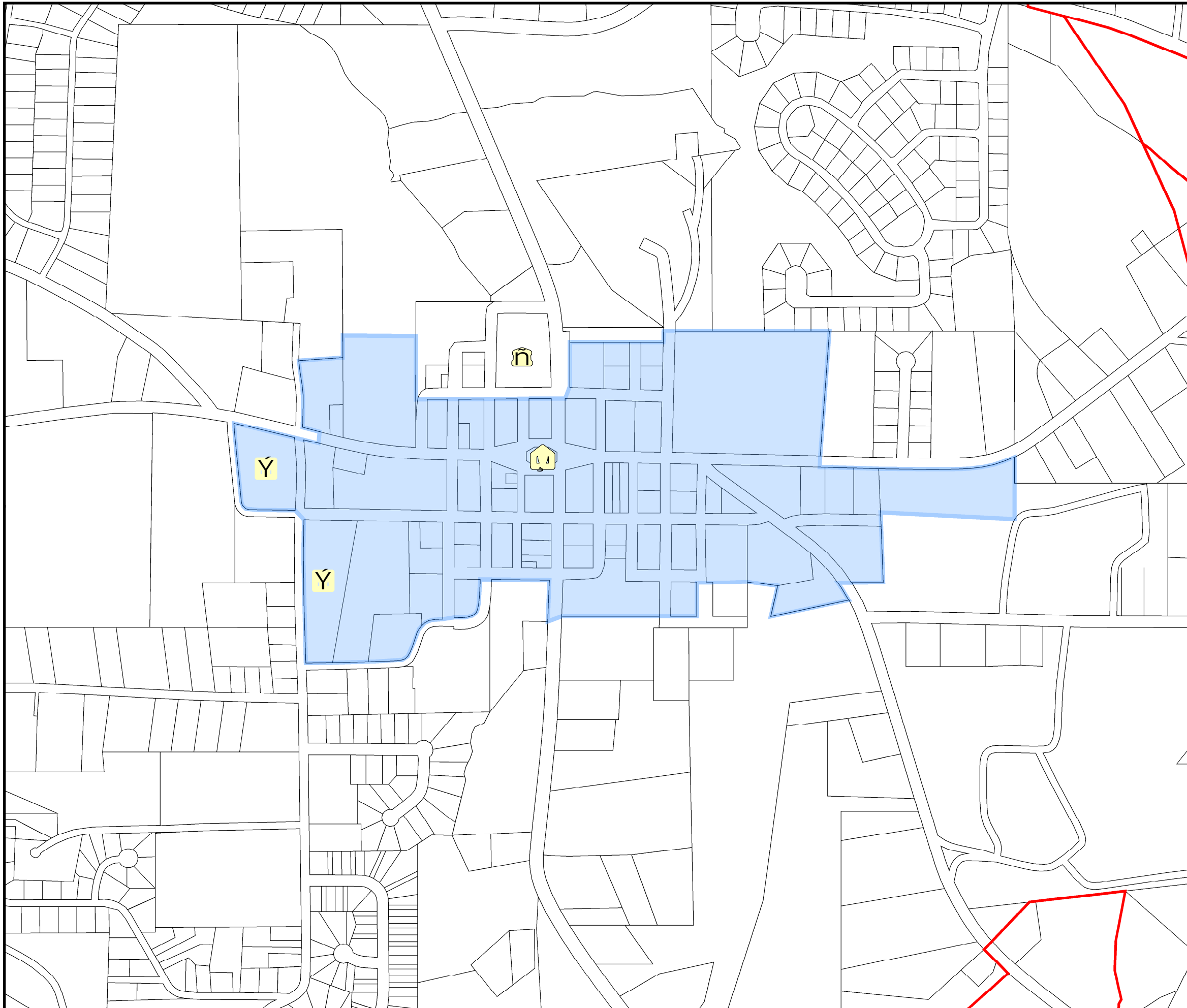
# Historic Resources Dawsonville, GA



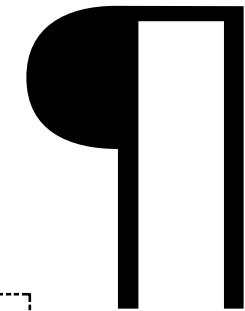
-  Cemetery
-  County Courthouse
-  Historic Courthouse
-  Historic District
-  City Limit Boundary


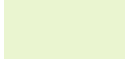








GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007

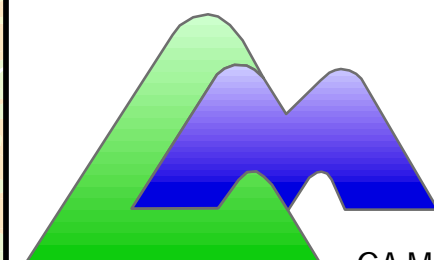


# Soil Suitability Dawsonville, GA



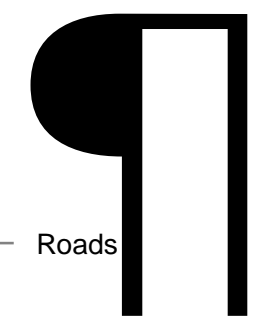
-  Dawsonville Boundary
-  Rocky/Gully/Eroded
-  Clay Loam
-  Sandy Clay Loam
-  Loam
-  Sandy Loam
-  Stony Loam
-  Dawson County Boundary

0 0.350.7 1.4 2.1  
Miles

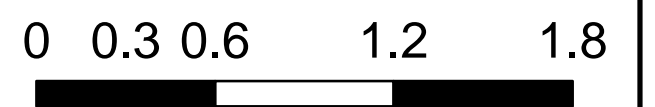


GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007

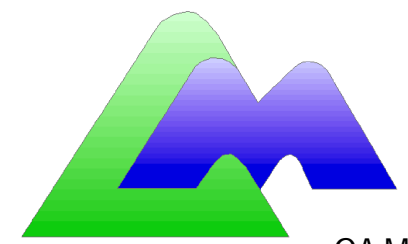
# Areas Requiring Special Attention Dawsonville, GA



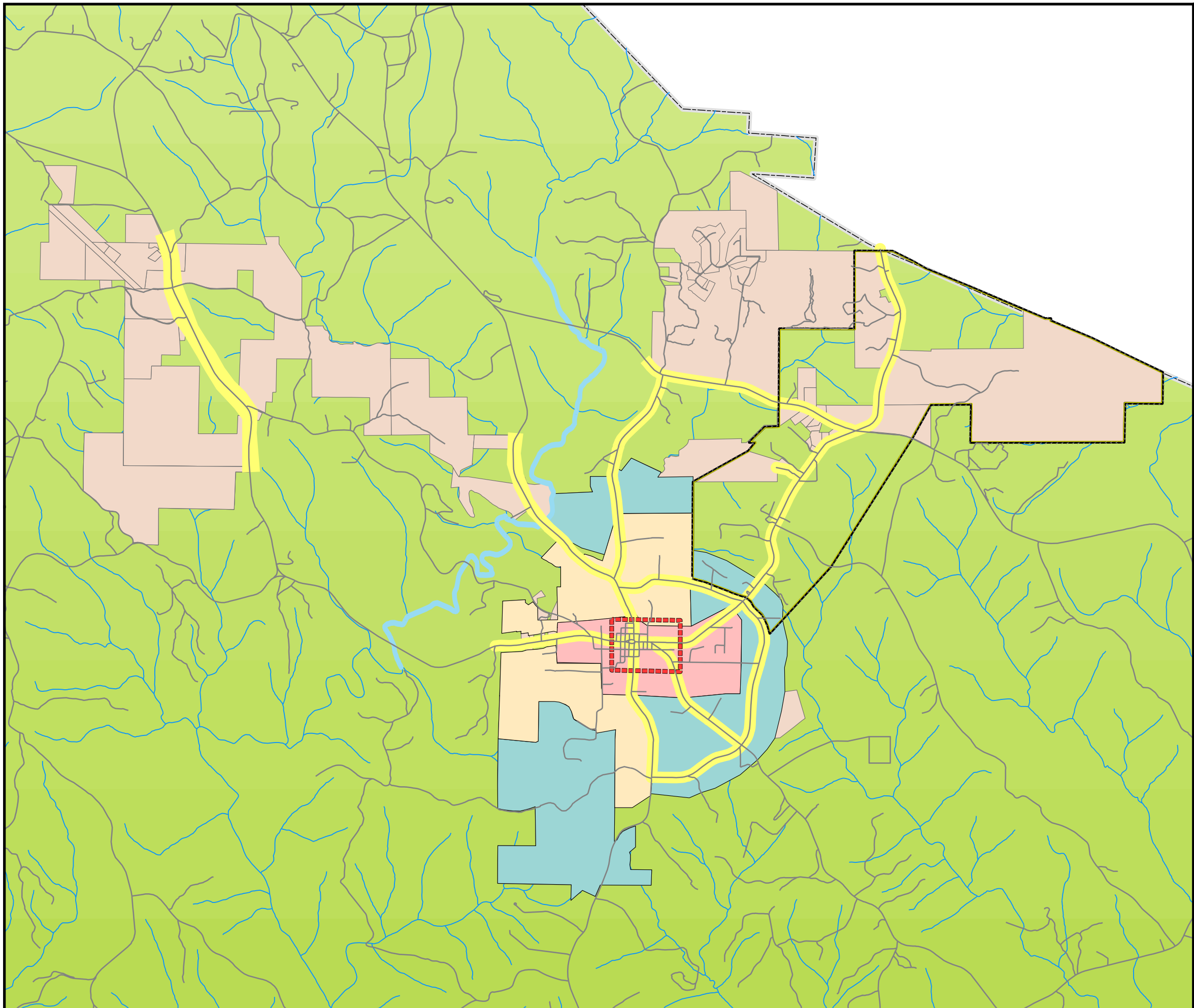
- Roads
- Central Dawsonville
- Rural Transitional Corridor
- Arterial Corridors
- Shoal Creek
- Central Dawsonville
- Urban Neighborhood
- Urban/Rural Transitional
- Dawsonville Boundary
- Streams
- Dawson County Boundary



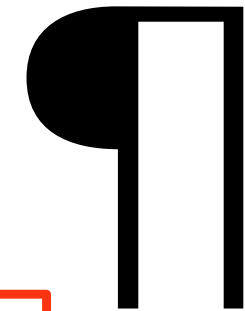
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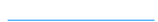
GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007





# Steep Slopes Dawsonville, GA

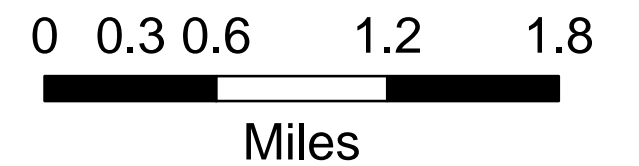


-  Dawsonville City Limits
-  Dawson County Boundary

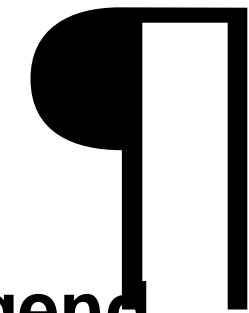
-  Roads
-  Streams

## Slope

-  0 - 20%
-  Greater than 20%

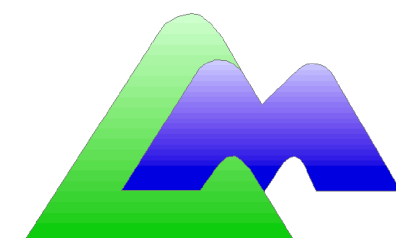


# 20-Year Level of Road Service (LOS-20) Dawsonville, GA

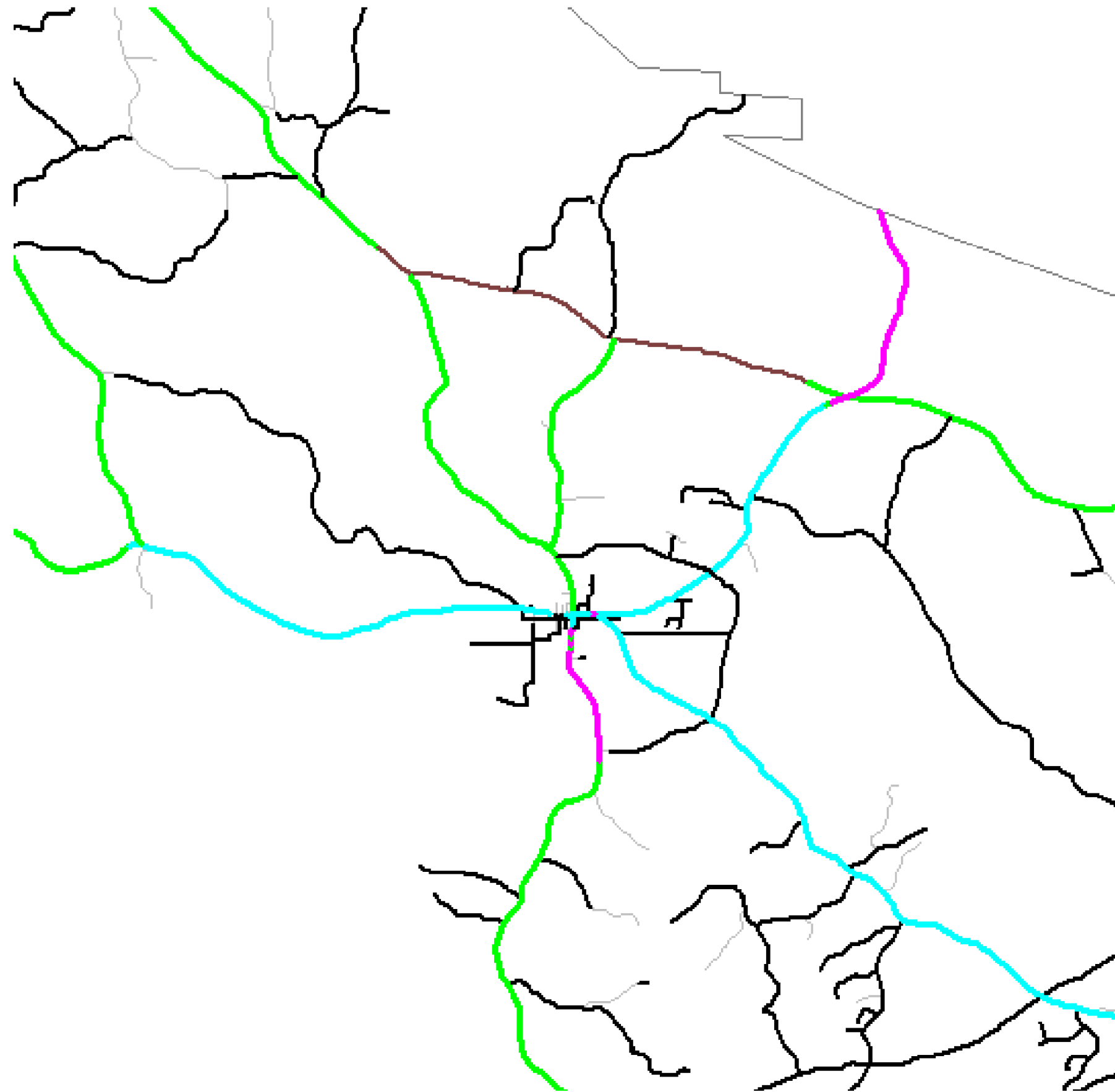


## Legend

- LOS A
- LOS B
- LOS C
- LOS D
- LOS E
- LOS F
- LOS Not Determined

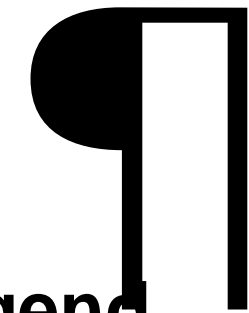


GA Mountains RDC  
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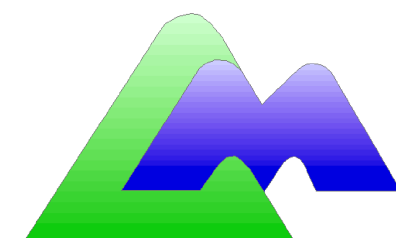


# Current Level of Road Service Dawsonville, GA

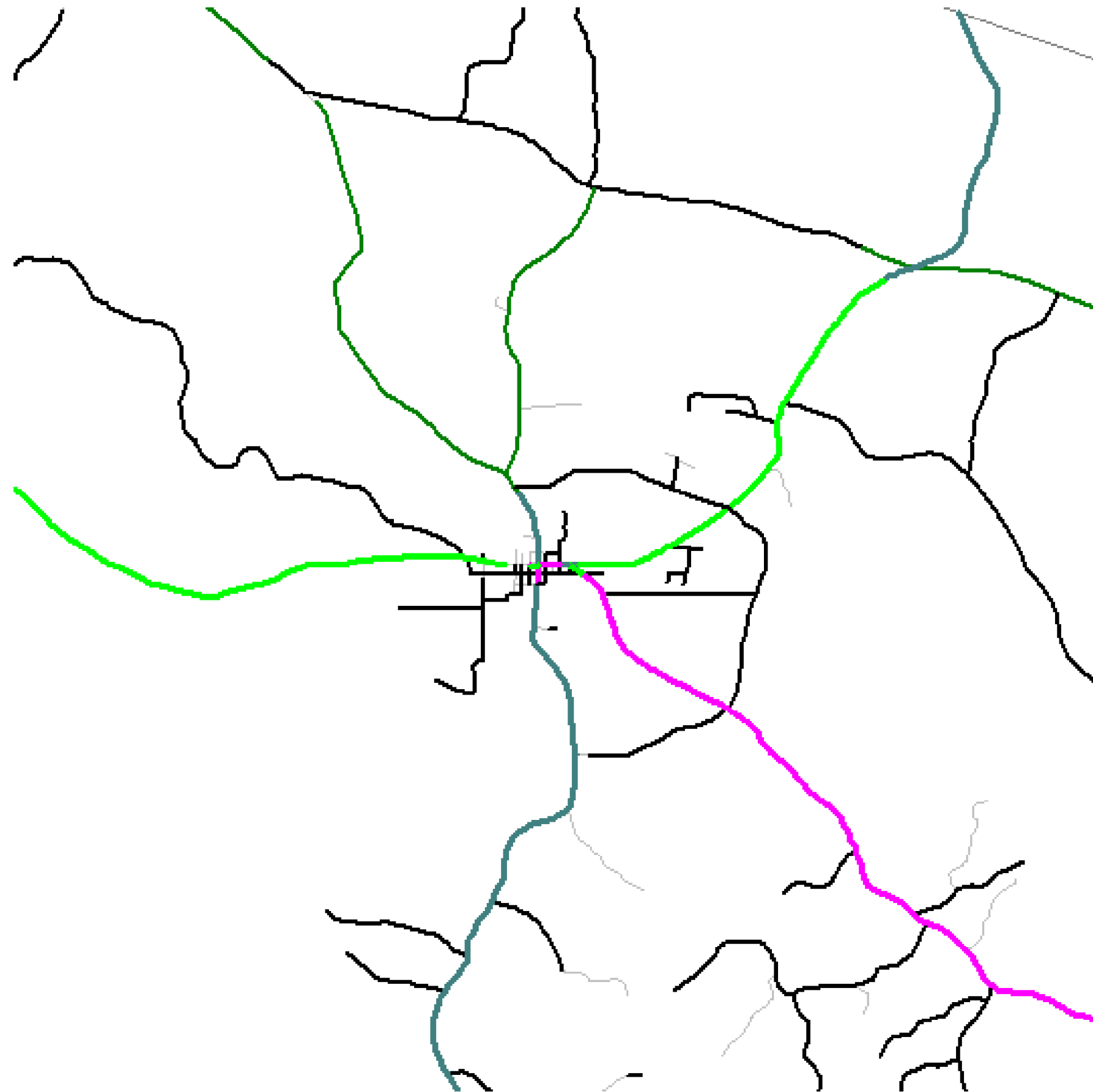


## Legend

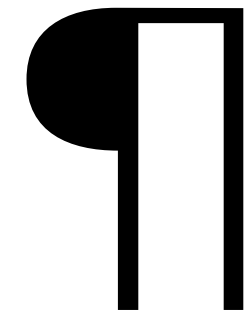
-  LOS A
-  LOS B
-  LOS C
-  LOS D
-  LOS E
-  LOS F
-  LOS Not Determined





GA Mountains RDC  
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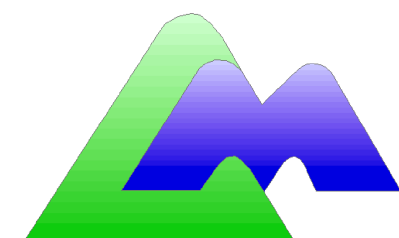


