

# *Forsyth County*

Comprehensive Plan



*Community Assessment*



## Partial Update

Introduction .....	1-1
Inventory .....	1-1
Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment .....	1-2
Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives .....	1-13
Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities .....	1-29
Policies .....	1-40

## Population

Introduction .....	2-1
Inventory and Assessment .....	2-1

## Housing

Introduction .....	3-1
Inventory and Assessment .....	3-1

## Natural Resources

Introduction .....	4-1
Inventory and Assessment .....	4-1
Potential Conservation Tools .....	4-41

## Cultural Resources

Introduction .....	5-1
Inventory .....	5-1
Assessment .....	5-12

## Community Facilities

Introduction .....	6-1
Inventory and Assessment .....	6-1

## Economic Development

Introduction .....	7-1
Inventory and Assessment .....	7-2
Technical Assistance .....	7-57



## Land Use

Introduction .....	8-1
Inventory and Assessment .....	8-1
Future Land Use Needs Analysis .....	8-7
Implementation Program .....	8-9

## Transportation

Introduction .....	9-1
Inventory .....	9-1
Assessment .....	9-20

## Intergovernmental Coordination

Introduction .....	10-1
Inventory .....	10-1

# *Forsyth County*

Comprehensive Plan



*Partial Update*

## Introduction

Forsyth County is required to undergo a full update of the Comprehensive Plan at least once every ten years to meet the minimum planning standards for the State of Georgia. The last major update to the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2004 while a mandatory partial update was adopted in 2009. The partial update was necessitated since state planning requirements were modified in 2005. The objective of the partial update is to provide a policy guide, in the interim period between full plan updates, resulting from the shift in the state-wide recertification requirements.

The partial update reviews the current Comprehensive Plan while indicating potential areas that may need evaluation and adjustment during the current, full update process. References to the existing future land use map and other features of the current plan point to the intermediary nature of the partial update and how it serves as a bridge between community participation processes.

Components of the partial update include the quality community objectives (QCO) local assessment and accompanying narrative as well as the identification of potential issues and opportunities with the associated policies. This partial update is now a component of the Community Assessment and has only been through minor revisions based on recent data updates since its adoption on May 21, 2009.

## Inventory

### Quality Community Objectives

Current county policies, regulations, activities and development patterns were inventoried through an assessment tool provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). This inventory process is intended to show the county's progress towards the achievement of sustainability based on a set of fifteen objectives. Ultimately, meeting the objectives is meant to both assist in the preservation of valuable resources within a community while strategically planning for quality growth.

The goal of sustainability seeks to maximize a jurisdiction's potential without the loss of invaluable assets provided by natural and existent, built environments. The assessment encompasses development patterns, resource conservation, social and economic development and governmental relations. This inventory was then used to assist in the identification of potential issues and opportunities as well as to review preliminary policies that form the remainder of the partial update.

### Development Patterns

**Traditional Neighborhoods: Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged including the use of more human scale development, compact development, mixed uses within easy walking distance of one another, and designs that facilitate pedestrian activity.**