# Above-Average Accidents per Road Segment Dawsonville, GA

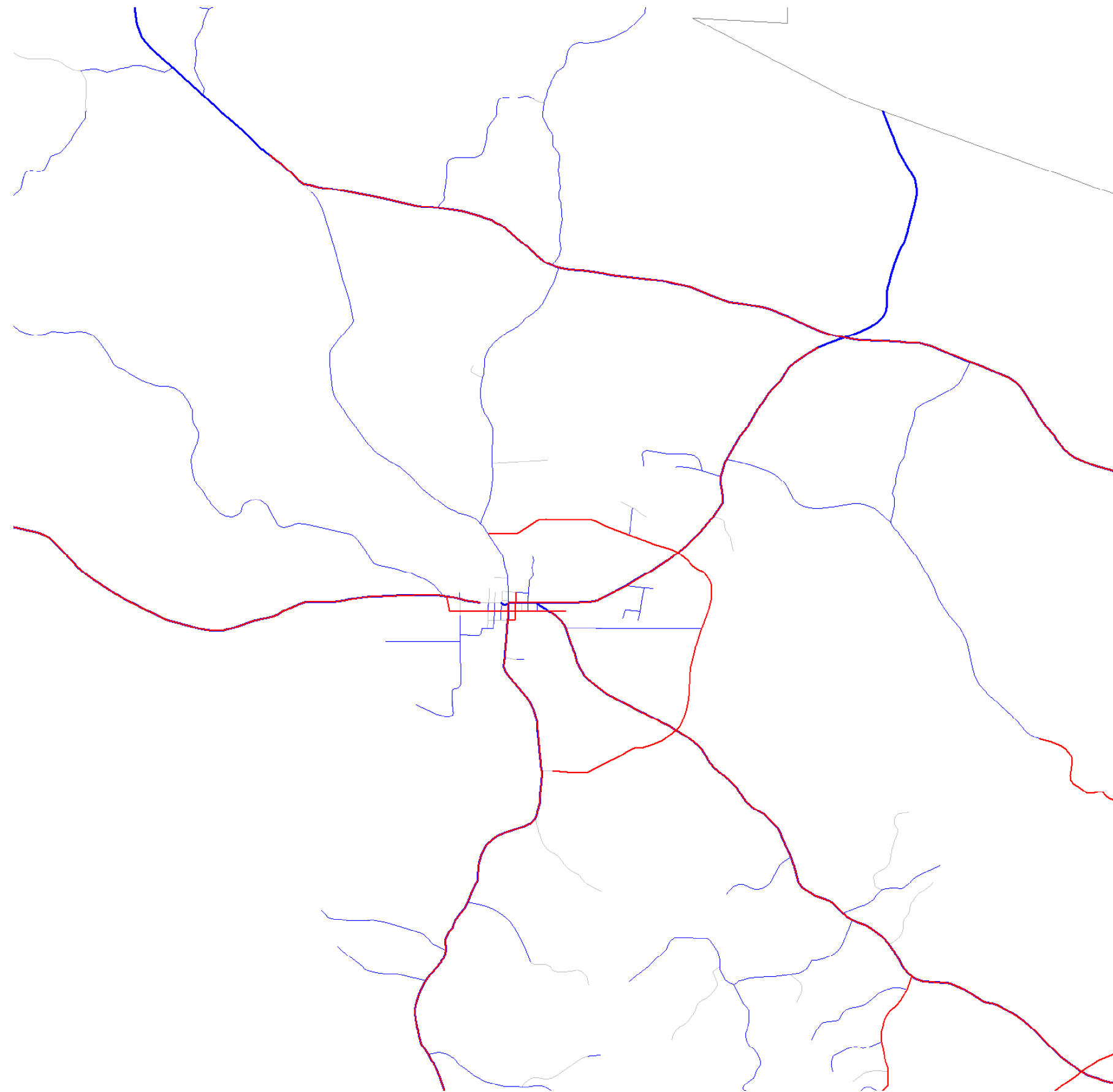


## Legend

-  Higher than Average Accidents
-  Roads

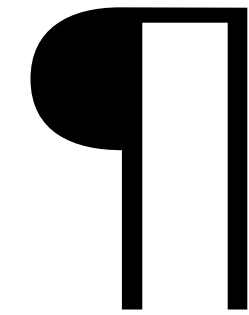


GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007





# Sidewalks Dawsonville, GA



## Legend

 Existing Sidewalks

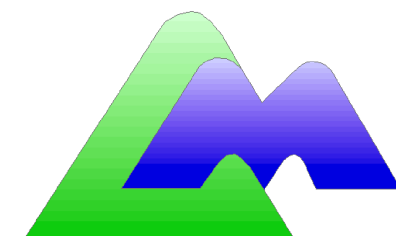
 Sidewalks- Phase I

 Sidewalks- Phase II

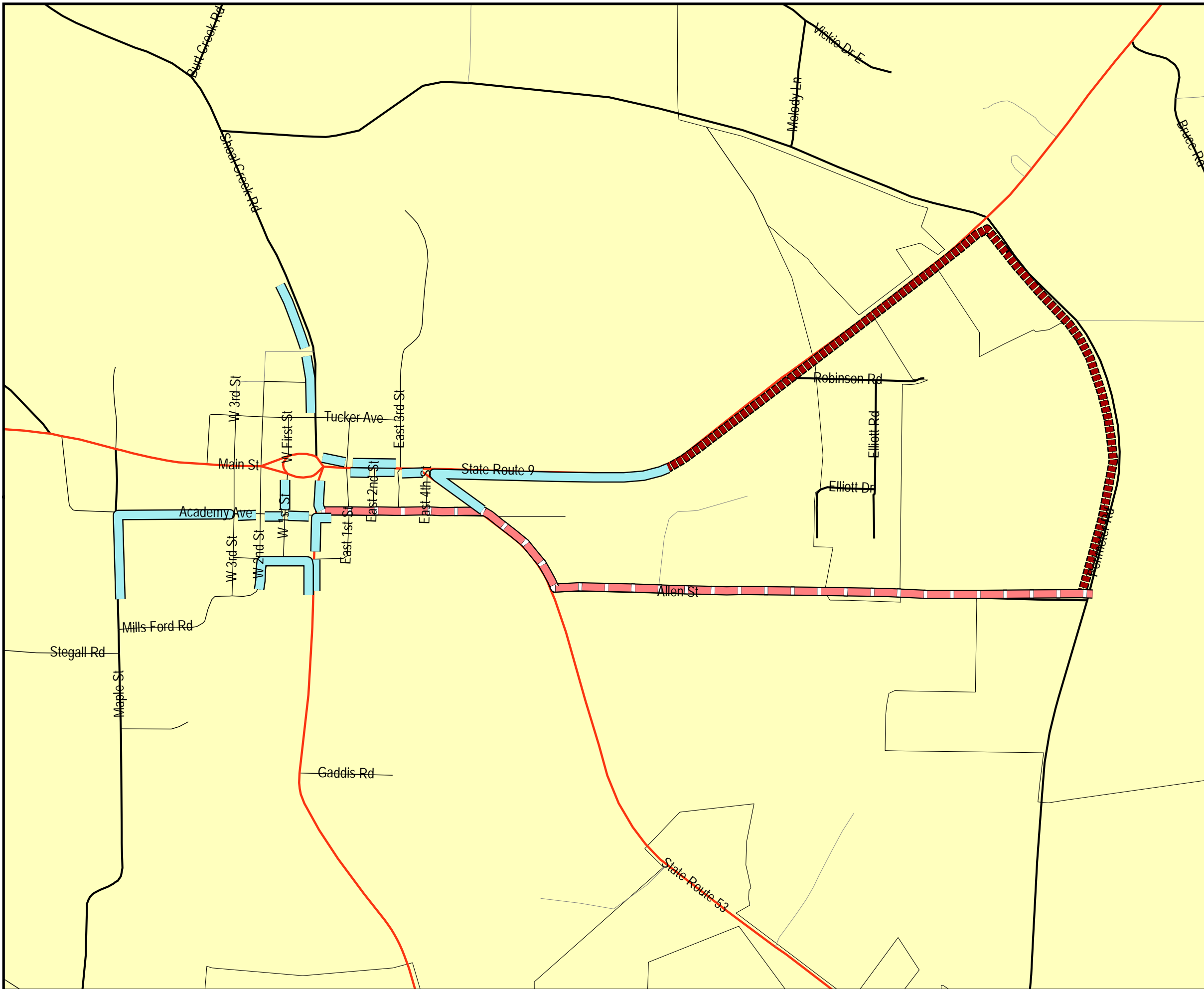
 Streets & Roads

 Dawsonville Boundary

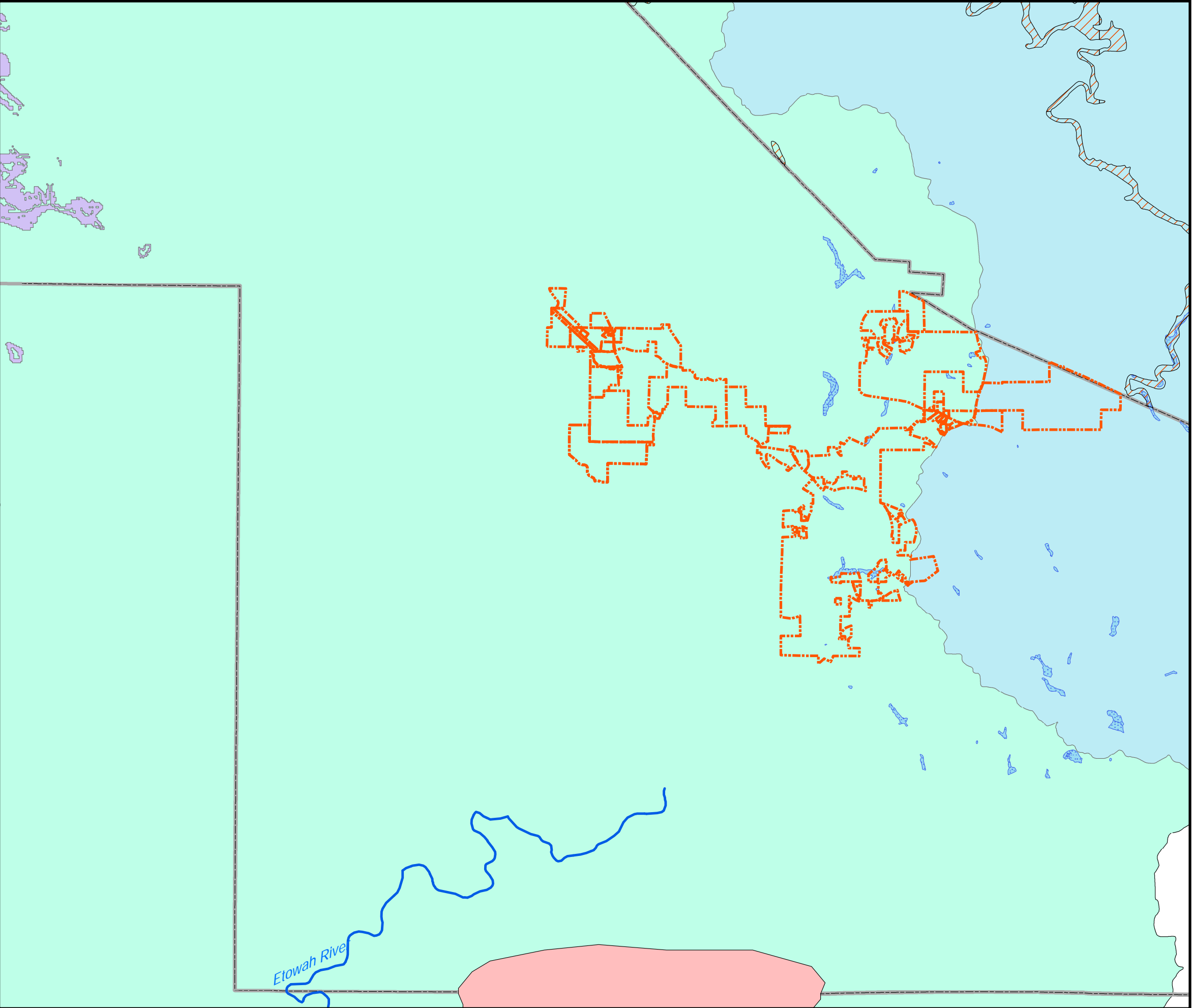
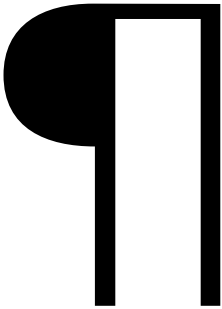
  
0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1  
Miles



GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007

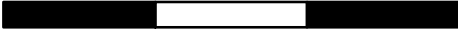


# Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Aquatic Resources Dawsonville, GA

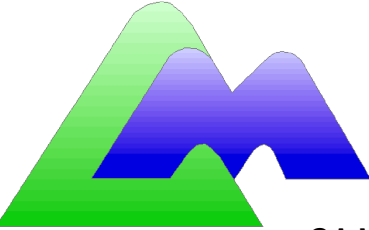


- 100 year floodplain-approx.
- 100 year floodplain-detailed
- undetermined risk
- Groundwater Recharge Area
- Protected Rivers
- Protected Mountains
- City Limits
- Wetlands
- Dawson County Boundary
- Etowah Water Authority Watershed
- Cherokee County and City of Canton Watersheds

0 0.5 1 2 3



Miles



GA Mountains RDC  
JGD, December 2007

# **City of Dawsonville Comprehensive Plan 2008-2030**

~

## **Supporting Data and Analysis**



*"Protecting our History and  
Providing for the Future"*

**March, 2008**

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**Chapter 2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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**Chapter 7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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## CHAPTER ONE - POPULATION

The foremost task of any government is to promote the welfare of the existing and future populations. This is the basis for all strategies involved in economic development, capital improvement projects, and land use management. The hope is that as the population changes the local authorities can respond as needed to foster economic expansion without diluting the quality of services provided. Achieving this requires an understanding the characteristics of both the present and future populations of the region; their traits, needs, and capabilities. Much of this begins with identifying trends within the population, to help explain current conditions and gain insight into probable future conditions.

### 1.1 Total Population

The total population of a region defines the volume of citizens for which a government is responsible. It explores the total size (volume) of the region as well as the trends that produced that size. Tracking a region's total population will introduce comparisons to others as well as provide a basis for which other calculations and projections will be made.

Population growth can identify numerous trends, ranging from economic expansion and a large volume of in-migration, to highlighting a comparably slow growth in relation to other areas. This information can then be used to address concerns over net migration, death and fertility rates, which in turn express greater issues to be addressed in other elements.

**Table 1.1 - Historic Population**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005
<b>Total Population</b>					
Dawsonville	288	342	467	619	1,066
Dawson County	3,639	4,774	9,429	15,999	19,731
% of County	7.91%	7.16%	4.95%	3.87%	5.40%
<b>% Change</b>	-	<b>'70-80</b>	<b>'80-90</b>	<b>'90-00</b>	
Dawsonville		18.8%	36.5%	32.5%	
Dawson County		31.2%	97.5%	69.7%	
Georgia			26.4%	26.4%	
<b>Gender Distribution</b>					
Male	-	-	234	330	
Female	-	-	233	289	

Source: US Bureau of the Census

A review of the historic population trends for Dawsonville and Dawson County finds the city experiencing steady growth but nowhere near the pace of the unincorporated county. As Dawson County becomes more suburban in character, Dawsonville remains much the small town.



**Table 1.2 - Regional Population Trends**

	1980	1990	2000	2005
<b>Total Population</b>				
Dawson	4,774	9,429	15,999	19,731
Cherokee	51,699	90,204	141,903	184,211
Forsyth	27,958	44,083	98,407	140,393
Gilmer	11,110	13,368	23,456	27,335
Hall	75,649	95,428	139,277	165,771
Lumpkin	10,762	14,573	21,016	24,324
Pickens	11,652	14,132	22,983	28,442
Georgia	5,484,000	6,478,000	8,186,453	8,918,129
		<b>'80-90</b>	<b>'90-00</b>	<b>'00-05</b>
<b>% Change</b>				
Dawson		97.5%	69.7%	23.3%
Cherokee		74.5%	57.3%	29.8%
Forsyth		57.7%	123.2%	42.7%
Gilmer		20.3%	75.5%	16.5%
Hall		26.1%	45.9%	19.0%
Lumpkin		35.4%	44.2%	15.7%
Pickens		21.3%	62.6%	23.8%
Georgia		18.1%	26.4%	8.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Table 1.2 provides a comparison of population totals and growth rates for Dawson County with the State of Georgia, the United States and each immediately surrounding county. This comparison is to denote regional trends in population changes that can impact Dawson County and Dawsonville.

The most glaring figures are those reflecting the population growth amongst the southernmost counties of Forsyth, Cherokee and Hall, all of which have advanced direct socio-economic relations with metropolitan Atlanta.

Other natural, national factors are also heavily contributing to the population increase:

- People are generally living longer; 20<sup>th</sup> Century advances in health care and lifestyles have increased the average life expectancy in America by more than seven years.
- These same advances have also allowed *more* people to live longer, as innovations in medicine have reduced the numbers and potency of once deadly diseases and ailments. The success rate for births has grown nearly 50% and preventative medicine has helped increasing numbers of those babies to grow into healthier adults.

### 1.1.1 Components of Population change

#### 1.2 Households

Households are defined by the Census Bureau as “*all the persons who occupy a housing unit,*” and represent one view of *how* the region’s population is living; as families, in groups, etc.. People living in households of more than one person typically share costs of living, producing a different economic profile than individuals. In addition, the market for housing units is more responsive to household characteristics, making it important to study the size, locations, and numbers of households as well as of the population in general.

**Table 1.3 - Households**

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
<b>Total</b>	127	146	165	200	234	NA
<b>Avg. Size</b>	2.61	2.63	2.65	2.48	2.31	2.24

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

As expected the volume of households within Dawsonville is increasing due to the overall population growth in the region. The trends with respect to household size mirror those of broader national trends as well, with the average size decreasing due to numerous factors:

- While people are generally living longer many senior citizens are widows or widowers and will spend periods of their lives alone before needing the assistance provided by a group-home setting;
- More people are marrying younger and choosing to spend early adulthood on their own;
- As people choose to have fewer children and have them later in life, the volume of large households decreases.

These lifestyle forces are not considered a detriment to social patterns in Dawsonville. What must be monitored in the future is the need to balance housing options with household types and income levels, so as to ensure the volume and quality of housing is cost effective at meeting the needs of the residents.

#### 1.3 Age Distribution

Consideration of the mix of age groups is vital for understanding the types of jobs and services needed. Each age group, from children to retirement age, requires special needs with respect to public services and facilities, making it important for the providing government to identify the prevailing age distribution. Moreover, by defining the present age make-up of the community a government is also producing a portrait of future age distribution and can more effectively plan for future needs and concerns.

**Table 1.4 - Age Distribution**

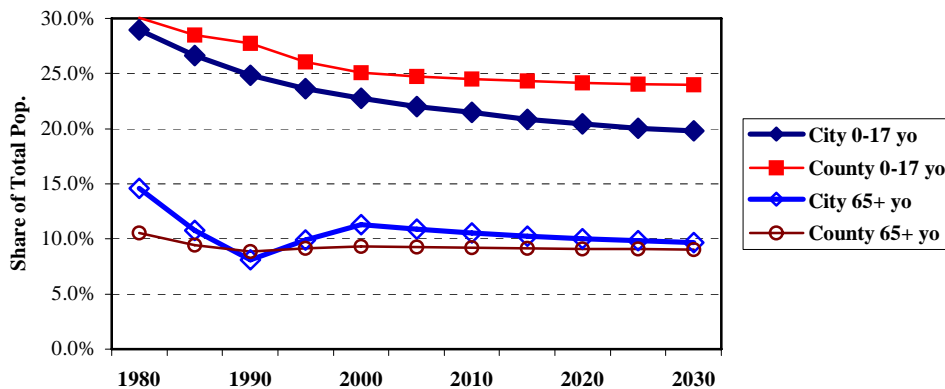
	1980	1990	2000		1980	1990	2000
<b>0 – 4</b>	25	38	54		7.3%	8.1%	8.7%
<b>5 – 13</b>	52	59	70		15.2%	12.6%	11.3%
<b>14 – 17</b>	22	19	17		6.4%	4.1%	2.7%
<b>18 – 20</b>	10	35	32		2.9%	7.5%	5.2%
<b>21 – 24</b>	27	42	45		7.9%	9.0%	7.3%
<b>25 – 34</b>	52	97	104		15.2%	20.8%	16.8%
<b>35 – 44</b>	38	65	91		11.1%	13.9%	14.7%
<b>45 – 54</b>	28	47	80		8.2%	10.1%	12.9%
<b>55 – 64</b>	38	27	56		11.1%	5.8%	9.0%
<b>65+</b>	50	38	70		14.6%	8.1%	11.3%
<b>Total</b>	342	467	619				

Source: US Bureau of the Census

The age distribution for Dawsonville is also following regional trends by featuring growing shares of older age groups and a slow decrease in the school age population. These conditions result from the same social forces discussed previously. Their impact on the city is critical with respect to the provision of social services and in economic development (Older age groups typically require more health care services, etc).

The mix of age groups within Dawsonville does not imply any concerns with exception for the decrease in the ages of younger adults. As this trend mirrors that for the county there could be a gap in the labor force to sustain particular economic development trends or initiatives. Should this continue it could indicate an imbalance between the characteristics of the local labor force and the nature of jobs within the county: Either a marginal demand for employees within Dawson County or a higher share of in-commuting workers. This is not an issue at present but one worth monitoring in conjunction with other factors.

**Fig. 1.1 - Age Distribution**



### 1.4 Racial Composition

**Table 1.5 – Racial Composition**

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
<b>Dawsonville</b>					
White alone	96.8%	98.3%	99.6%	98.3%	97.6%
Black/ African American	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%
Native American/ Alaskan	2.9%	1.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other race	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	1.6%
Persons of Hispanic origin	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	1.5%
<b>Dawson County</b>					
White alone	99.1%	99.0%	98.9%	97.8%	97.2%
Black/ African American	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%
Native American/ Alaskan	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.6%	0.4%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%
Other race	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	1.1%	1.7%
Persons of Hispanic origin	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	1.2%	1.6%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Dawsonville is considered a small community within a rural county. As a result the racial composition of the community has been historically homogenous, remaining more than 97% Caucasian. This isn't expected to change greatly in the near future unless the city sees a tremendous influx of new housing and employment opportunities. While such population growth is expected to continue, it may not be dynamic enough to alter the racial composition: Most development is designed to match the regional character of the area and in the absence of many new jobs there is no emphasis to draw people to the area.

This isn't to say more minorities won't be coming into the Dawson County area. There has been a steady influx of African Americans and Hispanic households. There is not, however, the density of the urban environment to foster ethnic enclaves that typically spike such in-migration. As a result, Dawsonville will likely retain its racial composition for the remainder of the planning period.

**Table 1.6 – Projected Racial Composition**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<b>Dawsonville</b>							
White alone	97.6%	97.5%	97.2%	97.1%	97.0%	96.9%	96.8%
Black/ African American	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%
Native American/ Alaskan	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other race	1.6%	1.7%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%
Persons of Hispanic origin	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%
<b>Dawson County</b>							
White alone	97.2%	97.1%	97.0%	96.9%	96.9%	96.8%	96.8%
Black/ African American	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Native American/ Alaskan	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Other race	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%
Persons of Hispanic origin	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%

*Source: Projection based on extrapolated Census data by GMRDC, using online tool from georgiaplanning.com*

## 1.5 Education

A leading component in making a community’s population a strong resource for economic and civic prosperity lies in the opportunities for a quality education. The academic levels and performances achieved by local residents are strong measures of quality of life and a community’s overall potential. Reviewing this information, then, allows insight into the *type* of population being studied and will help clarify many income, economic and employment issues.

### 1.5.1 Adult Educational Attainment

A region’s educational attainment refers to the final level of education achieved within the adult population (ages 25 and up), as identified by categories representing various levels of education. Ideally, communities would prefer a greater percentage of their populations achieving much higher education levels, surpassing high school and possibly graduating college.

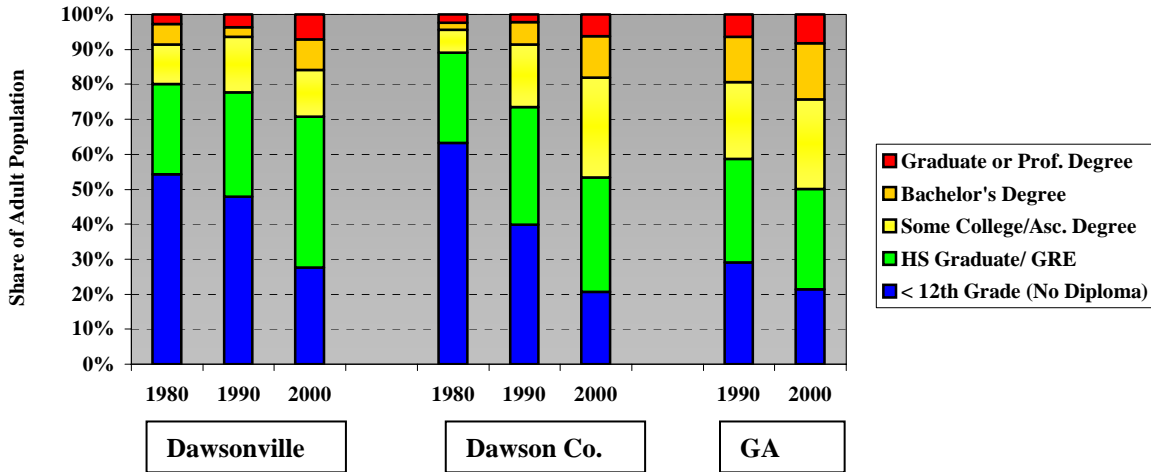
**Table 1.7 – Adult Educational Attainment - Dawsonville**

	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
< 9th Grade	29.9%	22.7%	13.6%	66	61	51
9th - 12th Grade (No Diploma)	24.4%	25.3%	14.1%	54	68	53
High School Graduate/ GRE	25.8%	29.7%	43.1%	57	80	162
Some College (No Degree)	11.3%	11.9%	12.8%	25	32	48
Associate Degree	-	4.1%	0.5%	-	11	2
Bachelor's Degree	5.9%	2.6%	8.8%	13	7	33
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.7%	3.7%	7.2%	6	10	27
<b>Total</b>				221	269	376

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Overall, the trends regarding education levels for Dawsonville residents have been very positive. Since 1980 the share of residents with greater levels of education completed are increasing, while the share of residents with less than a complete high school education has dropped to less than 30%. This indicates the quality of the city’s labor force should be improving, and that a continuation of this trend would enable the city to attract more dynamic industries. It would also indicate a more involved and enlightened populace that would support capital initiatives that improve the local quality of life.

Fig. 1.2 – Educational Attainment



Source: US Bureau of the Census

By comparison, however, the city of Dawsonville could do better with regards to attained education levels. Dawson County, with its influx of new residents and growing ties to metro Atlanta, features stronger numbers with respect to residents with at least some college education. The share for the state of Georgia is greater still, suggesting that while Dawsonville has made improvements in this area, the city does not have the level of educated labor force that can likely be found elsewhere throughout metro Atlanta. If the city’s trends in improvements continue this difference will become marginal. Should the city see stagnation in the improvement trends, however, this could impact economic development efforts and/or suggest a concern among the educational resources in the area.

According to the Georgia State Board of Education, the Dawson County School System met all 10 of the criteria for Annual Yearly Progress reporting, meaning the system is considered in good standing with State academic performance standards. Three-year graduation rates from 2004 through 2006 rose from 67% to 71%, while at the same time the 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade dropout rate fell from 5.7% to 4.9%. In both categories the Dawson County scores were in line with State averages and are not considered areas of concern.

### 1.6 Income

Measuring income levels provides an indication of the economic health of the population. Just as education levels can offer insight into employment conditions and the quality of the labor pool, per-capita and household income levels measure the financial stability of the population, and how the local economy is responding to the educational climate. Higher income levels suggest a thriving economy, and offer a good indicator as to the success of a community.

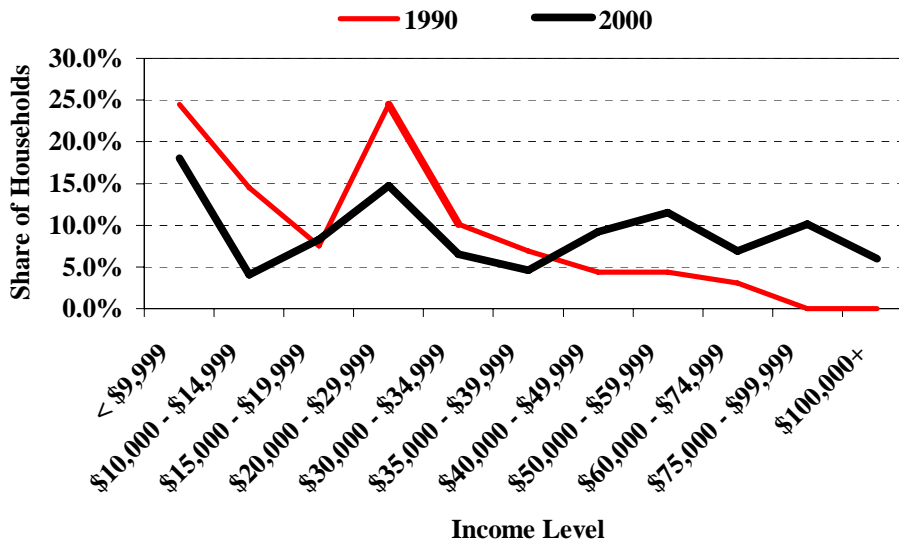
**Table 1.8 – Income Levels - Dawsonville**

	1980	1990	2000
<b>Mean HH</b>	NA	\$21,935	\$50,203
<b>Per Capita</b>	\$5,201	\$8,415	\$20,207

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

The initial data concerning income levels in Dawsonville supports the suggestions that the city is prospering. Real income levels have increased since 1980, most notably between 1990 and 2000 when both the mean household and per capita income levels more than doubled. This corresponds with the education and age distribution data, showing the impacts of a more dynamic, skilled and experienced labor force.

**Fig. 1.3 – Household Distribution by Income**



*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Of equal note is the change in the distribution of income levels within the city. Figure 1.3 illustrates the distribution of Dawsonville households based on income levels, highlighting the decrease in households on the lower (left) end of the spectrum while seeing an increase in households with higher income levels (right side). This indicates Dawsonville households are seeing a notable increase in earnings and thus their subsequent purchasing power. This is the desirable trend for economic growth, yielding more sustainable, independent households.

**Table 1.9 – Household Distribution by Income Levels**

	1990			2000		
	Dawsonville	Dawson Co.	Georgia	Dawsonville	Dawson Co.	Georgia
< \$9,999	24.5%	13.9%	16.8%	18.0%	6.4%	10.1%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	14.5%	10.3%	8.6%	4.1%	4.3%	5.9%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	7.5%	8.7%	8.9%	8.3%	5.7%	5.9%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	24.5%	20.6%	17.1%	14.7%	12.6%	12.7%
\$30,000 - \$34,999	10.1%	9.1%	7.9%	6.5%	4.8%	6.2%
\$35,000 - \$39,999	6.9%	4.9%	6.8%	4.6%	7.5%	5.9%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	4.4%	11.7%	11.0%	9.2%	10.7%	10.9%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	4.4%	8.1%	7.6%	11.5%	13.6%	9.2%
\$60,000 - \$74,999	3.1%	6.3%	6.8%	6.9%	9.8%	10.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	0.0%	3.7%	4.6%	10.1%	13.1%	10.4%
\$100,000+	0.0%	2.5%	3.8%	6.0%	11.6%	12.3%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

As with education levels, however, the city of Dawsonville remains behind Dawson County and the State of Georgia in this category. In this instance, the distribution of households by income is not as favorably skewed towards higher income levels as seen for the county or the State as a whole. So while Dawsonville residents have made gains in their economic status, they compare unfavorably with standards found throughout metro Atlanta.

Most telling is the percentage of households at the lowest income levels, where Dawsonville featured at least 10% more households earning less than \$30,000 when compared with the county and the State. Further, almost 1 in every 5 households earning less than \$10,000 in 2000. While it is not uncommon for rural and developing cities to feature higher numbers in these categories, due largely to the presence of social services and welfare programs for impoverished households, these levels indicate that Dawsonville as a whole remains a comparably poorer community. However, once adjusted for cost of living this comparison is not as skewed and, given the trends and other economic indicators such as earnings and real estate sales, the city is still considered economically stable. Further, should these trends continue the per capita and household income figures for the 2010 Census should feature more favorable ratios that are more in-line with those for the State.



### 1.7 Population Projections

Calculating projected population growth is necessary to gauge the potential impact of that growth on the demand for community facilities and services. Having established an understanding of base conditions and trends, it is possible to develop future growth scenarios and subsequent population projections for an area.

There is a difficulty in projecting population figures for cities such as Dawsonville in that there is the unknown factor of annexations and/or changes to the city boundaries. Within the past year the City has annexed more than 1,000 acres. While this is not expected to be the norm nor is all that land projected for rapid, high-density development, the potential remains for the City to expand its boundaries and alter its capacity for new growth.

Since this is of concern to both Dawsonville and Dawson County in planning for the long-term delivery of public facilities and services, Dawsonville has devised an annexation policy to guide any expansion of boundaries, complete with a map indicating the rough extent of land to be considered eligible. The policy will work with the completed Dawsonville Comprehensive Plan to prescribe the type and extent of growth and development favorable to the City. Thus, while the policy and map are subject to change they will provide a sense of limitation with respect to concerns about possible boundary changes and their impacts on growth.

**Table 1.10 – Recent Population Projections, Dawson County**

Source	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Ga. State Office of Planning and Budget	19,731	24,757	28,342	32,456	36,571	40,685
Dawson County/ Dawsonville Joint Plan – Amended ('05)	19,731	25,000	32,500	38,000	43,501	49,001
Dawson County Plan Development Report ('07)	20,710	25,980	31,972	38,961	46,143	55,049

As illustrated in Table 1.10, recent population projections for Dawson County have continued to raise the population forecast for 2030. Most recently progressive calculations have the county doubling in size between 2010 and approximately 2028, if not sooner. These figures assume select improvements in terms of utilities and infrastructure, and well as continued growth for the overall region, however the County is being proactive in securing the improvements needed to sustain such levels of growth. As such, the City of Dawsonville must position itself to sustain comparable levels of growth.

Taking account the preliminary assigned conditions (see below), the following population projections were devised as a guide for possible growth in Dawsonville. Final scenarios for the City will be selected during the Community Agenda planning process, during which the optional conditions for various growth scenarios will be evaluated and prioritized for their benefits and costs to the City.

For the purposes of this part of the planning process, population growth has been tied to the following factors:

- Utility capacity will not be a limiting factor, but will in fact enable some level of increase in small-scale urban density residential, office and commercial use.
- Trends with household size will continue, with a subtle increase in multi-family and specialty housing;
- Any further annexation will correspond to overall increase in development throughout the county, and will not initiated to attract growth;
- Overall appeal of the region will continue to attract new households and development.

**Table 1.11 - Population Projection, Dawsonville**

Year	Housing permits/ year	Persons per household	Net Migration	Resident Pop. Change	Population
2005		2.25			<b>1,066</b>
2006	50	2.24	93		<b>1,159</b>
2007	46	2.23	85	1	<b>1,246</b>
2008	49	2.22	91	1	<b>1,338</b>
2009	53	2.21	97	1	<b>1,436</b>
2010	56	2.19	103	1	<b>1,539</b>
2011	65	2.18	118	1	<b>1,659</b>
2012	77	2.17	139	1	<b>1,799</b>
2013	84	2.16	151	2	<b>1,952</b>
2014	90	2.15	161	2	<b>2,114</b>
2015	96	2.14	171	2	<b>2,287</b>
2016	93	2.14	166	2	<b>2,455</b>
2017	88	2.13	156	2	<b>2,613</b>
2018	96	2.12	169	3	<b>2,786</b>
2019	105	2.11	184	3	<b>2,972</b>
2020	114	2.09	198	3	<b>3,174</b>
2021	124	2.08	215	3	<b>3,392</b>
2022	135	2.08	234	3	<b>3,629</b>
2023	148	2.07	254	4	<b>3,888</b>
2024	161	2.07	277	4	<b>4,169</b>
2025	175	2.06	301	4	<b>4,474</b>
2026	191	2.06	328	4	<b>4,805</b>
2027	208	2.05	356	5	<b>5,166</b>
2028	227	2.04	386	5	<b>5,557</b>
2029	248	2.03	418	5	<b>5,980</b>
2030	270	2.02	454	6	<b>6,017</b>

Source: GMRDC, 2007

## **1.8 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

### ***Issues:***

- *Managing potential growth* – While the majority of growth anticipated for Dawson County will occur in the unincorporated areas, the City of Dawsonville will continue to grow both naturally and through possible annexations. As it does so the City must work to ensure such growth is done in a manner that does not adversely impact the delivery of public services or greatly alter the character of the community.
- *Declining size of households* – Natural demographic and economic trends are increasing the volumes of smaller households within all of Dawson County. As the community moves to support traditional family and large-household programs and development types, Dawsonville must also ensure that a diversity of housing conditions and programs exist to support this variety of household types, particularly for younger residents looking to move into the city and elderly residents struggling to support themselves.

### ***Opportunities:***

- *Continuing positive social trends* – Both the City of Dawsonville and Dawson County are experiencing improvements with regard to levels of household incomes and the education levels for adult residents. As the community becomes more and more suburban it is imperative that Dawsonville continues to efforts that foster and support increased opportunities for education and work to diversify the economy.

## **CHAPTER TWO – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Public facilities and services are those elements vital to a population’s health, safety, and welfare that are most effectively provided by the public sector, such as sewerage, law enforcement and school services. This element examines the community’s ability to adequately serve the present and projected demands for such services, identifying concerns with the spatial distribution and conditions affecting service delivery. These assessments can then assist in projecting future demands and in planning future capital improvement projects.

### **2.1 Public Water Service**

Water is among the foremost utilities provided by local governments, and is generally considered the primary benchmark of progressive modern communities. A stable, healthy water supply is considered critical for attracting industrial growth, and the scope and quality of the distribution system will play a significant role in shaping how a community grows over time.

The Etowah Water and Sewer Authority is the sole water provider in the City of Dawsonville, and public water service is available throughout the entire City limits and to portions of the County east of Dawsonville. (Map 2.1) The EWSA water intake is allocated a maximum daily withdrawal of 5.5 Million Gallons/Day (MGD) and a monthly average withdrawal of 4.4 MGD. As monitored by the State the Etowah River at the EWSA intake point is not meeting its water quality standards due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria. To provide a reliable water source for its citizens, cooperation is needed between the City of Dawsonville, Dawson County, and the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority to make certain that continued growth in the Etowah watershed does not further impair water quality and does not jeopardize public drinking water supplies.

Current and planned improvement projects for the EWSA include expansion of their existing treatment plant and a new withdrawal permit, which should enable the City to have a stable supply for the duration of the planning period and beyond. With respect to the distribution system, the City is working on a long-term plan for conservative expansion of the system in accordance with growth and annexation policies. No other major improvements have been identified to maintain the level of service through 2030.

**Map 2.1 – Water and Sewer Service Area**

## **2.2 Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

A local community's sewerage system and ability to treat wastewater is the utility most responsible for facilitating growth from rural to suburban and urban conditions. Managed properly, sewer service permits densities and levels of industrial capacity that allows cities' to receive volumes of development with comparably marginal impacts on the environment.

As with water EWSA is responsible for managing the wastewater treatment service within the City of Dawsonville. Treatment occurs at the Dawsonville plant located on the city's southwest side. This facility has a permitted capacity of 0.12 MGD and an average daily use of 0.05 MGD (42% capacity). (Map 2.1) EWSA also provides sewer service to portions of the unincorporated county, including some properties near or adjacent to the City limits, and maintains a second facility in the southeastern portion of the County along the Etowah River. This facility has a capacity of 0.18 MGD and is running at 94% capacity with average daily use. This facility is in need of immediate expansion to maintain existing levels of service.

The combined treatment capacity for EWSA may be able to sustain the City of Dawsonville during the planning period depending on the overall growth of the county. Expansion plans are being made, however, and EWSA is working with the City and the County to pursue a larger, more efficient treatment system. There are also immediate plans for expansion of the sewerage system to more of the City and County northward of downtown Dawsonville.

## **2.3 Solid Waste Management**

As communities grow they also incur more garbage, necessitating proper management of the collection and disposal of various forms of solid waste. Some items can be recycled, some require special measures for disposal. All forms of waste management should be considered so as to ensure the continued health and safety of local residents.

The City of Dawsonville currently works with Dawson County in operating a collection & transfer station for residents to bring their refuse. All solid waste is then hauled by a private contractor to a disposal point in Forsyth County.

At present the receiving landfill in Forsyth County has sufficient capacity to continue accepting garbage from Dawson County through 2035. No major improvements have been identified for this element on behalf of Dawsonville, but the City should review its policies identified within the Solid Waste Management Plan and consider the possible evolving need for curbside pickup as the population grows.

## **2.4 Public Health and Safety**

It is the primary responsibility of government to preserve the health and welfare of its citizens, and nothing embodies this role greater than the management of services directly involved in public safety. These services, such as fire and police protection, typically demand volumes of specialized manpower to attain effective levels of service and to help a community remain secure.

Unless otherwise indicated all of these services and facilities are provided through Dawson County. Locations of public facilities can be found on Map 2.2.

### **2.4.1 Fire Protection**

Fire protection services provide not only the direct benefit of safety against hazards, but the ability to provides such services traditionally ensure a higher quality of life for urbanized communities by permitting greater numbers of residents and activities at lower insurance costs. Half of this is dependent on the distribution of the public water system, the other half is the make up of the personnel, facilities and equipment needed to perform the actual protection services.

The City of Dawsonville receives fire protection service as part of countywide service provided by the Dawson County Emergency Services Department (ESD). The ESD employs 12 full-time firefighters and 45 volunteers. The existing fleet of vehicles includes 8 tanker trucks, one ladder truck and 17 other heavy vehicles. Station #1, located behind City Hall, is the station designated to serve the Dawsonville area and is the only facility located within the city limits. While assistance can be called upon from any station, all other facilities are located at least 3 miles outside the city.

To help measure the performance or value of fire protection services, a national fire protection rating system has been established by the Insurance Services Organization to evaluate the adequacy of fire protection services in a community. Ranging from 1 to 10, communities with more than adequate personnel and water systems would score very low, while areas with sparse public water and volunteer firemen would score very high. Dawsonville's fire insurance rating is currently rated at 7.

In 2004 Dawson County adopted an Impact Fee Program as a means of generating revenue for select capital improvement projects, including investments in fire protection equipment and resources. Analyses to determine the projected scope of needs in this area identified the following necessary improvements in order to maintain the existing level of service:

- Build an additional 4 new stations and/or pursue the renovation and expansion of existing facilities;
- Purchase an additional 19 new vehicles, including more tanker trucks and an additional ladder truck;
- Increase the number of full-time and volunteer firefighters.

Additional improvement measures identified included consideration for new training facilities and coordination with the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority in planning water system improvements.

It is not anticipated that during the planning period the City and County will need improvements in this area beyond those already identified as part of the Impact Fee planning studies. Several improvements have already been initiated or are in the formal planning stages, including the construction of one new station, the replacement/renovation of 3 other stations and the purchase of 2 or more trucks. While most of these efforts are not directly related to Station #\_ in

Dawsonville, they do support the overall level of fire protection available to the area, which will support the safety and growth of the City. Further, the assessment of needs in regards to fire protection will be reevaluated every year as part of the Impact Fee Program.

#### **2.4.2 Police Protection**

Police protection, or law enforcement, is the public service designed to safeguard community residents and businesses from acts of theft, personal violence and other crimes. Such protection builds community character and support and can serve as a tool for attracting tourism and growth. Preventative protection also can lower costs of living and contribute to an overall higher standard of living within the community.

Law enforcement for the City of Dawsonville is provided through the Dawson County Sheriff's Department. The main Sheriff's headquarters is located just west of downtown Dawsonville on Hwy 53, while the county jail and Courthouse are also within the city limits.

Primary law enforcement is handled through the Sheriff's Department Patrol and Criminal Investigation Divisions. The Department has 4 other divisions including Court Services, Warrants, Communication (addressed below) and operation of the Detention Center. Overall the Department has 49 deputies and assistant personnel. For this facet of police protection the Federal Bureau of Investigation suggests a ratio of 3.8 employees per-1000 persons for suburban counties. Using 2005 population estimates for the County, the Dawson County Sheriff's Department has a ratio of 2.5 persons per 1,000 residents. This factor alone does not suggest a need for additional employees, but can indicate that the comparably low number of employees, particularly officers, could lie behind any negative trends in criminal activity.

According to Department records the number of calls responded to in Dawson County has increased 31% between 2004 (521 incidents) and 2005 (706). The County has also seen increases in the number of vehicle citations, warrants and civil papers. Some of this is to be expected as a natural increased correlating with the increase in overall population. What the Sheriff's Department is monitoring is the nature of criminal activity for increases in violent crimes, narcotics use or other signs that may indicate more organized criminals. Similarly the Department must maintain personnel awareness and education about new trends in criminal behavior, such as identity theft, technology use and white-collar crimes. Such activity has not been prevalent in Dawson County's history but is expected to grow more common as the community evolves into a suburban, commercial hub.

The existing Detention Center was last expanded in 2004 to a new capacity of 168 inmates. Due in part to the facility's role in hosting inmates from neighboring counties the Detention Center has been mostly operating at full capacity since the expansion. However, a new and larger Detention Center is set to open in 2007 that will also feature new administrative space for the Department.



### **2.4.3 Emergency Response Systems**

Emergency Response Systems (EMS) refers essentially to two things: The communication network that facilitates the response actions of public safety organizations, and the availability of ambulance carriers to address health transport needs that fall beyond the normal purview of police and fire protection services. Combined these services provide an additional means for supporting the general health and welfare of the citizens.

The Dawson County Sheriff's Department also manages the EMS system for Dawson County and the City of Dawsonville. Currently the Department features 22 certified officers and coordinates the response calls for the Sheriff's deputies, fire protection and paramedics.

The level of EMS service received in Dawsonville is considered acceptable, largely due to the concentration of personnel and facilities/equipment located within the City. There are no specific improvements needed in this area during the planning period other than the system maintenance plans already established.

### **2.4.4 Hospitals and Health Facilities**

The remaining aspect addressed within the Public Safety element is the availability of hospitals and healthcare facilities to treat the ill and infirmed. Access to such facilities is required in order for a community to sustain its level of function and prosperity.

There is no full-service hospital within Dawson County, as such Dawsonville residents are directed to 1 of 3 facilities in neighboring counties for in-patient and critical health care:

- Chestatee Regional Hospital – Dahlonega
- Northside Forsyth Hospital - Cumming
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center – Gainesville

Northeast Georgia Medical Center is the largest and most extensive facility in close proximity to Dawsonville, though depending on the exact location and traffic conditions city residents may often find the other hospitals more convenient. This at least provides residents with options in the absence of a native facility. Combined the three hospitals provide all levels of common inpatient and critical health care including maternity, imaging and surgical services.

Within Dawson County there is the Chestatee Emergent Medical Center for 24-hour a day urgent care and treatment, and the Dawson County Health Department that provides clinical care for women and children, immunizations and preventative care support.

As a small community it is expected that Dawsonville and Dawson County must grow before having the volume of patients to warrant a local hospital. In the absence of such a facility the City is fortunate that there are several quality options available within 30 miles.

## **2.5 Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Recreational facilities provide communities with a quality that is difficult to measure but considered vital to its social well-being. By offering a variety of recreational activities a region can strengthen the residents' quality of life and stimulate facets of the local economy.

All park and recreation facilities and programs are provided by Dawson County. There are currently two parks operated by the County:

- Dawson County Park has a mix of ball fields, a swimming pool, passive recreation space and a recreation center on approximately 40 acres. This is the more accessible facility for city residents, located within a couple miles northeast of downtown Dawsonville.
- Rock Creek Sports Complex is in the southeastern part of the county and has 52 acres. This park features more athletic fields, a larger recreation center complete with banquet hall and classrooms, and a maintenance and storage building.

In addition to the two parks, the County also coordinates athletic programs at school gymnasiums in collaboration with the Dawson County School Board.

The County has a Recreation Master Plan from 2005 that assesses the inventory of facilities and resources and identifies needs through 2015. Select improvements have been identified for both parks, including building improvements, more ball fields and additional trails and passive recreation amenities. In addition to these improvements the Recreation Master Plan recommended the development of two new parks, one to be located in the eastern part of the county and the other to be northwest of Dawsonville. Both would include comparable amenities for both passive and active uses, but the park northwest of the city is also expected to include a botanical garden and amphitheater to serve as more of a regional draw.

While the Recreation Master Plan should satisfy the needs of both city and county residents during the planning period, the City should do what it can to encourage more neighborhood parks and the development of a formal strategy for developing trails and pathways that could serve as additional recreational facilities and foster pedestrian accessibility to the larger park sites.