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	X		Limited commercial uses are allowed with a conditional use permit in residential districts. A mix of uses is encouraged in the Planned Unit Development District, allowed in the Ronald Reagan/Union Hill Overlay District and required in the Master Planned District.
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development 'By right' so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	X		The following Forsyth County regulations allow for certain aspects of neo-traditional development to be incorporated into residential, commercial and mixed use projects: Conservation Subdivision, Planned Unit Development District, Master Planned District, Castleberry-Bethelview Crossroads Overlay Zoning District and Ronald Reagan/Union Hill Overlay District.
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	X		The Forsyth County Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance, Forsyth County Ordinance #98. The Forsyth County Recommended Plant List contains many native and drought tolerant species.
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in summer.	X		Keep Forsyth County Beautiful sponsors several tree planting programs. The Forsyth County Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance establishes guidelines for a tree fund for developers to pay into when they cannot fulfill the required tree density. This fund is used to plant trees on public property.
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code has provisions in Chapters 10 and 12 for maintenance and security of commercial developments. The Parks and Facilities Division of the Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department provides maintenance and security for all county parks.
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X		The Forsyth County Public Facilities Department maintains landscaping along all public sidewalks. The Forsyth County Engineering Department provides maintenance for all sidewalks within the right-of-way of county owned roads.
7. In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X		Certain mixed use and larger commercial developments within Forsyth County contain a sidewalk network allowing for pedestrian traffic to and from residential areas.
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X		Students attending Forsyth County elementary schools are allowed to walk to school with parental supervision. The infrastructure is in place for students attending several Forsyth County middle and high schools to walk to school.
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	X		Students attending Forsyth County elementary schools are allowed to bike to school with parental supervision. The infrastructure is in place for students attending several Forsyth County middle and high schools to bike to school.
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X		Schools are permitted by right in all residential zoning districts.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce utilizes an online inventory system to identify available properties and land.
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce works with the Forsyth County Development Authority and the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners to promote brownfield redevelopment.
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce works with the Forsyth County Development Authority and the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners to promote greyfield redevelopment.
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road.)	X		The Forsyth County future land use map designates 10 commercial nodes to concentrate commercial and high intensity development into compact patterns to reduce commercial strip development.
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.	X		There are no minimum lot size requirements for site development within any commercial districts, but there are maximum building coverage regulations. One multi-family residential zoning district allows for a minimum lot size of 4,000 sq. ft. with public sewer. Minimum lot sizes for the Master Planned District and Planned Unit Development District are flexible and are approved with the development plan.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	X		Forsyth County has many natural features such as Sawnee Mountain and Lake Sidney Lanier that distinguish it from surrounding communities. The Avenue Forsyth and Vickery Village are two pedestrian oriented developments unique to Forsyth 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.	X		Historic resources are fairly evenly distributed throughout the county so no areas have been specifically delineated. The planning department uses a historic resource layer in GIS to determine existing resources as part of a staff technical report created for all rezoning applications. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains provisions for delaying the demolition of historic structures to ensure proper review of their significance.

3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains design regulations for retail developments larger than 40,000 sq. ft., senior housing and development within the Master Planned District along with design guidelines for the Neighborhood Shopping District, Urban Village District and the Planned Unit Development District. The Unified Development Code also contains architectural and landscaping regulatory elements in commercial and industrial districts. Forsyth County has created three design overlay districts for specific commercial areas of the county.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X		The Forsyth County Sign Ordinance, Ordinance # 74, has regulations for the size and type of signage throughout the county.
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want for our community.		X	While Forsyth County does not have a general development guidebook, the three codified design overlays direct new development in terms of aesthetics. In addition, there is a design guidelines booklet for pedestrian oriented signage that accompanies the sign ordinance for those projects in neighborhood shopping, urban village, master planned districts as well as any other project that demonstrates pedestrian oriented features.
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X	Although Forsyth County does not have a specific plan to protect farmland, the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan identifies areas of prime agricultural land and includes the potential for preservation of farmland through the conservation of greenspace, forest land and wildlife habitat. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code includes regulations for conservation subdivisions, which identifies farmland as a secondary conservation area.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.	X		Forsyth County operates a Dial-A-Ride bus service for all citizens and has one park and ride lot for the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress Bus.
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains regulations for commercial and office developments to provide inter-parcel connections for both pedestrians and automobiles. Developers may be asked to install or provide funding for any roadway improvements located along their property that is identified in the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		Currently a substantial network of completed sidewalks or sidewalks under construction exists in the south-eastern portion of Forsyth County with signed shared roadways in the northern section of the county. The Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan calls for additional sidewalks, multi-use paths and greenways to be located throughout most of the county by 2025.