Dawson County also has the benefit of local parks operated by federal and State organizations. From the federal level the US Army Corps of Engineers maintains 5 parks along Lake Lanier on the county's east side while the US Forest Service operates the Chattahoochee National Forest along the west side. At the State level the Ga. Department of Natural Resources operates Amicalola Falls State Park and the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area. Amicalola Falls State Park is rated as having a national level of interest due the falls themselves and the Park's role as one terminus of the Appalachian Trail. Additional parks and recreation facilities utilizing the Lake and mountains are within short driving distances from Dawsonville, as well.

## **2.6 Education Facilities**

Education facilities are those places and programs designed to support the learning and development of youth and the general labor force. These can include general or specialized education facilities and programs, and are closely tied to economic development efforts: Economic growth is often dependent of the levels of education and skill sets available within a community, thus it is in the best interest of every community to have the best education resources available.

### **2.6.1 Primary and Secondary Schools**

The base level of education and the most prevalent within most American communities is that of primary and secondary schooling, which entails the common curricula taught between kindergarten and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This education is designed to arm children and youth with the basic understanding of communication, analytical and social skills required to function within society. Often these schools will incorporate higher levels of study for those inclined to continue their education. They may also include technical and professional job-skill training programs that provide specialized instruction on common and available jobs, so that graduates can immediately (re)enter the workforce.

The Dawson County School System currently features 1 high school, 1 middle school, 3 elementary schools and one alternative school for at risk children in the middle and high school grade levels. A new middle school is under construction and should be available for classes in 2008. Combined the System hosted 3,284 students in 2006, with only the middle and alternative schools operating at more than 82% of student capacity.

Dawsonville students attend Robinson Elementary and will continue to attend Riverview Middle School after the new middle school is complete. According the School Board neither of those schools nor Dawson County High School are in need of improvements for the next five years. The School Board is responsible for maintaining at least a 5-year facilities improvement plan in accordance with State policies, and will coordinate with the City and County during their update procedures to identify capital projects for maintaining the existing level of service.

It should also be noted that there are also private schools available to Dawsonville residents. War Hill Christian Academy is a small (< 100 students) K-12 facility in eastern Dawson County, and there are at least two boarding academies within adjoining counties.

### **2.6.2 Post-Secondary Facilities**

Post-secondary education facilities are those colleges, universities and other programs that allow high school graduates to pursue higher levels or different fields of study. Their programs of are designed to strengthen the real-world skills of the younger labor force for a variety of subjects.

There are two colleges within Dawson County:

- A fourth satellite of Lanier Technical College occupies a former Dawson County High School facility in downtown Dawsonville. Lanier Tech is designed to develop workforce

skills, particularly modern production and service oriented skill sets required of local employers. The Dawson Campus provides instruction in 17 different certificate programs and 6 diploma programs. The facility includes classrooms, laboratory spaces for various professions, a media center and general administrative space.

- Southern Catholic College began operations in 2002 and offers 2-year degrees in the liberal arts. This campus is located immediately inside the city limits on the northeast side, adjacent to Gold Creek Golf Resort. Currently at just over 100 students, the college hopes to reach more than 400 students by 2009 and is planning for on-campus housing and amenities to develop a true campus character.

Within close proximity outside of Dawson County even more post-secondary opportunities are available for city residents:

- North Georgia College and State University is located in Dahlonega, roughly 20 miles to the north;
- Gainesville State College and Bruneau University are located in Oakwood and Gainesville, respectively. Both campuses are within a 30 minutes drive east of Dawsonville;
- Lanier Technical College's main campus is located approximately 17 miles south in Cumming, providing access to additional labs and courses of study.

While there are no more opportunities within commuting distance of Dawsonville, the University of Georgia is just an hour away in Athens and many more universities are within a 60-90 minute drive in north metro-Atlanta including the Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, Georgia State University and others.

### **2.6.3 Libraries**

In addition to the formal education programs directed through schools and post-secondary institutions, libraries provide an important resource for individual learning and development, as well as a source of recreation. As the default media and archive center of a community, the availability and scope of library services can prove significant in shaping the potential of a community. Libraries provide information and tools needed to support continued learning, ingenuity and creativity outside the structured environment of schools.

The City of Dawsonville is included in the Chestatee Regional Library System that serves Dawson and Lumpkin Counties. There is one facility in each county, with the Dawson county branch located within Dawsonville. The system also provides sharing with other libraries as part of the PINES Library Network.

The Chestatee Regional Library System has an informal facilities master plan that suggests the Dawsonville facility should be sufficient through the planning period, but that regular updates to inventories and review of programs (such as summer and after-school classes) should be done regularly to ensure the level of service stays high.

## **2.7 General Government**

General government facilities are those resources required for the government to perform its operations: Administration and office space, meeting facilities, storage space, etc. In order for the government to function efficiently (both fiscally and physically) the operating facilities must be conducive the nature of the operations.

Three years ago the City of Dawsonville purchased the former Thunder Road Museum. This was done in part to hopefully save the museum but to also utilize the building space as new City administrative offices. Since then the City has renovated portions of the facility to accommodate additional offices and a new upstairs meeting hall. This project was completed earlier this year and should address the City's most significant needs for space during the planning period.

Community facilities map

## **2.8 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

### ***Issues:***

- *Viability of water and sewer service* – Dawsonville is one of several communities purchasing its water and sewer service from the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority. In order for the City to properly plan for and attract quality growth it must ensure the quality and long-term viability of these services.
- *Demand for a Civic Center* – Dawsonville does not have a formal Civic Center for hosting a variety of indoor events. Renovations are planned for the Thunder Road Museum/ City Hall complex that will provide improved meeting space but there is demand for some small convention space to support local and tourist events.

### ***Opportunities:***

- *Planned renovations to Thunder Road/ City Hall* – This facility has benefited from several modifications to accommodate both the reopening of the Museum and improvements for the City offices and meeting spaces.
- *New/ Expanded schools* – The Dawson County Board of Education does have plans for at least one new school and several facility expansions that should accommodate increases in enrollment and allow for the use of modern technology.
- *New Parks and Recreation Plan* – The County adopted a new Parks and recreation Master Plan in 2005 that will guide new land purchases and facility improvements through the next 20+ years. Parks and recreation management is done on behalf of both the County and the City.

## **CHAPTER THREE - TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation concerns the accessibility to sites and land uses. The demands for transportation facilities and services vary by land use, demographics and other factors. The dynamic nature of accessibility and the various factors that combine to determine functional performance in infrastructure suggest transportation for larger or rapidly growing communities requires special attention outside of the traditional public facilities and services. The provision of a quality transportation system can be assessed as in part a utility, part facility and part service. Because of these differences, and because transportation plays such a large part in shaping the development patterns and options within a community, transportation must often be assessed as its own element.

### **3.1 Street/Road Network**

State roads are classified as interstates, arterials, collectors, or local roads based on average trip lengths, trip destinations, traffic density and speeds. Each classification represents the relative weight, or value, of a roadway, which helps govern the types of service and development conditions permitted. In this modern era characterized by the automobile, a community's accessibility is largely defined by the quality and quantity of its street network, particularly its access to major arterials. As a result, business and land development is often dictated by the conditions of the local roads and related capital improvements.

#### **3.1.1 Existing Conditions**

Dawsonville serves as the crossroads of Dawson County. As the county seat, Dawsonville is home to the county's earliest governmental buildings and is the current home to the Dawson County Courthouse, County and City administrative offices, schools, library, post office, public safety facilities and public works departments. These facilities bring many citizens through the city's streets during the business day.

The city is served by many of the county's roads, specifically Burt Creek Road, and State Routes 53, 9, 142 and 136 located in the north section of the city, also serve as major corridors. At the heart of the historic area, SR 9 and SR 53 intersect and bring modern day traffic through an area with undersized roads and rights-of-way for the needs of today's larger and heavier vehicles. On average, more than 14,000 vehicles a day funnel through 20-foot wide streets and around historic structures. Dawsonville and the outlying areas of the county are expected to increase population during the planning horizon. With this increase in growth, it is predicted that the number of vehicles will far exceed the current capacity of these small roads, and travel through this vital intersection will gridlock.

This condition is illustrated through an analysis of the county's road network with the Multimodal Transportation Planning Tool. This computer analysis of projected Levels of Service (LOS) for 10-year and 20-year future travel demand through use of a number of factors, including traffic counts, location of common destinations and other demographic information. LOS is expressed by a letter grade A through F. Generally, a LOS of C or better is acceptable. At current levels, the section of SR 53 lying within the city limits has a LOS of D or E. Increases in traffic counts predicted at the 10-year and 20-year mark show volume of vehicles exceeding capacity, and reaching a generally unacceptable degree of congestion by drivers.



Map – Level of Service

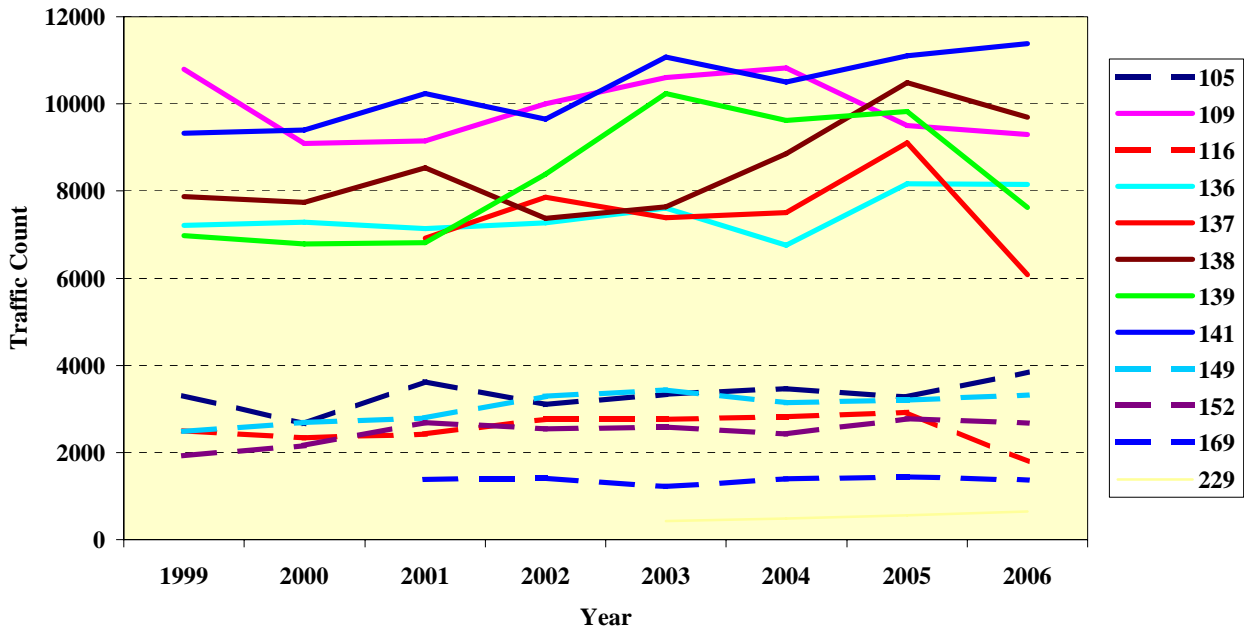
Map – 20 year Level of Service

Without changes to increase the efficiency the current road network and to reduce the projected volumes into the center of Dawsonville, these vital travel routes through the city would effectively choke the area’s ability to prosper.

This need to reduce the number of vehicles traveling through the city was identified in earlier plans by the city and county, and brought about development of a perimeter road around the city. This circular route, however, has not been completed. In preparation for the increase in residential units throughout the county (which will be traffic generators), it is recommended that the city and county work collaboratively to complete the circular route.

	<u>Years</u>								
	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	
<b>Traffic Counter</b>									
<b>105</b>	3,305	2,660	3,624	3,099	3,328	3,461	3,280	3,850	
<b>109</b>	10,789	9,090	9,157	9,996	10,601	10,821	9,500	9,300	
<b>116</b>	2,492	2,340	2,423	2,760	2,759	2,821	2,930	1,790	
<b>136</b>	7,209	7,286	7,132	7,266	7,612	6,763	8,170	8,150	
<b>137</b>			6,913	7,853	7,384	7,512	9,110	6,080	
<b>138</b>	7,878	7,738	8,539	7,379	7,636	8,853	10,480	9,700	
<b>139</b>	6,972	6,793	6,814	8,388	10,241	9,627	9,830	7,620	
<b>141</b>	9,322	9,400	10,232	9,652	11,081	10,503	11,110	11,380	
<b>149</b>	2,486	2,686	2,786	3,285	3,436	3,144	3,200	3,320	
<b>152</b>	1,917	2,160	2,694	2,537	2,590	2,420	2,780	2,670	
<b>169</b>			1,375	1,417	1,222	1,397	1,440	1,370	
<b>229</b>		440			426	485	560	640	

Dawsonville AADT 1999-2006



An analysis of annual average daily traffic counts (AADT) collected by the Georgia Department of Transportation between 1999 and 2006 reflect other observations of the existing network.

Traffic counts for SR53, an east-west route, are significantly higher than SR9 (north-south route) and other count locations along SR136 and the intersection of SR9 and SR136 (north of the city).

This difference in traffic volumes is most likely attributed to the movement of local traffic between destinations such as the post office, schools, government offices and other businesses in the central city. Vehicles also are traveling this route to the intersection of SR53 and SR400 (east of the city), which is a significant commercial area. Additionally, drivers wishing to travel through the county along SR53 have no alternate route other than through the central city. A completed perimeter route would an alternative route, thereby reducing the congestion brought about by freight carriers and other vehicles traveling through the county.

The pattern of the road network also shows the limited routes for east-west movement through the city between residential areas in the southwestern quadrant of the city and the location of schools and other community facilities. Lacking an alternative route, it is necessary for these vehicles to travel along the greatest-traveled sections of SR53. Northbound travelers on SR9 likewise must travel these congested sections. It is recommended that the city consider construction of new roads, or the opening of previously platted roads traveling east-west to provide alternative routes to further reduce the number of local trips traveling along SR53 by necessity.

Map – Accident locations

Land use is a key consideration in transportation. As the city grows through annexations and future development, it is important to consider whether a proposed land use is likely to produce traffic (residential) or attract traffic (retail and service, recreation, schools, etc.). Given the location of annexations north of the city, and the likelihood that this and other unincorporated areas north of the city will experience residential development, it is recommended that thought be given to the future increase in traffic along Shoal Creek and Burts Creek Roads, and the Perimeter Road.

Safety and efficiency of travel along these growth corridors may also be improved by addition of accel/decel and left turn lanes, as appropriate, to serve new development. Access management and parcel innerconnectivity in commercial areas, as appropriate, will also increase safety and efficiency by limiting the location of curb cuts along heavily traveled roads.

In order to carry out these recommendations, it would be necessary to amend the city's development regulations. Changes in the zoning ordinance also may be advisable for consistency with the 2007-2027 Comprehensive Plan. It is also recommended that consideration be given to development of a locally established functional classification system for the city's streets. This information may be used to determine appropriate road design standards for new development, plan for future road improvements, and assist in determining recommended speed limits for local roads.

Another method of improving safety and efficiency of the network is intersection design. Intersections function better when roadways intersect at right angles. This allows drivers entering the intersection a clearer and broader line-of-sight. The intersection of SR53 and SR183 west of the historic courthouse can be improved by a re-design to provide a right angle configuration.

Given the anticipated residential development north of the central city, it is recommended that a redesign of the intersection of Burt Creek/Shoal Creek/Dawsonville Bypass area to improve angle of travel and capacity for turning movements and stacking. It is likely that travel through this area will warrant a traffic signal within the planning horizon. Other intersections within the city also may warrant capacity improvements and signals to improve through-travel of the road network.

### **3.1.2 Alternative Transportation**

A number of these short trips may be accomplished by pedestrian or bicycle rather than vehicular travel. The opening of additional roads and addition of sidewalks between the central city and redevelopment areas would increase the ability and safety of pedestrian travel. The pedestrian experience may be improved with the addition of streetscaping, lighting and crosswalks, particularly in the areas new the schools.

It should be noted that the city has begun planning or construction of a number sidewalks that will link some residential areas, the central city, and the schools and library. It is recommended that further study be given to development of a local bicycle and pedestrian plan to prioritized future public investment in these facilities. It is also recommended that consideration be given to developing a bicycle facility along Shoal Creek Road and SR136 to link the central city and State Bicycle Route 53 along the northern edge of the county.

### **3.1.3 Scheduled/ Proposed Improvements**

- *Burt Creek/Shoal Creek/Dawsonville Bypass area* - This intersection area brings together three major transportation routes, and anticipated growth north of the central city will substantially increase vehicular traffic in this area. A focused transportation study is needed to determine alternative intersection and road designs and locations. Findings from this study can guide future public investment in corridor preservation.
- *Proposed Dawsonville Bypass* - Completion of this perimeter road will reduce congestion in the historic district, improve freight movement within the city and county, and safety for local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists sharing the road. A focused transportation study is recommended to determine alternative routes. Findings from this study can guide future public investment in corridor preservation.
- *Education District* – Allen Street serves as a corridor for the county’s educational and library facilities. Completion of a network of sidewalks and other pedestrian trails will allow pedestrian movement between facilities, and enhance the ability of nearby students to walk or bike to school or the library.

### **3.2 Public Transportation**

Public transportation allows people otherwise unable to travel greater access to the community, and can support a community’s health and vitality by providing a functional alternative to private automobile ownership. Public transportation is also a means of diffusing traffic pressures, alleviating the environmental concerns stemming from roadside development, and for stimulating residential and commercial activity.

Since Dawsonville serves as the hub of educational, governmental and other services for Dawson County, it is a destination for many citizens going about their daily business. As such, a public transportation system that can transport citizens to and from outlying areas into the city would serve a number of persons who choose or are unable to drive.

Improving linkages to mass transit between Dawsonville and metropolitan Atlanta would provide an important link to commuter service for employment and other commercial activities for residents. As the city’s population increases, a strong need for such transit programs will develop, particularly a route connecting Dawsonville and the GA 400 area in eastern Dawson County, thus reducing the number of vehicles traveling through the city on a regular basis.

A Transit Development Plan is in progress for Dawson County and Dawsonville, to be completed by June 2008. This plan will evaluate current transit services and consider broader implementation of programs available in Georgia, including coordination with human service agencies and the general public.

### 3.3 Railroads and Air Transportation

#### ***Freight***

Dawsonville and Dawson County are not served by freight rail service within the County. The closest rail route to the west of the county is operated by Georgia Northeastern Railroad Company and owned by CSX. The route runs through Pickens and Cherokee counties, and connects the cities of Jasper and Ball Ground.

The active rail line to the east of Dawson County is owned and operated by Norfolk Southern. The route runs northeasterly to Greenville, S.C., and southwesterly to Atlanta. City of Gainesville is the nearest point of the line to Dawson County.

#### ***Passenger***

Dawsonville and Dawson County are not served by passenger rail service within the County. Amtrak provides the closest passenger rail service along the Norfolk Southern route, which runs northeasterly to Greenville, S.C., and southwesterly to Atlanta. Located east of the County, City of Gainesville is the nearest passenger depot to Dawson County.

The Georgia Department of Transportation developed plans for a Rail Passenger Program in 2002, and Gainesville is proposed as a station for the proposed commuter route into Atlanta. This same rail corridor from Atlanta to Greenville, S.C. is a federally designated High Speed Rail Corridor. City of Canton, located west of the county, also is proposed as a station for the proposed commuter route into Atlanta. Should the Georgia Rail Passenger Program come to fruition during the planning horizon, Dawsonville and Dawson County may consider establishment of a transit link to these commuter routes.

#### ***Air Transportation***

Dawsonville and Dawson County are not served by a public-use airport. A privately owned airstrip, Elliot Field, is located within the city. Public use airports in proximity to Dawsonville include Gainesville, Blairsville, Dahlonega, Canton and Jasper.

<b><u>County</u></b>	<b><u>City</u></b>	<b><u>ID</u></b>	<b><u>Runway Length (ft.)</u></b>	<b><u>Runway Width (ft.)</u></b>	<b><u>Level*</u></b>
Hall	Gainesville	GVL	5,500	100	III
Union	Blairsville	46A	3,800	75	III
Lumpkin	Dahlonega	9A0	3,090	50	I
Cherokee	Canton	47A	3,414	75	II
Pickens	Jasper	JZP	5,000	100	II

*Source: Georgia Airport Association*

*\* As discussed in the current Georgia Aviation System (20-year) Plan, all public use airports in Georgia are assigned one of three functional levels as the facility relates to the state’s transportation and economic needs:*

*Level I- Minimum Standard General Aviation Airport*

*Level II- Business Airports of Local Impact*

*Level III- Business Airports of Regional Impact*



Map – Airports and Rail access

### **3.6 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

#### ***Issues:***

- *Balancing local traffic and commercial traffic* – As Dawsonville and Dawson County grow more suburban the major corridors will become viable for multiple uses. Uses that, at times can lead to competing priorities, particularly in balancing through and tourist traffic with that of local residents. The City must balance its overall priorities for growth, character and land use management to ensure clear priorities for all major roadways to ensure an efficient transportation system.
- *Maintaining the access corridors* – Connectivity to Hwy 400 is a chief priority for residents and businesses alike. Yet this also causes the greatest blend of uses and competing demands as discussed above. For example State Route 53 could serve as a commercial destination, gateway, scenic corridor or simple rural arterial. Management of these routes will be critical to determining a vision for the community and the effectiveness of measures to achieve that vision.
- *Improving access to mass transit* – Few opportunities currently exist for public transit, either as a local service or as a link to commuter service into metropolitan Atlanta. Though demand is not high for such modes at present, both the rate and styles of growth projected for the near future suggest a strong need for such transit programs in order to mitigate transportation concerns for the City.
- *Improving road network interconnectivity* – Development patterns beyond the historic district were not based on an interconnected road system. This lack of connectivity hampers emergency response times, and leads to an overburden of the existing collector and arterial roads. Completion of the perimeter road, and establishing new roads would improve efficiency and safety within the system, and preserve the existing road system by reducing overuse of certain sections.
- *Improving safety and preservation of the road network* -- Local public safety officials have requested an updated system of local speed limits be established to improve safety. A locally-established functional classification system would facilitate this, as well as establishing local road construction standards, access management, and other transportation/land use planning decisions such as zoning.

#### ***Opportunities:***

- *Long-Range Road Improvement Plan* - The city is served by many of the county's roads, specifically Burt Creek Road, and State Routes 53, 9, 142 and 136 located in the north section of the city, also serve as major corridors. The expansion to the north will prompt development and increased travel demand. There is a need to develop a focused road improvement program to guide public investment in the future, and to connect future land use planning with transportation planning.
- *Establishment of Pedestrian and/or Bike Planning* - The city has begun steps to improve pedestrian infrastructure with a long-term master plan that coordinates pedestrian interconnectivity between the historic downtown district and the newer development along Ga. Hwy 53, Ga. Hwy. 9, Allen Street, and Dawsonville By-Pass. There is an opportunity to build connectivity to State Bicycle Highway 9. The development of bicycle and pedestrian routes in

the near term may prove beneficial by allowing for coordination with future road improvement projects and establishing a plan before land becomes too scarce or costly.

- *Downtown/Historic District Transportation Master Plan* – The historic district was developed on a grid pattern of roads that are narrow by modern standards, and a number of road sections originally platted have not been opened. An opportunity exists to develop a plan to open these areas, including the extension of Allen Street to SR 53, and establishing north-south pedestrian only corridors to enhance safe circulation.

## CHAPTER FOUR - HOUSING

Housing is a critical issue to every community as a primary factor of quality of life. The costs and availability of quality housing is a key gauge in calculating local costs of living and one measure in defining the long-term sustainability of the resident population. The housing element of the comprehensive plan is used to evaluate whether existing and projected development will meet the county's housing needs with respect to supply, affordability, and accessibility.

### 4.1 Total Units/ Type of Structure

In reviewing the housing trends across a community, the number of units alone does not provide the most accurate picture. Instead, the number of housing units must also be divided into three categories that further define the type of housing involved. For the purposes of this plan, the assessment of housing units will utilize three primary housing types: Single family, multi-family, and manufactured housing. Because each type of housing provides different options for lifestyle choices and economic conditions for local households, they also require varying sets of needs and demands with respect to land conditions, public services, and facilities. Understanding the different housing types and how they are dispersed throughout a community can assist governments in more effective distribution of public services and facilities.

*Single-family* units are defined as free-standing houses, or as units that are attached but completely separated by a dividing wall. Associated with the “American Dream,” single family housing is often the most desirable by all parties involved; To residents for the ownership rights and symbolism of achievement, to governments for the tax revenue and investment in the community, and to developers for the potential return value.

*Multi-family* housing consists of structures containing two or more units, including large multi-unit homes, apartment complexes, and condominiums. Compared to single family housing, multi-family units are more cost effective to produce and associated with a more temporary residency, factors which have spurred the growth of this market in a national society achieving new levels of mobility.

*Manufactured housing* is currently defined by the US Census as all forms of pre-fabricated housing, with a special HUD definition for units produced before June 10, 1976. This category is generally the least expensive means of housing production and ownership but is also often associated with weaker economic conditions because of how local communities continue to evolve in their approach to taxing such structures, treating modern units the same as their mobile-home predecessors. However, the difference between modern manufactured housing and conventional housing is growing smaller and smaller, with much of the remaining difference being stylistic and less in terms of functionality or impacts on public services.

**Table 4.1 – Housing Units by Type, Dawsonville**

	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>162</u>	<u>182</u>	<u>231</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Single Units (detached)	128	98	129	79.0%	53.8%	55.8%
Single Units (attached)	0	1	2	0.0%	0.5%	0.9%
Double Units	0	5	11	0.0%	2.7%	4.8%
3 - 9 Units	0	26	45	0.0%	14.3%	19.5%
10 - 19 Units	0	1	0	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
20 - 49 Units	0	0	4	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
50+ Units	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mobile Home/ Trailer	34	48	40	21.0%	26.4%	17.3%
All Other	0	3	0	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

As a small community Dawsonville is predominantly comprised of single-family detached housing. Some manufactured housing remains and there are pockets of multi-family units, but the City is essentially a collection of established residential areas around the downtown commercial core.

Even as the City has expanded through annexation the past few years, the overall ratios are unlikely to change in the near future. Most residential properties added to the City since 2000 are also single-family detached, and it is unlikely there will be notable increases to the numbers of mobile/manufactured homes. The categories that may show the most dynamic change will be those for multi-family units: As the City increases in population there will be more demand for urban scale housing, particularly for special needs populations desiring locations accessible to the city’s amenities.

**Table 4.2 – Housing Units by Type - 2000**

	Dawsonville	Dawson
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Single Units (detached)	55.8%	77.6%
Single Units (attached)	0.9%	0.6%
Double Units	4.8%	0.8%
3 - 9 Units	19.5%	2.8%
10 - 19 Units	0.0%	1.0%
20 - 49 Units	1.7%	0.2%
50+ Units	0.0%	0.3%
Mobile Home/ Trailer	17.3%	16.6%
All Other	0.0%	0.2%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Compared with Dawson County the only notable difference is in regards to multi-family units. As the established urban center Dawsonville is the expected choice for such housing types years ago. Newer development has placed garden style apartments and other multi-family housing near the GA 400 corridor in the unincorporated county. However, both the city and the county have historically been rural communities that feature mostly single-family detached units.

## 4.2 Age and Conditions

The US Census of Housing includes information on units without complete plumbing and water service, allowing governments to target concentrations of such housing as areas in need of service upgrades or redevelopment. Units lacking complete modern conveniences, or those old enough that they likely feature illegal construction material or need regular repair, should be monitored for possible economic depression. Measures taken to aid the renovation and maintenance of these units can prevent the development of slum conditions and ensure the vitality of local land values.

**Table 4.3 – Housing Age and Conditions**

Year Built	1990			2000		
	D'ville	Dawson	Georgia	D'ville	Dawson	Georgia
<b>1980+</b>	20.9%	49.3%	32.1%	51.5%	74.4%	49.9%
<b>1970 - 1979</b>	12.1%	23.3%	24.5%	13.4%	11.6%	18.6%
<b>1960 - 1969</b>	24.2%	12.4%	17.2%	4.3%	5.5%	12.7%
<b>1950 - 1959</b>	16.5%	5.4%	11.7%	10.8%	3.5%	8.6%
<b>1940 - 1949</b>	14.8%	4.7%	6.4%	4.8%	1.9%	4.4%
<b>&lt; 1940</b>	11.5%	4.9%	8.1%	15.2%	2.9%	5.9%
<b>Incomplete Plumbing</b>	1.6%	0.8%	1.1%	1.7%	0.2%	0.9%
<b>Incomplete Kitchen</b>	1.6%	0.3%	0.9%	1.7%	0.3%	1.0%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

The data concerning housing age and conditions indicates the city’s housing stock is essentially older and features higher shares of sub-standard units. This is expected as almost all new development, especially larger subdivisions, has taken place on undeveloped land in the unincorporated county. This trend will likely continue unless the City’s recent annexations yield more new subdivisions.

What is notable about the data is the percentage share of housing units older than 1950 – 20%. While this information alone does not indicate a concern, it does emphasize the need for the city to monitor housing trends, affordability and reinvestment. Older units that do not receive regular maintenance and/or renovations are liable to fall into disrepair, become unviable for occupancy or fail to maintain property values. Failure to maintain the economic viability of the housing supply will depress markets, resulting in issues with property tax revenues and sustaining households with quality income levels. Correlating with this information is the fact that Dawsonville did not see a significant drop in the share of units with substandard plumbing or kitchens between 1990 and 2000.

### 4.3 Occupancy Characteristics

Tracking the vacancy rates for a region can help in gauging the strength of the housing market. Lower vacancy rates suggest the market is keeping pace with population growth and demands, while higher rates would indicate a glut of housing development. The threat exists that excessive vacancy rates may lead to the deterioration of certain units or even whole neighborhoods.

Similar to the different economic and social needs defined by the type of housing, data concerning the different types of residency can also indicate specific trends or needs of the region’s population. Whether a housing unit is being leased or owned indicates the financial abilities of the household, as well as suggesting the health of the local economy. Typically, a stronger market is defined by a relatively high percentage of homeowners versus renters.

**Table 4.4 – Housing Occupancy Characteristics**

	Dawsonville			2000		
	1990	2000		D'ville	Dawson	Georgia
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>182</u>	<u>231</u>		<u>231</u>	<u>7,163</u>	<u>3,281,737</u>
<b>Total Vacant</b>	26	14		6.1%	15.3%	8.4%
<b>Total - Owner Occupied</b>	96	116		50.2%	69.0%	61.8%
<b>Total - Renter Occupied</b>	86	101		43.7%	15.7%	29.8%
<b>&gt;1 person per room</b>	5	13		5.6%	2.3%	4.4%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Dawsonville’s occupancy characteristics reveal rental rates comparably higher than those for Dawson County and for the State of Georgia as a whole. While this figure alone does not indicate a problem, it does warrant monitoring against future trends. As the traditional urban center for Dawson County it can be expected that the city and its higher shares of multi-family housing feature higher renter occupancy rates. The disparity between the two jurisdictions, however, and the significantly higher disparity between the City’s rates and those for the State could be a sign of economic concerns. Higher ratios of renters correlating with lower income levels would indicate households with limited spending power and or recourse to invest in the properties. If the goal of the community is to create wealth among its residents then higher ratios of owner-occupied properties would be desired. This figure should be investigated upon the release of updated census data in 2010, and the City should consider moving towards ratios closer to those for the State as a whole.

#### 4.4 Housing Costs

Understanding the physical conditions of housing options within a community is relatively useless without also understanding the market for housing affordability. An assessment of housing costs is critical to understanding the accessibility of the housing supply to the residents, and goes a long way toward explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the housing supply.

**Table 4.5 – Housing Costs**

	Dawsonville		2000		
	1990	2000	D'ville	Dawson	Georgia
<b>Median property value</b>	\$62,800	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$142,500	\$111,200
<b>Median rent</b>	\$310	\$655	\$655	\$685	\$613

**Costs as % of Income**

<b>30% - 49%</b>	27	29	13.4%	12.1%	13.2%
<b>50%+</b>	NA	22	10.1%	7.1%	9.3%
<b>Not computed</b>	14	17	7.8%	3.2%	3.2%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Dawsonville and, more specifically, Dawson County have grown in large part due to the comparably low cost of living compared to metropolitan Atlanta. The costs have grown over the past few years and now exceed the State average, but this is largely due to increased quality and quantity of the overall supply. Costs of living are still considered very affordable versus neighboring counties deeper within the metropolitan area, and current recession conditions have stabilized the rate of price increases for new construction.

The City does feature a significant amount of households spending high percentages of their income on housing costs. Ideal conditions would see most households spending under 30% of their income on housing so as to reduce the potential for poverty or bankruptcy. In Dawsonville, however, greater than 23% of occupied housing units are spending above that level, including a comparably very high 10% of occupied housing units spending more than 50% of their income. Such spending is either indicative of low wage levels or extremely high housing costs, with either figure presenting an imbalance the City should seek to remedy.



### 4.5 Special Needs Housing

In addition to considerations for various income levels, housing assessments must also consider those persons and households with special needs such as the disabled, elderly, victims of domestic violence, those suffering with HIV or from substance abuse. This segment of the population not only requires basic housing, but also housing that matches affordability with functionality due to their limited abilities or need for access to medical care and human services.

**Table 4.6 – Special Needs Population Characteristics**

	<b>Dawson</b>	<b>Forsyth</b>	<b>Hall</b>	<b>Lumpkin</b>	<b>Pickens</b>
<b>AIDS Cases 1981-2000</b>	3	22	95	5	12
<b>Family Violence, # of Police Actions Taken, 2000</b>	98	1022	223	434	91
<b><u>% of Total Population</u></b>					
<b>Age 62+ (2000)</b>	12.06%	8.90%	11.44%	11.99%	16.36%
<b>Disability (Any), Age 16+ (1990)</b>	29.41%	22.40%	26.72%	27.55%	30.90%
<b>Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Need (2001)</b>	6.84%	6.82%	7.09%	7.46%	6.68%
<b>Migrant &amp; Seasonal Farm Workers and Dependents, Estimated at Peak Employment, (1994)</b>	N/A	N/A	0.09%	0.34%	N/A

*Source: Various sources contributing to Georgia Statistics System web site: <http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu>*

Dawsonville and Dawson County may encounter a growing demand for special needs housing based on shares of retirement age and disabled population. While these figures have likely decreased since 2000 due to the population growth from new transplants, Dawson County is also within a metro area typically more attractive to special needs residents that require accessibility to urban amenities. Dawsonville and Dawson County have seen more communities proposed to address the needs of retirement age residents, but no strong needs have been raised by particular interest groups or developers. As medical facilities and utilities become more accessible throughout the county, more demand for special needs housing could be considered.

## **4.6 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

### ***Issues:***

- *Aging housing stock* – A notable portion of the City’s current housing stock more than 30 years old. Many of these units may require structural maintenance or repair while many more may simply lack the amenities or features to remain economically viable in the face of a rapidly growing housing market. If the natural market and economy is not enabling the City’s residents to maintain their homes there is a risk of seeing many units fall into disrepair and concentrations of impoverished units leading to social blight.
- *Lack of select housing types* - The recent growth Dawsonville is experiencing has produced an imbalance in the measure of two housing types; 1) Quality affordable housing for the area’s workforce, and 2) special needs housing for the elderly and handicapped. While these sectors are recognized as among the least viable for private developers, failure to provide options within proximity of Dawsonville will only serve to increase the costs for those consumers and likely adversely impact the general economy and local quality of life.

### ***Opportunities:***

- *Natural expansion of the housing market* – While there is some uncertainty in the types of new housing development that will occur in Dawsonville, it is clear that new housing will come as part of the outward growth of metropolitan Atlanta. The opportunity exists to provide the City with higher standards of living and increased diversity of housing choices.
- *Potential for housing diversity within the City* – There is enough space and a number of existing properties within the city to develop alternative housing. Lofts and other units could be provided above shops within downtown, and mixed use and multi-family housing could be incorporated into the city without adversely impacting traffic, utilities or the character of the community.

## **CHAPTER FIVE - NATURAL RESOURCES**

This Natural Resources element seeks to define the issues, problems, and opportunities associated with the effective management of a region's environmental features. Natural resources are those environmental conditions that share a direct relationship with surrounding communities, such as ecologically sensitive areas, scenic areas, and water sources. These elements help define a community's character and potential and thus should be protected from misuse.

### **5.1 Environmental Planning Criteria**

The Environmental Planning Criteria was established through the Georgia Planning Act as a method of identifying minimum standards that should be implemented to protect Georgia's most sensitive natural resources including wetlands, water supply watersheds, protected rivers, groundwater recharge areas, and mountain protection areas. Local governments are encouraged to adopt regulations for the protection of relevant natural resources to maintain their eligibility for certain state grants, loans, and permits. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has developed model ordinances to be used as guides for local governments as they develop the necessary regulations to meet EPD standards. Of the features addressed by the Environmental Planning Criteria only water supply watersheds and wetlands fall within the City of Dawsonville.

#### **5.1.1 Water Supply Watersheds**

Water supply watersheds include all areas within a watershed that are located upstream of a public water supply intake. Proper land use management within these areas is critical to ensure that raw public water supplies are of high quality and do not become degraded to the point where it cannot be treated to meet drinking water standards.

The Etowah Water and Sewer Authority (EWSA) manages a public water intake that is located on the Etowah River at SR 53. Sections of eastern Dawsonville are located within the water supply watershed of the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority intake (Map 5.1). Model regulations developed by GA EPD identify a number of protection measures to be implemented within this water supply watershed that include 100ft stream buffers, a 150ft impervious setback from the stream, and a 150ft setback from the stream where septic tanks are prohibited. Similarly, sanitary landfills within the watershed are only allowed if they have synthetic liners and leachate collection systems, new hazardous waste treatment or disposal facilities are prohibited, and impervious surface area of the entire water supply should be limited to twenty five (25) percent.

#### **5.1.2 Public Water Supply Sources**

The Etowah Water and Sewer Authority is the sole water provider in the City of Dawsonville. The EWSA water intake is allocated a maximum daily withdrawal of 5.5 Million Gallons/Day (MGD) and a monthly average withdrawal of 4.4 MGD. As monitored by the State the Etowah River at the EWSA intake point is not meeting its water quality standards due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria. To provide a reliable water source for its citizens, cooperation is needed

between the City of Dawsonville, Dawson County, and the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority to make certain that continued growth in the Etowah watershed does not further impair water quality and does not jeopardize public drinking water supplies.

### **5.1.3 Wetlands**

Wetlands play an important role in maintaining environmental quality by providing habitat for a variety of rare and sensitive species and serve human needs by storing natural flood waters and stormwater, purifying water through filtration, and providing open space and recreation areas.

The National Wetlands Inventory developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identifies a number of wetland areas scattered within Dawsonville (Map 5.1). Most are located in low-lying areas adjacent to streams such as Shoal Creek, Burt Creek, and Flat Creek.

While Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, as administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, provides a measure of protection through a permitting and mitigation process for all activities that impacts wetlands, local oversight of wetland disturbing activity should consider the following:

- Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
- Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna such as threatened, rare or endangered species.
- Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
- Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural.

In addition, the Environmental Planning Criteria recommends local regulations develop a list of unacceptable uses for wetland areas such as receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste, or sanitary waste landfills.

### **5.1.4 Other Ongoing Protection Plans**

A number of environmental plans have been developed, or are being developed, that impact Dawsonville. The Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan is being drafted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in cooperation with the University of Georgia, Kennesaw State University and the Georgia Conservancy to develop a plan for the protection of water quality in the Etowah River to ensure the survival of two federally endangered species, the amber darter and the Etowah darter, and a federally threatened species, the Cherokee darter.

Under existing regulations, developments within the Etowah watershed that may have a negative impact on federally listed species must acquire an incidental-taking permit from the USFWS. The Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan has been developed around six guiding policies that include stormwater management, erosion and sedimentation control, stream buffer regulations, road crossings of streams, utility crossings of streams, and water supply planning. With adoption

of the Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan by local governments, these policies will provide sufficient protection for endangered species in the watershed and developers will have the ability to bypass the federal permitting process and be issued the required development permits directly through the local government.

Water quality testing by Georgia EPD has identified the Etowah River as not meeting its water quality standards between Proctor Creek and Blacks Mill Creek due to fecal coliform impairment. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan has been developed for the watershed that drains this section of the Etowah River, which includes portions of eastern Dawsonville. The TMDL Implementation Plan, developed by the Georgia Mountains RDC, incorporates field surveys and public and governmental input to identify potential pollution sources, appropriate management measures to improve water quality, and develops a timeframe for the implementation of the management measures.

## **5.2 Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

Dawsonville is located in the Southern Inner Piedmont geographic region. Near the Blue Ridge Mountains and surrounded by largely rural, unspoiled lands, Dawsonville has a unique setting with many environmentally sensitive resources.

### **5.2.1 Floodplains**

In their natural or relatively undisturbed state, floodplains provide three broad sets of values: (1) water maintenance and groundwater recharge; (2) living resource benefits, including habitat for large and diverse populations of plants and animals; and (3) cultural resource benefits, including archeological, scientific, recreational, and aesthetic sites. In addition, some sites can be highly productive for agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry where these uses are compatible.

Dawsonville participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The NFIP provides federally backed flood insurance to citizens in communities that participate. To qualify for the NFIP, local governments must adopt regulations, as required by FEMA, that provide for floodplain management and develop a permitting system for all developments in the flood hazard area.

According to FEMA, Dawsonville's updated Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) will be released this year. As flooding conditions change due to alterations in environmental conditions such as precipitation fluctuations, and man made changes to the environment such as the level of urbanization, maintaining an updated flood hazard map is critical to determine areas at risk during flood events. Dawsonville will need to review the updated flood hazard maps to ensure their codes and enforcement staff are aware of the new official conditions.

The 2002 FIRM identifies a number of flood prone areas in Dawsonville that are located in low lands adjacent to major streams such as Flat Creek, Burt Creek, and Shoal Creek. Floodplains also exist along unnamed tributaries to the said streams. Map 5.1 shows the distribution of floodplains in the City of Dawsonville.

Map – Environmentally Sensitive Resources

**5.2.2 Soils**

Soils are an important factor for both natural and manmade settings. Soils dictate the type of vegetation and its growth rate, suitability for agricultural and forestry production, propensity for erosion, suitability for building foundations and septic systems, and indicate depth to bedrock. The Soil Survey of Dawson, Lumpkin, and White Counties, Georgia provides the most in-depth consideration of Dawsonville's soils and their properties. Table 5.1 provides information regarding the major soil types located in the City of Dawsonville.

**Table 5.1 - Soil Limitations**

Map Symbol	Soil Series (slope)	Dwelling Foundations	Septic Drainfields	Light Industry Structures	Roadways
AmC2	Appling sandy loam (6 to 10%)	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
AwB	Augusta fine sandy loam (2 to 6%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
AwC	Augusta fine sandy loam (6 to 10%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Cac	Cartecay (0 to 2%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
FaB	Fannin fine sandy loam (2 to 6%)	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
FaC	Fannin fine sandy loam (6 to 10%)	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
FaE	Fannin fine sandy loam (10 to 25%)	Mod.-Severe	Severe	Severe	Mod.-Severe
FbC2	Fannin sandy clay loam (6 to 10%)	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
FbE2	Fannin sandy clay loam (10 to 25%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Mod.-Severe
HIB	Haysville sandy loam (2 to 6%)	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
HIC	Haysville sandy loam (6 to 10%)	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
HIE	Haysville sandy loam (10 to 25%)	Mod.-Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
HJE3	Haysville sandy clay loam (10 to 25%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
MoB	Masada fine sandy loam (2 to 6%)	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate
MoC2	Masada fine sandy loam (6 to 10%)	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate
MoD2	Masada fine sandy loam (10 to 15%)	Moderate	Moderate	Severe	Moderate
TdG	Tallapoosa soils (25 to 70%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Toc	Toccoa soils (0 to 2%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Wed	Wehadkee soils (0 to 2%)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
WgD	Wickham fine sandy loam (10 to 15%)	Mod.-Severe	Mod.-Severe	Severe	Mod.-Severe

*Source: Soil Survey of Dawson, Lumpkin, and White Counties, Georgia.*

Several soil categories exhibit a severe rating with regards to capacity to sustain various types of development. Specifically, these areas are most susceptible to adverse impacts from erosion and sedimentation problems during land disturbance activities or through failure to manage stormwater runoff. The City should monitor lands with these soil types and work to ensure that all development regulations and best management practices are being employed during construction and land disturbance.

- DRAFT -

Map – Soil Associations



### **5.2.3 Steep Slopes**

Steep Slopes include areas other than protected mountains where the slope of the land is severe enough to warrant special management practices. Soil conditions are often shallow and unstable in these areas, resulting in erosion, loss of vegetation and habitat and ultimately reduced water quality. Steeper slopes can also require more expensive and specialized construction measures, yielding concerns over the safety or efficiency of development

Dawsonville is located on a broad ridgeline that separates the Etowah River watershed from the smaller Amicalola watershed. While much of the City has low to moderate slopes, much of northern and eastern does Dawsonville contain steep slopes (Map 5.3). Dawsonville's existing development regulations adequately protect steep slopes within city limits through existing grading and drainage requirements and land suitability requirements.

- DRAFT -

Map – Steep Slopes

### **5.2.4 Plant and Animal Habitats**

The protection of endangered, threatened, and sensitive species is required to maintain a sustainable ecosystem. Areas conducive to, or known to harbor, such species should be preserved in a natural state as best as possible to allow these species to thrive and thus maintain the area's ecology.

Table 5.2 and 5.3 provide information on species located in Dawson County that are listed as threatened and endangered or species nationally or within the State of Georgia. Most of the animal species listed are considerably small, but their role in local ecological systems is considered vitally important. Smaller animals are often the food source for larger animals, and if that food source should dissipate or fade away all together, then the larger species will begin to feel the impact.

A similar concern applies to the listed plants, as well. These plants act as either a source of food for animals or contribute to the ecology by amending soil conditions, mitigating flooding and water pollution. As the number of these plants is reduced the net impact on the environment could yield adverse impacts on other species and/or on native soil and water quality.

Habitat conservation for listed plants and animals should occur if such species are found within city limits. This may not entail complete restrictions on development but should ensure protection of the most critical areas, such as stream banks and buffers, to preserve the character and conditions of the habitat.

**Table 5.2 - Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Animals in Dawson County**

Status	Common Name	Latin Name	Habitat
Threatened/ US	Etowah Darter	Etheostoma etowahae	Small to medium sized streams over cobble to gravel in areas of swift current.
Threatened/ US	Cherokee Darter	Etheostoma scotti	Small to medium sized creeks with moderate current and rocky substrate.
Threatened/ US	Amber Darter	Percina	Riffles and runs of medium sized rivers.
Threatened/ GA	Holiday Darter	Etheostoma brevirostrum	Small creeks to moderate sized river in gravel and bedrock pools.
Threatened/ GA	Frecklebelly Madtom	Noturus munitus	Shoals and riffles of moderate to large streams and rivers.
Sensitive	Coosa Darter	Etheostoma coosae	Medium sized streams to rivers in flowing run or riffles over gravel to cobble substrate.
Sensitive	Rock Darter	Etheostoma rupestre	Medium sized creeks to rivers in riffle areas over gravel to bedrock substrate
Sensitive	Southern Brook Lamprey	Ichthyomyzon gagei	Creeks to small rivers with sand or sand and gravel substrate.
Sensitive		Macrhyopsis sp. 1	Swift currents over gravel substrates.
Sensitive	Rainbow Shiner	Notropis chrosomus	Small clear streams with moderate current over sand to gravel substrate.
Sensitive	Silverstripe Shiner	Notropis chrosomus	Medium sized streams to rivers in flowing polls over sandy to rocky substrate.
Sensitive	Bronze Darter	Percina palmaris	Moderate to swift riffles over rocky substrates in streams and rivers.
Sensitive	Riffle Minnow	Phenacobius catostomus	Swift riffles in large streams or rivers over rocky substrates.
Sensitive	Northern Pine Snake	Pituophis melanoleucus	Dry pine or pine-hardwood forests.
Sensitive	Pygmy Shrew	Sorex hoyi	Mountain bogs; grassy openings in high elevation forests.

*Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Wildlife Resources Division.*

**Table 5.3 - Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Plants in Dawson County**

Status	Common Name	Latin Name	Habitat
Threatened/ US	Georgia Aster	Aster georgianus	Upland oak-hickory-pine forests and openings; sometimes with Echinacea laevigata or over amphibolite.
Threatened/ GA	Manhart's Sedge	Carex manhartii	Cove hardwood forests; other mesic deciduous forests.
Threatened/ GA	Pink Ladyslipper	Cypripedium acaule	Upland oak-hickory-pine forests; piney woods.
Threatened/ GA	Small-flowered Yellow Ladyslipper	Cypripedium var. parviflorum	Upland oak-hickory-pine forests; mixed hardwood forests.
Threatened/ GA	Large-flowered Yellow Ladyslipper	Cypripedium parviflorum var. pubescens	Upland oak-hickory-pine forests; mixed hardwood forests.
Threatened/ GA	Goldenseal	Hydrastis canadensis	Rich woods in circumneutral soil.
Threatened/ GA	Piedmont Barren Strawberry	Waldsteinia lobata	Stream terraces and adjacent gneiss outcrops.
Sensitive	Phlox-leaved Aster	Aster phlogifolius	Mesic hardwood forests over basic soil.
Sensitive	Naked-fruit Rush	Juncus gymnocarpus	Seepy streamsides; open swamps; mountain bogs.
Sensitive	Dwarf Ginseng	Panax trifolius	Mesic hardwood-coniferous forests.
Sensitive	Broad-toothed Hedge-nettle	Stachys latidens	Cove hardwoods and mesic forests.

*Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Wildlife Resources Division.*

### **5.3 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

#### ***Issues:***

- *Need for greenspace* – As Dawsonville grows more suburban there is more pressure to not only provide greenspace but to do so in a way that retains the community’s rural character, provides actual environmental benefits and coordinates with recreational uses where possible. This issue becomes more critical as new development reduces the number of options, while increasing the level of demand, for preserved greenspace. As a priority among the greenspace issues discussed above, the City of Dawsonville must work to protect the ecology along local waterways. This provides direct benefits as a measure of flood control, preserving water quality and providing natural buffers and scenic beauty amidst a rapidly growing area.
- *Need for improved management of greenspace* – Dawsonville needs further measures to monitor the protection of preserved greenspace and to include preserved greenspace in recreation plans. Land set aside for natural resource protection should be monitored to ensure its protection, and the City should work to ensure that the lands pursued for preservation can provide the most benefit to local natural resources.
- *Need to review tree and landscaping policies* – As the level and variety of development increases the City should review existing policies regarding tree planting/preservation and landscaping requirements. Emphasis should be placed on benefiting the local ecology and targeting lands within environmentally sensitive areas.

#### ***Opportunities:***

- *Incorporation of greenspace within new development* - The City does have regulations encouraging conservation design. These policies should be reviewed to make sure they emphasize protection of environmentally sensitive areas as recognized by the City.
- *Improved resources for natural resource management* - Advances in technology and environmental science now allow for more effective management policies. City efforts to protect the environment can outline definitive actions that build upon public awareness and utilize improved sources of information to better achieve preservation objectives.
- *Strong levels of public support* - The preservation of natural resources has become more critical to Dawsonville residents, the result of a strong links between area resources, the local economy and the community’s character. Dawsonville is still regarded as a rural town and is recognized for its proximity to popular lakes, rivers and mountains, and as a result these resources are considered vital to the community’s well being.

## **CHAPTER SIX – HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Cultural resources are those man-made sites, structures and resources that contribute to the identity of a community. Such resources are typically classified as historic or non-historic and are often viewed as having a worth beyond their direct economic value. Historic resources are typically defined as buildings, objects or sites that are listed or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places because of their associations with certain times and people in history. Non-historic resources are defined as popular civic or public resources that play a key part in local culture, such as new parks, a civic center or theatre halls.

To be eligible for the National Register, a resource must be at least fifty years old, relatively unchanged (unless archaeological), and connected to a significant person, event, or architectural style. However, qualification brings a complete account of a resource's history and significance and establishes eligibility for special tax credits or other programs that preserve and build upon historic resources.

### **6.1 Historical Narrative**

In order to appreciate the significance and value of Dawsonville's cultural resources, it is necessary to examine them in the context of the historic physical development of the area. Without this historical framework, Dawsonville's historic resources are nothing more than a scattering of buildings having no relation to one another or the City as a whole.

Rockpile, located three miles south of present day Dawsonville, was the first county seat of Dawson County. The settlement at Rockpile was established as a rock pile on a road where several families had settled. The road no longer exists and the site is now located on the Dawson Wildlife Refuge property.

Dawsonville was incorporated on December 10, 1859 and Andrew Glenn, the County Surveyor, laid out and named the city streets and lots of Dawsonville. City lots were sold at public auction and money raised paid for lots 440 and for the construction of public buildings. Certain lots were retained for a courthouse, jail, and other public buildings. Citizens requested that the town fathers set aside eight feet of main street in town for sidewalks or "promenades." The inclusion of plants and trees for shade along these features was also requested. Maple Street still shows signs of these plantings.

From 1859 to 1860, the existing brick County Courthouse was constructed at Dawsonville. Wesley McGuire, Anderson Wilson, and John Hockenbull contracted to build the structure for \$6,000. The bricks used in this construction were believed to have been made by slaves belonging to John Hockenbull on a lot just south of the square. A temporary log Courthouse was utilized until the present Courthouse was completed. In 1873, the Courthouse received a new roof and the old shingles were sold for five dollars. Also in 1873, the northeast room of the Courthouse was fitted for the commissioner's office, windows were glazed, and the building was repainted.

A County Jail was constructed from logs circa 1860, close to the time the brick Courthouse was completed. The jail burned shortly after during an attempted escape. As a result, the county was without a jail due to the unrest associated with the War Between the States. It wasn't until 1871 that Marshall L. Smith drew plans for the present historic jail west of the historic Courthouse. Construction began in 1880 and was completed in 1881. Today the historic jail houses the Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center.

Today, much of Dawsonville reflects the economic prosperity of the early twentieth century. At one time it contained several commercial buildings and the main offices for several gold mining companies that were located throughout the county. Also included were the Dawsonville Drug Company building and three hotels, one of which was the Howser Hotel, which was destroyed by fire in 1904. Although Dawsonville was not as heavily populated as other areas of the County, it was centrally located and has been the only incorporated town in Dawson County's history.

Dawsonville was once known as the "Moonshine Capital" of Georgia during the Prohibition years of the 1920s. The Prohibition Act of 1920 created the demand for the product and many local families were involved in the production of corn whiskey. This production included the growing of corn and sugar cane, the manufacture of jars, the building of fast cars, and local and regional delivery. These processes are referred to as the "Moonshine Chain." The production of moonshine did not cease with the lifting of the Prohibition Act in 1933. Large-scale production continued well into the 1970s.

A tremendous economic boost for Dawsonville came with the introduction of the poultry industry in the area. The Rural Electrification Act of Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s also boosted prosperity and growth. Howser's Mill, although not within the city limits, served as Dawsonville's first source of electrical energy through the use of its turbine water wheel. The development of Lake Lanier in the 1950s has also made a large impact on local land values and the local economy with the rising popularity of vacation homes. The construction of Highway 400, running northeast through the lower southeast section of the County, has been a proponent to the increased civic and private achievements within Dawsonville City Limits.

In the 1950s sizeable tracts of land adjacent to the City of Dawsonville were purchased to create National Forest land. Originally owned by the Air Force and used by Lockheed for the research and development of nuclear energy, this area was later purchased by the City of Atlanta Airport Authority. Today the land is maintained by the Department of Natural Resources as the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area.

## **6.2 Historic Properties**

Most of Dawsonville's historic resources have been categorized according to property types to help identify them more clearly. These categories include: residential structures, commercial buildings, community landmarks, and historic districts.



### **6.2.1 Residential Structures**

The greatest majority of historic building stock within the City of Dawsonville is residential structures. The historic residential buildings are primarily simple vernacular houses, with the majority dating from around 1890 to 1960. Few antebellum residential structures remain. Some of these vernacular houses exhibit restrained stylistic elements, with the majority not having a great deal of ornamentation. A few high-style residents can be found here. These exhibit primarily Greek Revival, Victorian Era, or Craftsman stylistic features.

There are several common house forms, or plans, in Dawsonville. These types include the Central Hallway, Hall and Parlor, Queen Anne Cottage, Gabled Ell Cottage, Pyramidal Cottage, and Bungalow. The Central Hall and Hall and Parlor tend to be two rooms wide, however they differ in their floor plan. The Central Hall consists of two rooms separated by a hallway. It is one room deep and frequently has one or two exterior chimneys. The Hall and Parlor is also usually one room deep and consists of two rooms unequal in size with the entrance leading into the larger of the two rooms. These forms are found intact or with various additions to the front, rear, or side of the structure. The Gabled Ell Cottage typically has a floor plan in a “T” or “L” shape with a gable roof. The Queen Anne Cottage may possess stylistic elements from other architectural styles; or they may lack stylistic elements and only exhibit the roof configuration and massing characteristic of this type. The Pyramidal Cottage consists of a square main mass, a steeply pitched pyramid shaped roof, and will generally have four main rooms with no hallway. The Bungalow house type is characterized by its overall rectangular shape and irregular floor plan. Houses of this type are generally low and have varied roof forms and integrated porches. Most of these house types found in Dawsonville are one-story examples. However two-story types may be found as well.

### **6.2.2 Commercial Buildings**

Prior to the construction of Georgia 400, the majority of Dawsonville revolved around its historic Central Business District (CBD). Much of the CBD, which is locally designated as a historic district, retains much of its original grid plan.

Dawsonville’s historic commercial buildings consist of three primary styles: two-story brick with little ornamentation, two-story frame, and one-story examples of early to mid-twentieth century origin. Set-backs tend to vary within the CBD. Most are in fair to excellent condition; however, some have experienced historically inappropriate alterations. In many cases, these remodelings have resulted in the loss of historical integrity of the buildings by covering up important architectural elements. While some changes to buildings may not be reversible, others may be reversed. Buildings that have been “modernized” with false façades can usually be returned to their original appearance by simply removing the extraneous material. The use of historic photographs, as well as guidance from the Regional Historic Preservation Planner, the State Office of Historic Preservation, or a private consultant is beneficial when undergoing commercial restorations and downtown revitalization. Programs such as Main Street and Hometown, both offered through the Department of Community Affairs, may also aid a community in downtown revitalization projects.

### **6.2.3 Community Landmarks**

A variety of historic landmarks exist within the city limits of Dawsonville. Community landmark buildings housed, or once housed community institutions such as local governments, educational programs, and civic organizations; or they are architecturally or historically significant residential or commercial structures that are particularly important to the city and its residents. Community institutions such as schools, churches, or post offices are important as they represent the one-time self-sufficient nature of the community. Some examples of the important landmarks within Dawsonville follow. It is important to note that the structures below are not the only structures worthy of historic preservation within the city of Dawsonville.

#### **R. D. McClure House**

Located on the south side of Academy Avenue (N 3812320 E 764960), this residence was built circa 1918 by one of Dawsonville's prominent citizens. Exhibiting both Craftsman and Colonial Revival architectural elements, it is considered to be a Side-Gabled Bungalow. Although the porch posts have been replaced, the two ridgeline chimneys and side and rear porches removed, this property appears to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. The elaborate nature of this structure adds to its historical appeal.

#### **McClure's Store**

This building is located near the intersection of Cumming Road and State Highway 9 (N 3812410 E 764805). McClure's Store dates from the period 1875 to 1889. It is considered a commercial structure with no outstanding academic style. It is rectangular in shape and symmetric in design. This wood-framed building is 2-storys and located on the courthouse square. It has boxed cornices with gable returns. Originally the post office, the store is held in place with wood pegs and cut nails. The corners are solid from the sills to the roof – no joints. Sills are 14 feet wide. This property was purchased by Cliff McClure in 1913 and is reputed to have been quite old at that time. This property qualifies for the National Register due to its historical significance and architectural style.

#### **Cain's Auto Parts**

Located on the Cumming Road (N 3812320 E 764760), this is a vernacular brick commercial building that dates from 1920 to 1939. Although having no academic style, this one-room rectangular building is symmetric and gabled-front-oriented. It was constructed using the combined techniques of balloon and platform framing. Brick masonry is machine made. This property may not be eligible for the National Register but it does qualify as a contributing property to the surrounding historic district on the grounds of architecture and commerce.

#### **Dawsonville Chiropractic Clinic**

Situated near the intersection of Howard Avenue and Highway 9 (N 3812260 E 764830), this Pyramidal Cottage dates to the period between 1900 and 1919. This structure has no defined academic style but does exhibit a square, asymmetric plan with two equal rooms. There is one front door and the remaining chimneys are off-center on the roof surface. Constructed using the combined techniques of balloon and platform framing, the building is clad in clapboard and exhibits a partial front veranda with a shed roof. Windows are double hung with a two-over-one light arrangement. Sidelights and a transom surround the front door. This property qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places due to its architectural detail and design.

### **Johnson-Tucker House**

Located near the intersection of Dahlonega Road and East First Street (N 3812475 E 764870), this house was built in 1868 by Henry Johnson, a relative to Lyndon Banes Johnson. This structure is constructed without the use of nails. All joints are reputed to be pegged. The building type is considered to be a “T” shaped gabled wing with an asymmetric façade. Two-story in height, the fieldstone chimneys are observed off-center to the cross-gabled ridgeline. The Johnson-Tucker House qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to its historic and architectural significance.

### **Dawsonville High School**

Located on the south side of State Highway 9, one-quarter mile east of the historic Dawson County Court House (N 3812400 E 765380), this building was constructed in 1941 using stone-bearing construction. The exterior is clad in fieldstone that is set in an unusual pattern: fieldstone interspersed with stacked stone. The windows are 12-light hoppers (center portion tilts out). This building exhibits three-part massing (H-plan), with three bays in each section. Marble lintels and sills adorn the windows and doorways. A transom window can be observed above the front set of double-doors. This building qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to its architectural design and craftsmanship as well as its historical significance.

### **Doctor Burt House**

This structure is located on Tucker Avenue (N 3812540 E 764802), and has an estimated date of construction circa 1885-1899. This is a Folk-Victorian with a rectangular plan and symmetric façade. It is considered to be a Georgian house type due to the central hallway located between four rooms. This decorated vernacular house has a portico associated with the second story and a steeply pitched gable ended roof. It was constructed using a combination of balloon and platform framing techniques. Gable returns can be observed in conjunction with sawn decorative elements. Transom lights are visible above the front door. This property qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due its unique architectural style.

### **Auto Parts Store**

Located on West First Street (N 3812460 E 764740), this building has an estimated construction date circa 1915. This one-story has a square building plan and has a side-gabled orientation. Constructed from a type of cast concrete block used throughout Dawson County, this building is important due to its location on the courthouse square.

### **The Old Newton Place**

Located on the east side of Burt Creek Road, one-quarter mile north of Spur 136 (N 3813550 E 764620), this domestic-residential single dwelling was constructed between 1880 and 1899. This structure has a side-gabled rectangular plan with Folk Victorian decorative elements. This Central Hallway Cottage has two flanking rooms divided by a middle corridor and is constructed using a combination of balloon and platform framing. A chimney was observed off-center to the ridge line. The exterior is clad in clapboard and the foundation is stone. A shed roof covers a front veranda. The Old Newton Place qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to its architectural type and style. Its historical themes are associated with agriculture and architecture.

## **6.3 Historic Districts**

Historic districts contain a number of historic structures that relate to one another historically and architecturally. Historic districts include landmark quality structures as well as less significant structures. Dawsonville currently has a locally recognized preservation zone: The City of Dawsonville Historic District. This district extends outward from the historic courthouse to the intersection of Second Street and Shoal Creek Road to the north; west along State Highway 9 approximately 2000 feet; south along State Highway 9 to a point approximately 200 feet beyond Howard Avenue; and east to the intersection of Academy Street and Main Street. Although some buildings have lost their historic integrity from inappropriate alterations, others have retained their historic appearance. Because of this, the City of Dawsonville Historic District, as a whole, may not be eligible for the National Register.

## **6.4 Archaeological Resources**

Although there are no recorded archaeological sites located within the city limits of Dawsonville, recognition and protection of any potential archaeological resources is encouraged. Since Dawson County was once home to both Cherokee and Creek Indian tribes, prehistoric sites around the City of Dawsonville are a distinct possibility. It is important to recognize and protect any potential archaeological sites, or those that may be discovered in the future as an important part of the city's historic or prehistoric cultural resources. These resources may be lost if not recognized and protected.

Map – Historic resources

## **6.5 Impacts on Historic Resources in Dawsonville**

Some negative impacts on Dawsonville's historic resources do exist. Development of land on, near, or adjacent to cultural and historic sites poses a potential threat to Dawsonville's most important resources. The Academy Street District located between State Road 9 and State Route 53 is presently vulnerable to the expansion of residential and commercial enterprise. Careful planning of the city's growth and development should include the recognition and protection of these character defining resources, as well as the promotion of compatible development.

Although not as frequent in the historic residential areas, historically inappropriate alterations have impacted some of Dawsonville's important historic resources, especially downtown. As mentioned above, the Regional Historic Preservation Planner or the State Office of Historic Preservation in the Department of Natural Resources can assist property owners in their restoration projects.

## **6.6 Strategies For Historic Preservation**

The following are elements of a potential preservation plan for Dawsonville. They are suggestions to follow to implement preservation in Dawsonville but are by no means a complete plan. Ideally, the community can pursue all of the following objectives, but it is wise to take on one at a time to achieve long-lasting and community supportive goals.

### **6.6.1 Survey**

The most recent preliminary or windshield survey was undertaken in 1991 under the auspices of the Dawson County Historical Society. This survey indicated approximately 20 historically significant resources within the city limits of Dawsonville. A more comprehensive survey is needed to update existing data in order to reveal a more complete inventory. Without a comprehensive picture of what resources exist, there is no sufficient way to evaluate what needs to be evaluated and protected.

Surveys can be used to identify individual buildings and districts for possible listing on the National and Georgia Register of Historic Places; support local designations of buildings and districts; expedite environmental review by governmental agencies; aid preservation and land-use planning; and promote research of the state's history and architecture. Also, through the public's participation, encouraged by the Office of Historic Preservation, surveys can increase awareness of, and interest in, a community's historic buildings and sites.

### **6.6.2 Analysis and Recognition of Historic Resources**

Once a community knows what and where its historic resources exist, it can then begin to recognize these resources and focus community attention on their significance. One tool a community can use to achieve this recognition is the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the nation's list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. Although listing on the National Register does not protect property from alteration and demolition, it serves as a good way to bring recognition of and pride in a

community's irreplaceable historic resources. National Register landmarks and districts also serve to pinpoint areas in a community where preservation and local protection can be implemented. Most resources listed in this section are worthy of and recommended for nomination to the National Register.

Once a city's resources have been determined, the community needs to decide which of these resources is most important to preserve, usually those deemed worthy of National Register recognition, and they should be informed of the benefits of preservation including:

- Historic resources are top tourist destinations. Revitalized buildings and historic districts attract new businesses and tourists, stimulating retail sales and increasing sales tax revenues.
- Historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse creates new jobs during construction and later in new offices, shops, and restaurants.
- Property values tend to increase in revitalized areas.
- Tax incentives are available for rehabilitation.
- Less energy is required to rehabilitate old buildings than to demolish and replace them with new construction.

Goals and priorities should be set for the preservation of these resources. Such goals might include protecting the most important historical resources from demolition, demolition by neglect, and encouraging property owners, organizations and businesses to use the available historic resources to their full potential including adapting the resources for new uses.

The final step in developing a plan for preservation in Dawsonville is to implement the actions needed to achieve the community's goals. These tools or actions may include survey, National Register designations, a citywide preservation ordinance, appropriate in-fill guidelines, financial incentives and community development programs. Information about these programs may be obtained from the Georgia Mountains Historic Preservation Planner or the State Office of Historic Preservation in the Department of Natural Resources.

### **6.7 Other Cultural Resources**

Amenities that are neither historic nor classified as public facilities or services (such as parks or schools) are generally referred to as cultural amenities. These can include museums, fairgrounds, scenic vistas or other recognized gathering spots considered crucial to the community's identity or culture. Their common trait and what makes them so valuable is their contribution to the local character.

### **Thunder Road USA: The Georgia Racing Hall of Fame**

Designed to capitalize upon the nationwide interest in NASCAR and the rich history of racing in Georgia, Thunder Road USA has the potential become one of the sport's top attractions. Jack Rouse Associates provided the overall creative direction for the original facility, which contains state-of-the-art interactive exhibits, theaters, one-of-a-kind artifacts; children's play areas and a variety of food and lease space.

### **Old Rock School – Dawson County Arts Council**

The Old Rock School is a 5,000 square foot building located within the Dawsonville Historic District. Built as part of Dawsonville's High School Complex in the 1930s, construction took place as part of the federal government's Works Progress Administration (WPA) and National Youth Administration (NYA) initiative during the Great Depression. The majority of the school was lost in a fire that occurred in the 1940s. This annex is all that remains. In 1999, the Arts Council purchased the building to rehabilitate and house a venue for the arts in Dawson County. The Center for the Arts sponsors performing and visual arts events, art education classes, the Artist's Co-op Gift Shop, and conference facilities for small meetings and community receptions for up to 100 people.

### **Dawsonville Pool Room**

Made famous by owner Gordon Pirkle, the Pool Room offers a family atmosphere containing an interesting collection of history and memorabilia on Bill Elliott's NASCAR career and early moonshine runners. The menu includes the famous made from scratch Bully Burgers and fresh-cut fries. The Pool Room is located in Dawsonville Downtown Historic District.

### **North Georgia Premium Outlets**

North Georgia Premium Outlets, a 403,000 square foot center containing 108 stores, opened in two phases, in May 1996 and May 1997. The center is located 40 miles north of Atlanta on Georgia State Highway 400 bordering Lake Lanier, at the gateway to the North Georgia Mountains. Nestled in an outdoor village setting, this outlet center currently houses over 140 designer outlets including Coach, Polo Ralph Lauren, Banana Republic, Nike, and Liz Claiborne. While not located within Dawsonville, the outlet mall serves as a magnet for regional tourism and should be considered a resource for drawing interest and attention to the City of Dawsonville.



## **6.8 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

### *Issues:*

- *Need to prepare an updated comprehensive survey* of the historic resources of Dawsonville, Georgia. This would include buildings, structures and sites deemed notable in the city's history prior to 1957.
- *Need to recognize existing resources.* Encourage the inclusion of all worthy historic buildings, structures, sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places and the Georgia Register of Historic Places.
- *Need to support local interest groups.* Encourage and support the Dawson County Historical Society's efforts to educate the general public on the importance and benefits of protecting cultural resources.
- *Need to take advantage of local sources.* Utilize regional, state, federal, and university programs that provide funding, staff, and services to enhance future historic preservation programs for the City of Dawsonville.
- *Need to encourage the adaptive reuse of existing resources.* Promote the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures.
- *Need to promote preservation through the use of municipal regulation.* Update the city's historic preservation ordinance in order to better protect downtown resources; establish a preservation commission which would solely oversee architectural and design reviews of new construction and external alteration of existing structures within the historic district.
- *Need to expand local qualifications.* Become a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Natural Resources.
- *Need to promote preservation Economics.* Encourage property owners to take advantage of Federal and State investment tax credits available for the substantial rehabilitation of historic structures.
- *Need for conferencing center* – Dawsonville does not have a civic center capable of hosting a variety of public functions and sizable crowds. Renovations to the Thunder Road Museum will provide improved meeting spaces but will not suffice as a central indoor gathering space for large-scale civic and cultural functions.
- *Need to redevelop the Thunder Road/City Hall site* – Plans for this are nearing completion, however the scale of the project suggest the need remains until the plans are realized. Completion of this effort will revitalize the central city's economy and

character, allowing Dawsonville to more aggressively pursue additional redevelopment efforts.

- *Need to continue plans to revitalize downtown* – Unlike the Thunder Road/City Hall redevelopment the City’s plans for downtown Dawsonville do not have the benefit of unified property ownership or financing. The existing plans require additional, more detailed implementation strategies and must be coordinated with several other specialty plans such as Corridor Improvement Studies and Historic Resource Protection policies. Yet the redevelopment of downtown is just as critical to the City’s economy and culture.
- *Need to coordinate new development within the existing community* - In order for Dawsonville to retain its identity and character, new development should be designed so as to compliment the existing community. This entails proper connectivity and access to transportation networks, comparable styles of architecture and, when involving infill development, matching the prevailing scale and massing of surrounding structures.

***Opportunities:***

- *Redevelopment plans for downtown and Thunder Road/City Hall* – While there has been little progress beyond the planning stage, there are completed plans with progressive implementation measures and the likelihood of immediate investment. The City knows what types and scales of development are desired and projected and now must merely follow through with the intentions.
- *Public support for maintaining the Dawsonville’s character* – The existing plans for redeveloping downtown and the Thunder Road/City Hall site were accomplished with strong levels of public input and prospective financial support. The plans try to build off the existing elements and character of Dawsonville, as directed by local residents. Such public buy-in suggests implementation will also be supported by residents and receive full cooperation.
- *Link downtown pedestrian and bicycle corridors* – The redevelopment of downtown should emphasize the use of alternate forms of travel. Biking and walking trails serve to lessen automobile traffic and can be linked to existing natural trail systems found within the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area.

## CHAPTER SEVEN – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development analyses inventory a community's functional conditions and achievements to identify the strengths, weaknesses and needs of native businesses. This portrait of a region's economic state is the foundation for assessing the performance of wages and job skills, employment and industry patterns, and the programs and efforts designed to improve local economies.

The Economic Development element of a comprehensive plan attempts to define the assets and liabilities of industrial categories, geographical locations, and employment conditions. The assessment is then used to identify trends, conflicts, inconsistencies and opportunities within the region's overall economic activity. This information will be merged with other Plan elements to outline the economic strategies necessary for achieving community goals.

*Note: The following acronyms are used throughout this chapter in reference to standardized industrial sectors:*

Agri. Services:	Agricultural Services
FIRE:	Financial services, Insurance and Real Estate
Govt. – Fed. Civ.:	Government – Federal Civilian (non-military)
Govt. – St./ Local:	Government - State and Local
TCPU:	Transportation, Communications and Public Utilities

### 7.1 Economic Base

Economic base analyses are used to identify the local significance of each industrial sector. Studied are the kinds of industry within a community, the total earnings those industries produce, and the wages distributed the resident population. Economic base studies can direct recruitment toward businesses that compliment existing industry or require the skills of residents currently exporting labor to other regions. This information is basic, but vital, for more effective decisions concerning the health of the local economy.

### 7.1.1 Employment by Economic Sector

The primary measure of an industry's value to a local economy is the number of people it employs. An economy grows stronger as it increases any form of gainful employment in the local population, redistributing wealth and encouraging economic growth.

**Table 7.1 –Employment by Industry, Dawsonville**

CATEGORY	1980	1990	2000
Retail Trade	18.4%	21.6%	18.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	2.5%	0.0%	14.3%
Manufacturing	17.2%	19.5%	13.1%
Educational, health and social services	11.7%	7.9%	12.7%
Other Services	0.0%	4.7%	9.0%
Construction	17.2%	17.9%	6.5%
Professional, scientific, mgmt., administrative, waste management services	2.5%	4.7%	6.5%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	3.1%	7.4%	5.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	6.7%	2.6%	4.1%
Public Administration	10.4%	1.6%	4.1%
Information			2.9%
Wholesale Trade	1.8%	5.3%	2.0%
<u>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</u>	<u>8.6%</u>	<u>6.8%</u>	<u>1.2%</u>
<i>Total Employed Civilian Population</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>190</i>	<i>245</i>

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

While Dawsonville still serves as the civic seat of Dawson County, the community is no longer its employment center. Industrial sites and large-scale commercial business have located along the GA 400 corridor so as to serve and benefit from a regional audience. As a result, Dawsonville's industrial base has shifted over the past couple decades from largely manufacturing and construction to mostly retail and recreational and entertainment services. Most of these service sector businesses are oriented to serving the local residents, such as small groceries and restaurants.

As a result of this the City's economy has grown more dependent on local and direct consumer spending rather than on the manufacture of bulk goods. This can render a community unstable and subject to extreme shifts in economic cycles.

**Table 7.2 – Employment by Industry, Region Comparison - 2000**

Category	Dawsonville	Dawson	Lumpkin	Forsyth	Pickens
Retail Trade	18.37%	14.00%	13.30%	12.80%	12.90%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	14.29%	4.50%	8.00%	5.20%	5.10%
Manufacturing	13.06%	16.00%	17.90%	13.70%	17.80%
Educational, health and social services	12.65%	14.50%	20.10%	13.00%	15.60%
Other Services	8.98%	4.70%	5.20%	4.20%	3.50%
Construction	6.53%	13.70%	12.50%	10.50%	15.50%
Professional, scientific, mgmt., administrative, waste management services	6.53%	8.20%	5.90%	13.30%	4.90%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	5.31%	3.80%	2.40%	4.50%	6.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	4.08%	3.20%	2.80%	0.80%	3.10%
Public Administration	4.08%	3.00%	3.10%	2.50%	5.30%
Information	2.86%	4.50%	1.90%	5.20%	1.50%
Wholesale Trade	2.04%	4.30%	3.30%	5.30%	2.80%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1.22%	5.50%	3.60%	8.90%	6.00%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

The balance for Dawsonville comes from the relative stability offered in Dawson County. The larger county economy retains a strong base in goods production and more secure service sectors such as health and social services and professional and administrative services. Further, in comparison to most surrounding counties Dawson features strong ratios within the construction and finance sectors, suggesting the recent growth trends are capable of holding steady in light of overall real estate recessions.

Dawsonville and Dawson County are still over reliant on commercial service industries, largely due to the impact of the outlet mall and surrounding shopping centers, while at the same time struggling (comparatively speaking) to generate new goods-producing industries. If the current trends hold, recent measures with regards to housing and education should help stabilize the local markets for residents, allowing the City and County to become more attractive to business growth. In the interim, Dawsonville and Dawson county must be wary to ensure their economic structure doesn't limit their revenue sources to just the GA 400 corridor.

### 7.1.2 Earned Wages

A second measure of an industry's value to a local economy is the amount of earnings produced and then distributed among the employees as weekly wages. These are funds brought into the local economy and are indicative of an industry's financial investment in the community. Industries that can support higher wages yield more disposable income that can be reinvested elsewhere in the local economy. By contrast, industries with lower wages can become liabilities by leaving households dependent on additional sources of income.

**Table 7.3 – Average Weekly Wages, 2005**

	<b>Dawson</b>	<b>Forsyth</b>	<b>Hall</b>	<b>Lumpkin</b>	<b>Pickens</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
<b>Total – All Industries</b>	\$504	\$749	\$650	\$557	\$580	\$752
<b>Goods Producing</b>	\$797	\$833	\$711	\$603	\$721	\$788
<b>Government</b>	\$514	\$709	\$631	\$619	\$558	\$711
<b>Service Producing</b>	\$413	\$710	\$620	\$498	\$522	\$752
<hr/>						
<b>Goods Producing</b>						
Manufacturing	\$918	\$838	\$716	\$611	\$703	\$811
Construction	\$660	\$828	\$696	\$541	\$682	\$768
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	\$524	\$635	\$660	\$405	\$582	\$472
<hr/>						
<b>Service Producing</b>						
Finance & Insurance	\$882	\$973	\$862	\$760	\$672	\$1,205
Wholesale Trade	\$805	\$1,047	\$806	\$737	\$682	\$1,128
Prof./ Sci./ Tech Services	\$652	\$1,222	\$824	\$535	\$668	\$1,187
Transportation & Warehousing	\$602	\$710	\$744	\$655	\$692	\$816
Health Care & Social Svcs.	\$540	\$663	\$764	\$664	\$604	\$746
Other Services	\$451	\$609	\$559	\$336	\$629	\$867
Administrative & Waste Svcs.	\$364	\$584	\$454	\$453	\$704	\$549
Retail Trade	\$358	\$488	\$516	\$479	\$424	\$473
Accommodation & Food Svcs.	\$234	\$237	\$248	\$223	\$208	\$278
Information	-	\$961	\$818	\$880	\$672	\$1,264

*Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor*

The main drawback to an economy so heavily reliant on service industries is the relatively weaker salary structure and business earnings. Service industries traditionally feature lower and/or hourly wages and minimal benefits. This increases the burden on households to spend less money, increase the number of wage earners or have wage earners with multiple jobs. Table 7.3 illustrates this point, wherein the retail trade sector in Dawson County had an average weekly wage of only \$358 in 2005. Thus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest-ranking source of employment for the county only ranks 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13 industries in terms of average wages! Should Dawson seek to raise the standard of living for residents it will need to develop those industries with higher overall wage levels, such as more financial and professional services.

This is largely the reason Dawson County fares so poorly compared with its major neighboring communities. The overabundance of retail and service sector employment reduces the overall wage level for the community. This effect can be reversed if future growth is driven by goods-production and professional service related job growth. However, there is a counter effect to this condition. Another phenomena revealed by Table 7.3 is the relationship between wage levels and relative inclusion in metropolitan Atlanta. Urbanized counties such as Forsyth and Hall do feature higher wage levels, significantly so in some industries, but they also feature generally higher costs of living, especially with regards to land. As a cost comparison Dawson County and Dawsonville are considered comparatively inexpensive, so provided the levels of community services and overall quality of life is considered satisfactory, there not may be as much need to emphasize earnings as a factor in economic growth.

## 7.2 Labor Force Characteristics

Information concerning the skills and abilities of the labor force provides a strong indication of the economic potential of a region. Occupational characteristics highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the available labor pool, offering guidance as to the employment needs and limitations. An analysis of occupational employment, balanced by information concerning work location and commuting patterns, can be used to determine the assets of the existing labor force as well as to highlight which skills should be brought into the area. This analysis can then be used with economic base studies to direct activities for improving the local economic conditions.

### 7.2.1 Employment Status

Another feature to be noted in addressing employment conditions is the general employment status with respect to gender and armed forces involvement. For example, higher rates of unemployment for women can often be cross-referenced with household sizes and family-status to establish a high number of stay at home mothers.

**Table 7.4 – Employment Status**

	Dawsonville		Dawson	Lumpkin	Forsyth	Pickens
	1990	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
<b>Total Population</b>	350	473	12,330	16,458	73,145	18,101
In labor force:	56.9%	53.3%	68.6%	65.5%	72.3%	63.8%
<u>Labor Force:</u>	<u>199</u>	<u>252</u>	<u>8,454</u>	<u>10,776</u>	<u>52,904</u>	<u>11,542</u>
In Armed Forces	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Civilian Labor force	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.9%	99.9%	100.0%
Employed	95.5%	97.2%	96.6%	96.0%	97.9%	97.7%
Unemployed	4.5%	2.8%	3.4%	4.0%	2.1%	2.3%
<b>Total Males</b>	176	248	6,192	8,040	36,923	8,717
In labor force:	60.2%	53.6%	76.3%	71.7%	82.7%	72.8%
<u>Labor Force:</u>	<u>106</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>4,726</u>	<u>5,765</u>	<u>30,553</u>	<u>6,349</u>
In Armed Forces	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	0.1%	0.1%
Civilian Labor force	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	96.5%	99.9%	99.9%
Employed	97.2%	97.7%	96.8%	97.6%	98.3%	98.3%
Unemployed	2.8%	2.3%	3.2%	2.4%	1.7%	1.7%
<b>Total Females</b>	174	225	6,138	8,418	36,222	9,384
In labor force:	53.4%	52.9%	60.7%	59.5%	61.7%	55.3%
<u>Labor Force:</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>3,728</u>	<u>5,011</u>	<u>22,351</u>	<u>5,193</u>
In Armed Forces	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Civilian Labor force	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.6%	100.0%	100.0%
Employed	93.5%	96.6%	96.4%	94.2%	97.4%	97.0%
Unemployed	6.5%	3.4%	3.6%	5.8%	2.6%	3.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

As with much of greater Atlanta Dawsonville and Dawson County feature high marks with regards to status of employment for area residents. As comparably small communities in a growing metropolitan region there is little concern over the availability of employment and more focus on affording the types of employment desired. Ratios for employment among male and female residents are considered satisfactory and indicative of the current economy and region.

**7.2.2 Unemployment Levels**

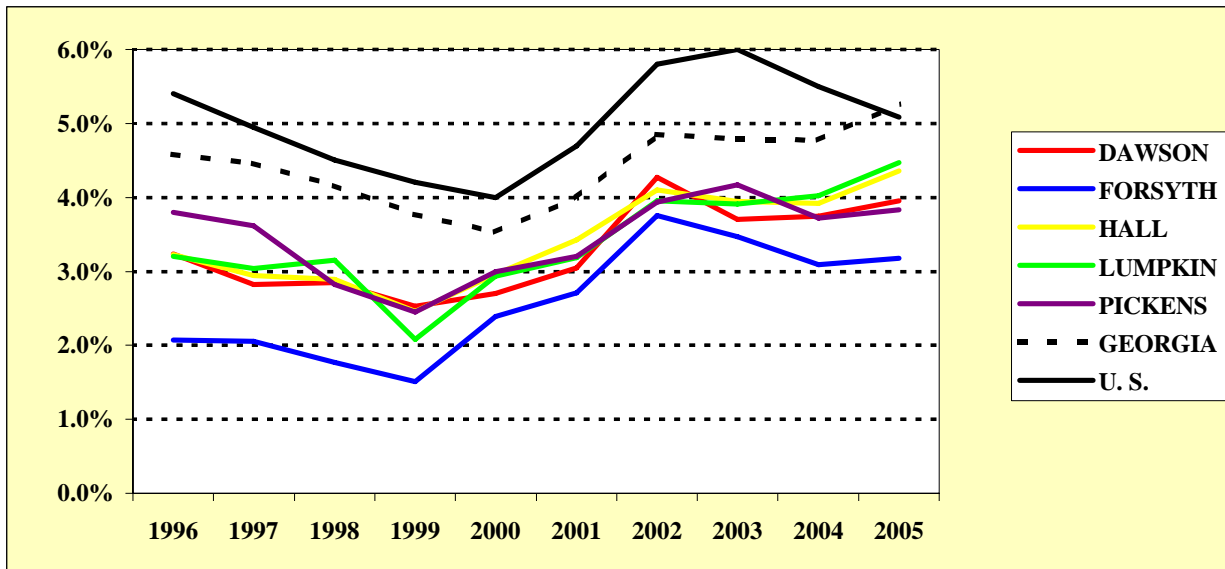
Another lead indicator of an economy’s strength is the measure of its unemployment levels. Trends in this area reflect the stability and prosperity of local industries, as well as the results of past economic development strategies. Unemployment levels also represent a measure of the poverty level within the area and potential deficiencies in the redistribution of wealth.

**Table 7.5 – Unemployment Trends**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Dawson	3.2%	2.8%	2.9%	2.5%	2.7%	3.0%	4.3%	3.7%	3.7%	4.0%
Forsyth	2.1%	2.1%	1.8%	1.5%	2.4%	2.7%	3.8%	3.5%	3.1%	3.2%
Hall	3.2%	2.9%	2.9%	2.5%	3.0%	3.4%	4.1%	3.9%	3.9%	4.4%
Lumpkin	3.2%	3.0%	3.2%	2.1%	2.9%	3.2%	4.0%	3.9%	4.0%	4.5%
Pickens	3.8%	3.6%	2.8%	2.5%	3.0%	3.2%	3.9%	4.2%	3.7%	3.8%
Georgia	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	4.0%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%	5.3%
U. S.	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

**Figure 7.1 – Unemployment Trends**



As indicated in the discussion of employment status, the overall unemployment levels for Dawson County have been relatively good for the past decade or more. Rates for Dawson County have been traditionally lower than those for the State or the Nation, signifying the benefits of being in/near the metropolitan area. As a smaller community Dawsonville and



Dawson County will likely have unemployment rates that mirror the region, due to the high numbers of residents who work outside the county.

The unemployment rates have been increasing overall the past few years due to various economic forces. Some of it is the increase in single income households and early retirees still considered within the labor force. Other factors include changes to the economic base and reduction of manufacturing jobs in the area, and the increase in working-age children and young adults moving to the area. However, until the figures stray from the regional averages or grow closer to those for the State this isn't considered cause for alarm.

### 7.2.3 Sources of Personal Income

While wage rates represent one gauge of a population's wealth, wages constitute only a portion of each household's net income. Additional sources of revenue include earned interest, dividends, proprietor's income and financial assistance. These sources must be evaluated to levy a true measure of local economic health.

**Table 7.6 – Sources of Household Income**

	Dawsonville		Dawson	Lumpkin	Forsyth	Pickens
	1990	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Total income	\$3.6 M	\$11.7 M				
Aggregate...						
wage or salary income for households	66.0%	74.7%	74.10%	73.60%	82.80%	71.60%
interest, dividends, or net rental income	5.4%	8.1%	7.00%	7.40%	4.70%	4.90%
retirement income for households	3.1%	7.3%	4.60%	4.50%	3.00%	6.70%
self employment income for households	12.0%	4.3%	9.10%	7.30%	6.00%	8.30%
social security income for households	6.7%	4.0%	4.10%	4.80%	2.30%	6.40%
other types of income for households	3.5%	1.2%	0.90%	1.80%	1.00%	1.70%
public assistance income for households	3.3%	0.4%	0.30%	0.70%	0.20%	0.50%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Table 7.6 illustrates how the differences in the economies can impact household incomes. The comparably high levels of retail and service related employment in Dawsonville and Dawson County can translate into lower rates of wages as a source of income. Much of this is due to the differences between urban and rural communities, as the most metropolitan community displayed (Forsyth) features the strongest levels of income from salaries, employment and interest related sectors. Fortunately Dawsonville households have experienced a sharp decline in the value of public assistance as a source of income. As the region continues its overall economic growth, these figures should continue to compare favorably with stronger economic engines such as Forsyth.

### 7.2.4 Employment by Occupation

The occupational information reveals the kinds of skills & experience present in the local labor force, and provides an indication of how successfully that force can fill the labor needs of particular industrial sectors. Such information can also help explain commuting patterns, education needs, and possible changes in demands for consumer goods and services.

**Table 7.7 – Employment by Occupation, Dawsonville**

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>
<i>Total Employed Civilian Population</i>	<u>163</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>218</u>	<u>245</u>	<u>266</u>
Retail Trade	18.4%	20.3%	21.6%	19.7%	18.4%	18.4%
Arts/ Entertainment/ Rec./ Accommodation/ Food Svcs.	2.5%	1.1%	0.0%	8.3%	14.3%	16.2%
Educational/ Health/ Social Svcs.	11.7%	9.6%	7.9%	10.6%	12.7%	12.8%
Manufacturing	17.2%	18.6%	19.5%	16.1%	13.1%	12.4%
Other Svcs.	0.0%	2.8%	4.7%	7.3%	9.0%	10.5%
Professional/ Sci./ Mgmt./ Admin./ Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	2.5%	4.0%	4.7%	6.0%	6.5%	7.1%
Transp./ Warehousing/ Utilities	3.1%	5.6%	7.4%	6.4%	5.3%	5.6%
Construction	17.2%	17.5%	17.9%	11.5%	6.5%	4.9%
Agriculture/ Forestry/ Fishing/ Hunting/ Mining	6.7%	4.5%	2.6%	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%
Public Administration	10.4%	5.6%	1.6%	3.2%	4.1%	3.0%
Wholesale Trade	1.8%	4.0%	5.3%	3.7%	2.0%	2.3%
Finance/ Ins./ Real Estate	8.6%	7.9%	6.8%	3.7%	1.2%	0.1%
Information	-	-	-	-	2.9%	-

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

Reviews of occupational trends mirrors the conditions identified in the information of employment by industry. Dawsonville employees are mostly employed in retail and service related positions, with strong growth coming in the hospitality related services such as arts, entertainment and accommodation. Employees within manufacturing jobs have held steady, however the ratio of workers employed in construction trades has fallen dramatically since 1980. This suggests that much of the new construction experienced in the city and Dawson County features businesses and/or employees from other communities.

Much of this change can be attributed to the overall population growth of the city, through natural means and through annexations that have expanded the city’s size. Further, the overall small number of residents and employment opportunities within the city render these characteristics highly sensitive to minor changes in real numbers.

**Table 7.8 – Projected Employment by Occupation, Dawsonville**

Category	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<i>Total Employed Civilian Population</i>	<u>266</u>	<u>286</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>348</u>	<u>368</u>
Retail Trade	18.4%	18.5%	18.2%	18.3%	18.4%	18.5%
Arts/ Entertainment/ Rec./ Accommodation/ Food Svcs.	16.2%	17.6%	18.4%	19.2%	20.3%	20.8%
Educational/ Health/ Social Svcs.	12.8%	12.9%	13.0%	13.1%	13.2%	13.3%
Manufacturing	12.4%	11.9%	11.4%	11.0%	10.6%	10.3%
Other Svcs.	10.5%	11.5%	12.7%	13.5%	14.4%	14.9%
Professional/ Sci./ Mgmt./ Admin./ Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	7.1%	7.7%	8.1%	8.6%	8.9%	9.2%
Transp./ Warehousing/ Utilities	5.6%	5.9%	6.2%	6.4%	6.6%	6.8%
Construction	4.9%	3.5%	2.3%	1.2%	0.3%	0.1%
Agriculture/ Forestry/ Fishing/ Hunting/ Mining	3.8%	3.5%	2.9%	2.8%	2.6%	2.4%
Public Administration	3.0%	2.4%	1.6%	0.9%	0.3%	0.1%
Wholesale Trade	2.3%	2.1%	2.3%	2.1%	2.3%	2.2%
Finance/ Ins./ Real Estate	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%	1.1%	1.3%
Information	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Source: Projections made by GMRDC staff using DCA calculator ([www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com)) as extrapolation of Census figures.*

Projections for the next 25 years indicate the trends will continue but with some greater stabilization. Service industries will continue to expand in the area based on projected development, with subsequent growth returning to supportive services such as finance and insurance occupations and professional services.

### 7.2.5 Commuting Patterns

One significant struggle with accommodating both residential and industrial needs lies in the effective use of regional infrastructure. The rapid development of modern transportation and infrastructure improvements has led to drastic changes in the commute to work and the unemployment patterns discussed above. The same modes of transit that may easily bring people and commerce into an area can just as easily take them away. This creates a governmental concern over the commuting patterns and increased interdependence among communities. An imbalance between needs for employment and availability of employees can lead to increases in commuting, leading to a disparity in the provision of governmental services.

**Table 7.9 – Commuting Patterns**

Place of Employment	Dawsonville		Dawson	Lumpkin	Forsyth	Pickens
	1990	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
In Place of Residence	32.1%	26.0%	34.5%	51.3%	41.1%	47.8%
Outside Place of Residence	67.9%	74.0%	64.6%	47.9%	57.7%	51.6%
Outside State of Residence	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.8%	1.3%	0.6%

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

**Table 7.10 – Dawson County Commuting Patterns - 2000**

Location of Employment for Dawson County Residents			Location of Residency for Dawson County Employees		
Destination	#	%	Residency	#	%
Dawson Co. GA	2,786	52.8%	Dawson Co. GA	2,786	34.5%
Lumpkin Co. GA	769	14.6%	Forsyth Co. GA	1,628	20.1%
Forsyth Co. GA	741	14.0%	Fulton Co. GA	1,199	14.8%
Hall Co. GA	360	6.8%	Hall Co. GA	479	5.9%
Cherokee Co. GA	95	1.8%	Gwinnett Co. GA	475	5.9%
White Co. GA	90	1.7%	Lumpkin Co. GA	353	4.4%
Gwinnett Co. GA	77	1.5%	DeKalb Co. GA	267	3.3%
Gilmer Co. GA	73	1.4%	Cherokee Co. GA	231	2.9%
Fulton Co. GA	65	1.2%	Cobb Co. GA	172	2.1%
<u>Other</u>	<u>221</u>	4.2%	<u>Other</u>	<u>492</u>	6.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,277</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>8,082</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

*Source: US Bureau of the Census*

At a mere 52.8%, Dawson County does not have a favorable retention rate of residents looking for employment. Fortunately most out-commuting residents are merely traveling one-county over to urbanized Forsyth or tourist heavy Lumpkin County. The figures suggest Dawson County is very much a bedroom community with little employment opportunity for residents, though historic trends indicates this condition has come about as new residents have relocated to Dawson County to create that condition by choice. The available amenities and shopping have made Dawsonville and Dawson County an attractive place for households seeking affordable land and quality of life, willing to endure commutes to employment outside the county to make this a reality. Should this figure not change in Dawson’s favor as the county grows in population, then the transportation system may need significant improvements to maintain levels of service.

This phenomena is further explained with the corresponding information about location of residency for Dawson County employees. Under nominal conditions, a county featuring low levels of residents working within the county would feature high rates of local employment filled by county residents. In the case of Dawson County, however, the latter rate is a mere 34.5%, indicating a high reliance on employees from outside counties. While reverse-commuting from urbanized areas to more rural communities like Dawson County is not unwelcome, this further suggests the transportation system is vital to the County’s economy and that there may be a disconnect between the local industries and the skill-sets or feasibility of the local labor force.

### **7.3 Economic Development Resources**

Many communities employ a number of methods to encourage and strengthen local business and economic conditions. Economic development resources can take the form of development agencies, government programs, or special features within an education system that foster desired business environments. These resources are a means of supporting the local economy, and as such become strong factors in the analysis of regional economic development patterns.

#### **7.3.1 Agencies**

Numerous organizations are often available to assist local governments with economic development efforts. Together with Dawson County, the City of Dawsonville actively partners with the *Dawson County Chamber of Commerce* and the *Development Authority of Dawson County* to promote the entire county for business growth and retention. These organizations serve as liaisons between business interests and the local governments, alerting the civic leaders to the needs and issues facing local industries. These organizations are vital partners in helping the City understand how to facilitate stronger economic conditions and assist with business development. Current relationships with these organizations are considered strong and stable.

There is also the *Dawsonville Downtown Development Authority (DDA)*, organized to assist with the general development of the city's historic core. This organization is responsible for helping with the current development of historic district recognition and related restoration efforts, the development of potential design guidelines and to serve as liaisons between area stakeholders and the City of Dawsonville. The City will continue to support the DDA as a resource for sustaining the social and economic vitality of the downtown area.

Through the State and Federal levels the City is provided assistance by the following:

- *Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center* – This is the RDC serving the 13 counties in the northeastern corner of Georgia, including Dawson and neighboring counties Forsyth, Hall and Lumpkin. The GMRDC has a department for Planning and one for Economic Development, each available to provide a full array of services to assist the City with plans, grant writing and other community development efforts.
- *Federal EDA Appalachian Regional Commission* – Dawsonville and the Dawson County have recently been classified as having attained high, stable levels of income and employment that they are no longer eligible for major assistance from federal EDA programs except as a partner with Hall or Lumpkin Counties. This does not mean that EDA will not be pursuing projects within the Dawsonville area, only that the City will not be eligible for direct assistance for locally originated projects.
- *Georgia Departments of Community Affairs and Economic Development* – The State of Georgia assists local economic development through the provision of training, expert resources and financial assistance. Staff from both Departments regularly communicate with the city regarding programs and resources, and make efforts to include the issues and interest of Dawsonville in regional and State projects.

### **7.3.2 Programs and Tools**

Local governments sometimes participate in several programs designed to assist business initiatives and improve the quality of the local labor force.

For State and Federal programs Dawsonville and Dawson County are classified in such fashion as to marginalize their eligibility for assistance. Improvements to household income levels and employment conditions have placed the county on the highest tiers eligible with regard to both the Appalachian Regional Commission and the OneGeorgia programs. This means Dawsonville or Dawson County alone cannot receive the highest levels of financial support except as part of a regional project.

Dawsonville is eligible for assistance through the new Entrepreneur Friendly program of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, designed to aid newer and smaller businesses. No opportunities for this using this program in Dawsonville have yet been identified.

The City has been the beneficiary of recent Transportation Enhancement (TE) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Funding from two rounds of TE grants has gone towards improving local sidewalks, while a recent CDBG award provided funding for a new Adult Learning Center on the new satellite campus for Lanier Technical College in downtown Dawsonville.

A recent Employment Incentive Program (EIP) grant has been applied for to assist with the expansion and improvements of the water and sewer service to two spots within the City. This is to help provide utilities to a new grocery store, restaurant and other commercial centers opening in the city.

### **7.3.3 Education and Training Facilities**

Multiple colleges and universities are readily accessible to/from Dawsonville, and the region has seen a notable increase in education resources for area residents.

A satellite campus for *Lanier Technical College* has been built within the renovated site of the old Dawson County High School. According to their web site: "This 15,860 square foot building provides four general classroom/computer labs for management, accounting, business office technology, CNA, and general core classes. In addition there are spacious labs for the various welding, automotive, plumbing, and electrical construction certificate and diploma programs. Students are also provided with an electronic media center and indoor and outdoor lounge areas."

Several other units of Technical College System of Georgia are located within close proximity of Dawsonville. Lanier Technical College's main campus is located in neighboring Hall County, approximately 30 miles east of Dawsonville. Lanier Tech also has a satellite campus south of Dawsonville in Forsyth County. *Appalachian Technical College* is located approximately 30 miles west in Jasper. The Technical College System of Georgia is considered an active and open partner with local education and economic development needs, and the rapport between the System and the local governments within the region is considered strong. The improvements to

the Lanier Tech facilities within Dawsonville will greatly assist efforts to improve the overall skill levels of the City's labor force and support the general education of local children.

Full universities are also accessible from Dawsonville. The closest units of the University System of Georgia include *North Georgia College and State University* located in Dahlonega, and *Gainesville State College* in neighboring Hall County. Both campuses are within 30 miles and considered a modest-to-easy commute for prospective students.

Several private colleges are also within close proximity of Dawsonville. *Southern Catholic College (SCC)*, the only Catholic college in Georgia, is located within the city of Dawsonville. Founded in 2000, SCC is a co-educational liberal arts college currently featuring approximately 200 students in a variety of two-year programs. *Bruneau University* (Gainesville) is a 2,000+ student women's university featuring 4-year degrees. Bruneau has recently begun proceedings to offer nursing programs at its campus in partnership with neighboring Northeast Georgia Medical Center. *Truett-McConnell College* is another accessible small religious-supported institution (approximately 400 students) located in Cleveland, Ga.

### **7.3 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

***Issues:***

- *Need to review focus on tourism* – The nature of local tourism has moved from the Thunder Road Museum to the North Georgia Premium Outlet Mall, representing a literal and figurative relocation of economic and cultural activity within Dawson County. Prosperity at the Outlet Mall does not automatically translate into prosperity for the City, and at times the two outcomes are in competition with each other. Dawsonville must work with Dawson County in recognizing the aspirations and possibilities for tourism in the City, the Museum and downtown to ensure a level of economic prosperity.
- *Need for economic development within Downtown* – Regardless of the level of tourism desired for downtown Dawsonville, there must be an influx of reinvestment in the downtown area if it is to remain viable. Programs for revitalizing structures and businesses must be made available and promoted, while the City must finalize long term development plans for the area to begin coordinating capital improvements and implementing proper development policies.
- *Dealing with transition of economic base* – As Dawsonville and Dawson County become more suburban the nature of industrial development and employment opportunities will change. Some aspects of coordinated economic development have become more difficult as the characteristics of the labor force and regional consumer market experience fluctuation.
- *Increase in Service sector/ hourly-rate employees* – One aspect of the economy currently growing is the Service industry, a boon for local consumers but typically a weaker sector in terms of wages and benefits to local employees. Continued growth is encouraged but the City must monitor the overall changes to the economy to ensure a diverse range of employment opportunities available for residents.
- *Increased demand for educational* – Access to quality post-secondary education has become critical as the modern marketplace requires more and more skill sets than are typically available through high school. This requires not only the presence of education facilities and programs but regular monitoring of those programs to ensure they provide the level and types of education needed to compete in the work place.
- *Increased demand for a coordinated economic development strategy* – The growth of Dawsonville’s economy is ensured by virtue of being in line with metropolitan Atlanta’s expansion. A coordinated strategy is required, however, if the City, County and all residents hope to achieve the most efficient and prosperous economic development possible. The modern market is more dynamic when dealing with business growth and recruitment, and the most successful communities are able to coordinate all resources across organizations to support economic growth.



***Opportunities:***

- *Impact of recent implementation measures* – The City stands to see immediate benefits from several actions designed to spur economic development:
  - Lanier Tech is completing an expansion with a new building and the introduction of new technological programs;
  - The City has hired a full-time Director of Economic Development;
  - The City is actively working with the property owner to redevelop the site around City Hall and the Thunder Road Museum, and will reopen the Museum pending several facility improvements.
  
- *Economic potential of downtown* – Dawsonville has enough businesses and attractions to remain a commercial destination for tourism and local consumers alike, while plans for redevelopment will serve to expand this potential. Proper implementation of these plans can provide not only economic balance and prosperity but also aid in the retention of local character and community identity.
  
- *Natural economic expansion* - Dawsonville is poised for growth of its labor force and consumer market as part of the continued expansion of metropolitan Atlanta. With proper planning this will provide the City with a wider range of opportunities to guide and receive economic growth and stability.
  
- *Proximity to regional resources* – The same metropolitan expansion will also introduce a greater variety of resources to aid in Dawsonville’s economic development, including additional technical and education facilities and stronger financial resources. Particularly with improvements in transportation and communication the City will be able to better draw upon these resources for promotion, recruitment and economic expansion.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT – INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Modern communities are more intertwined than at any time in history, with neighboring jurisdictions sharing environmental features, coordinated transportation systems and other socio-economic ties. In order to provide the efficient and effective delivery of governance, such relationships require coordinated planning between counties, cities and across all public sector organizations.

This chapter provides local governments an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes with other local governments and governmental entities that can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of the community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases, involve multiple governmental entities.

*\* Note: A number of the topics discussed in this chapter are also discussed in Community Facilities and Services chapter or the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter. For those topics, the focus in this chapter is the effectiveness of coordination between the entities involved and not the overall effectiveness of the provision of services.*

### **8.1 Coordination with Other Entities**

The intergovernmental coordination element requires an inventory and assessment of the relationships between the local government and the various entities assisting in the provision of public sector services and facilities. This can include other units of local government providing services but not having regulatory authority over the use of land, such as constitutional officers. The inventory of each item must address the nature of the entity's relationship to the local government comprehensive plan, the structure of existing coordination mechanisms or agreements, and the parties responsible for coordination.

#### **8.1.1 Adjacent local governments**

Dawsonville has agreements in place with Dawson County to manage select services by and within the City. (See Service Delivery Strategy, below, and Community Facilities and Services)

#### **8.1.2 School Boards**

Primary and secondary schooling is provided county-wide by the Dawson County School Board. City representation on the Board is considered adequate. Levels of communication and coordination between the City and School Board are considered adequate with the possible exception of addressing growth. The School Board is regularly notified and does comment on major developments within the county and city. However, past issues have suggested the School Board is not fully aware of the potential growth suggested by the Comprehensive Plans or is otherwise struggling to cope with the volume of new residents moving into the area, particularly with developments large enough to qualify for the Development of Regional Impact review

process. A forum or other measure whereby all three parties can develop a unified vision of projected growth and management measures would assist in mediating any concerns from the School Board.

### **8.1.3 Independent Authorities**

Dawsonville and Dawson County have agreements in place with the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority (EWSA) in place for the provision of public water and sewer service. As outlined in the Service Delivery Agreement (and discussed in Community Facilities and Services), the EWSA sells water to the City of Dawsonville and the City maintains its own distribution system.

The Development Authority of Dawson County serves Dawsonville and Dawson County, while the City also supports and is supported by the Dawsonville Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Both organizations are charged with assisting the business community and helping guide and implement local economic development efforts. Activities for the DDA are expected to increase with the employment of a formal National Register Historic District and design guidelines for the commercial and civic centers of town. Once the City completes its Downtown Revitalization Plan the DDA will take a more progressive role in identifying and soliciting funds for select projects.

### **8.1.4 Chambers of Commerce**

Dawsonville supports and is served by the Dawson County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is the main liaison for communication with existing businesses and assisting the City with understanding the local economy and supporting the needs of local businesses. To date, the rapport with the Chamber has been considered satisfactory. There is great interest by the City in attracting more and newer businesses to downtown Dawsonville as opposed to the Ga 400 corridor, but it is understood that development trends and select improvements to the downtown area would be needed to make significant change.

### **8.1.5 Utilities**

Electrical power is provided to Dawsonville and surrounding Dawson County through Georgia Power and through Amicalola EMC. There have not been any issues identified with the capacity or distribution of electricity in Dawsonville.

Natural Gas is provided to Dawson County through Atlanta Gas Light Company. No issues have been identified for this utility.

### **8.1.6 Regional and State Entities**

Dawsonville and Dawson County are part of the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center (GMRDC). The GMRDC is responsible for monitoring local planning, implementing a regional plans and projects, assisting local governments with community development concerns and with assisting select State and Federal efforts within the region. Dawsonville is responsible for appointing one member to the GMRDC Board of Directors and the City administrators, if not

acting as one of the Board appointees, are notified of MTRDC activities. Coordination with the GMRDC includes participation in the development of the Georgia Mountains Regional Plan, with which this local Plan must show consistency.

Various Departments of State government also have regional district offices assigned to serve Dawsonville and Dawson County. Premier among these are the **Department of Transportation** (District 2), the **Department of Community Affairs** (District 2) and **The Department of Economic Development** (Georgia Mountains Region). All of these State Departments are based out of Gainesville offices is assigned to monitor Dawsonville for issues and demands related to their fields and then to work with the County in developing resolutions as needed. Such initiatives have included studies for major road improvements and training for economic development officials. To date, communication occurs on a casual, as needed basis but no significant need for change has been identified.

## **8.2 Coordination with Intergovernmental Programs**

In addition to evaluating the coordination with other entities, the local government must also inventory other applicable related state programs and activities that are interrelated with the provisions of the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of such an inventory is to identify existing agreements, policies, initiatives, etc. that may/will have an effect on the options a local government may want to exercise as part of its comprehensive plan.

### **8.2.1 Service Delivery Strategy**

The 1997 Georgia General Assembly enacted the Local Government Services Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). The intent of the Act is to provide a flexible framework for local governments and authorities to agree on a plan for delivering services, to minimize any duplication and competition in providing local services, and to provide a method to resolve disputes among service providers regarding service delivery, funding equity and land use. In summary, in each County the Service Delivery Strategy Act provides local governments and authorities with an opportunity to reach an agreement to deliver services in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Local governments must also maintain and adhere to their service delivery strategy and submit it to DCA for verification in order to remain eligible for state administered financial grants or state permits. No state administered financial assistance or state permits will be issued to any local government or authority that is not included in a DCA-verified service delivery strategy. In addition, no state administered financial assistance or state permits will be issued for any local project which is inconsistent with the agreed upon strategy.

#### *Summary of Dawson County Agreement*

The last major update to the Dawson County SDA took place between 2000 and 2002. As established, the current agreement covers the following services:

- *Soil Erosion Permitting and Enforcement:* Within Dawsonville this is handled by the City, which coordinates with the County to ensure compatibility of services.

- *Development Permitting and Inspections:* Within Dawsonville this is handled by the City, which coordinates with the County to ensure compatibility of services.
- *Building Permitting and Inspections:* Within Dawsonville this is handled by the City, which coordinates with the County to ensure compatibility of services.
- *Storm Water Management:* Within Dawsonville this is handled by the City, which coordinates with the County to ensure compatibility of services.
- *Street/Road Repair, Maintenance and Cleaning:* Within Dawsonville this is handled by the City, which coordinates with the County to ensure compatibility of services.
- *Solid Waste:* Provided by the City, with some service outside City limits.
- *EMS:* Provided county-wide by the Dawson County EMS.
- *Fire Protection:* Provided county-wide by the Dawson County Fire Department.
- *Law Enforcement:* Provided county-wide by the Dawson County Sheriff's Department.
- *Water Service:* Provided within the City by the City of Dawsonville, which purchases its water from the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority. Service provided by the City is within the City limits and in pre-determined areas in the unincorporated County.
- *Sewer Service:* Provided county-wide through agreements with the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority.

Planning and Zoning is one item that was once managed for the City via contract with the County, but the City of Dawsonville has pursued it's own planning and zoning for the last few years. This has included efforts to coordinate potential annexations and land use management.

*Consistency between Comprehensive Plan and SDA*

Conditions outlined within the SDA were considered when evaluating the needs and objectives for each related public service or facility within this Plan, and as of the date of publication the documents are considered compatible. Further, the SDA will be reviewed for updating as soon as the City and County complete their planning processes. The governments have established recent agreements regarding long-term policies for annexation and coordination of land use.

*Summary of dispute resolution land use process*

The following summarizes the current process outlined for resolving land use disputes for the City of Dawsonville and Dawson County:

The host government will notify the other government of any proposed annexation, rezoning, building permit or land use change for any property adjacent to the City/County limits. No action will be taken by the host government until the established comment and review period has been completed. In the event of a bona fide objection identified by the other government, the two governments will enter into 3<sup>rd</sup> party mediation as outlined within the

SDA. The process is designed to take only 30 days and the decision of the mediator is considered final.

*Consistency of the land use plan with water and/or sewer extensions/improvements*

The character areas and land use policies were devised with consideration for all existing and proposed utility improvements for both the City and the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority.

*Compatibility of adjoining land use plans*

The City and County are actively coordinating land use plans and amendments to zoning regulations so as to facilitate development of adjoining properties. This includes the City considering a form of mixed-use village concept comparable to the new mixed-use category developed by the County.

### **8.3 Articulation of the Community Vision, Goals and Implementation Measures**

The Vision, Goals and Implementation Program for the City of Dawsonville will be defined during the Community Agenda process, as outlined within the Community Participation Program. Preliminary discussion has established a desire to maintain the community's relatively rural character, continuing improving the conditions for local businesses and households, and improving the physical and social connections between the historic downtown and the new City Hall/ Thunder Road Museum area.

### **8.4 Assessment**

*Issues arising from growth and development?*

Dawsonville must continue to coordinate land use management with Dawson County. Efforts to clarify annexation policies, utility services areas and establish compatible zoning regulations has assisted this effort. Completing the communities' two respective Comprehensive Plans will facilitate this effort and give staff and administrators a better understanding of the various goals and issues involved. Upon the completion of the planning processes, both communities should continue sharing information and continue regular meetings between planning and zoning staff.

*Adequacy of existing coordination mechanisms? Needs that would benefit from further coordination?*

Measures for coordinating programs and policies with other agencies and governments (such as the SDA and service agreements) are considered adequate. The effectiveness of these measures will only improve over time due to increases in the levels of information and improvements in technology that assist with the community development process. The increased transparency and consistency in the application of these measures can also assist in diffusing any political conflicts and allow Dawsonville and Dawson County to provide more effective services.

## **8.5 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

### ***Issues:***

- *Service Delivery* – The Service Delivery Strategy will be updated as part of this planning process, which is critical to ensure the provision of these services is accurate, consistent and done efficiently.
- *Annexation and growth management* – The City is under pressure from development to expand boundaries and service areas. This requires not only coordination as part of the Service Delivery Agreement but also effective planning by the City to ensure the proper quality of growth introduced to the area.
- *Coordination with affiliated organizations* – As Dawsonville and Dawson County experience rapid growth and change it becomes more important that the governments are coordinating their actions with those of all affiliated support organizations such as the School Board, Development Authority and others.

### ***Opportunities:***

- *Existing City/ County cooperative actions* – Measures such as the Service Delivery Agreement and the Special Purpose Local Option Tax (SPLOST) provide an existing framework for expanding cooperation and communication between governments.
- *The City's proposed annexation policies* – The City of Dawsonville is poised to adopt policies for guiding future annexation and land management that would aid discussions with the County regarding these processes.
- *Expanded economic opportunities* – Projections for the area suggest a growing and more diversified economy and an overall increase in the quality of life for area residents. While there will be pressures to capitalize on these trends, the City and County will also have a greater array of resources to aid in all facets of community development, especially with planning, communication and education.