4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	X	Developers may be asked to install or provide funding for any roadway improvements located along their property as identified in the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan. Code requirements for large scale retail developments require the installation of an internal sidewalk network as well as sidewalks along the public street. Single-family dwellings within senior housing developments require a sidewalk system as well as paths connecting open space.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible	X	When existing sidewalks are present along roadways, new developments are expected to connect with them. In addition, developers may be asked to install or provide funding for any roadway improvements located along their property that is called for in the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan.
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	X	Forsyth County completed an update to the Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrians Walkways 2025 Plan in 2008.
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X	The Forsyth County Unified Development Code allows for two or more uses to share parking when feasible.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X		According to the Forsyth County <i>Historic Resources Survey Report</i> , historic resources are distributed throughout the county. Numerous archeological sites in the county provide evidence of past Native American activity. The northern portion of Forsyth County has maintained rural land use characteristics. The Castleberry-Bethelview Overlay Zoning District has developed an equestrian theme to complement the horse farm tradition of that area.
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X		A rendering plant that processes poultry from the region is located in Forsyth County. The fairgrounds in the City of Cumming also host a farmers market during the growing season with local products.
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.)	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce markets regional aspects of the community's strengths including agri-business, tourism related industries and manufacturing.
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	X		Forsyth County regularly participates in tourism programs such as the Hospitality Highway campaign through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X		Forsyth County promotes tourism related to regional resources such as Lake Sidney Lanier and the Chattahoochee River. The City of Cumming holds a country fair and festival each year to promote local heritage. Forsyth County is also a part of the Hospitality Highway campaign along SR 400.

6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, education.	X		Forsyth County contributes to the region as a source of culture with the Cumming Country Fair and Festival, Lake Sidney Lanier, the Sawnee Mountain Park and Preserve and the Chattahoochee River. The county also participates in regional education with a branch of Lanier Technical College and an MBA program through North Georgia College and State University in the City of Cumming. Forsyth County draws from the region with its central location between metropolitan Atlanta and the mountains.
--	---	--	--

**Resource Conservation**

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

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.		X	There are no designated historic districts in Forsyth County, but two National Register listings are in the community, the Fowler Family Farm and Poole's Mill Bridge.
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		X	Forsyth County does not have a historic preservation commission, but the Historical Society of Forsyth County, Inc. is an active organization.
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure that happening.		X	There are no local historic preservation ordinances at this time, but increased architectural standards attempt to create compatibility with historic resources. For example, the Castleberry-Bethelview Overlay Zoning District contains architectural guidelines with an equestrian theme that complements local horse farms in the area.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.	X		The Forsyth County greenspace plan was instituted in 2000 and officially adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan in 2004. The Board of Commissioners is currently pursuing options to obtain additional greenspace either through direct purchase via bond money or through donations.
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	X		The Board of Commissioners is currently pursuing options to obtain additional greenspace either through direct purchase via bond money or through donations. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code also requires a certain percentage of open space to be included in commercial and industrial developments, senior housing, conservation subdivisions and Master Planned District developments.

3. We have a local land conservation program, or, we work with state or national land conservation programs to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	X	Forsyth County has a greenspace plan that promotes land preservation for active and passive recreation as well as open space. The Forsyth County Greenspace Plan was created to meet the goals of the now former Georgia Greenspace Program. The Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan designates areas for conservation, public parks and private parks on the future land use map.
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	X	The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains regulations for conservation subdivisions.

**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	Yes	No	Comment
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	X		The Forsyth County GIS Department maintains layers for the Part V Environmental Criteria as well as floodplains and steep slopes. This data has been obtained from federal, state and county sources. The last update of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan also contains an inventory of all natural resources.
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	X		The natural resources inventory is used during the rezoning process to identify any natural resources that could potentially be disturbed during development.
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and have taken steps to protect them.	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains overlay districts for the Part V Environmental Criteria (water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, protected rivers and wetlands). Forsyth County also has a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance, Ordinance #73, to protect water quality.
4. Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains overlay districts for the following Part V Environmental Criteria: Water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, the Etowah River corridor and wetlands. The protected mountain portion of the Part V Criteria does not apply.
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.	X		The Forsyth County Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance, Forsyth County Ordinance #98.
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X		The Forsyth County Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance, Forsyth County Ordinance #98.
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X		Forsyth County Ordinance #73, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control.
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.)	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains overlay districts to protect natural resources plus Forsyth County complies with all state and federal regulations.

### 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	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X		Forsyth County planning staff uses population projections from the Comprehensive Plan. Other county staff uses these projections or projections from departmental master plans prepared in conjunction with consultants.
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X	Each entity uses different projections that have been obtained from consultants, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Atlanta Regional Commission.
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X		Elected officials attend training through the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia and may elect to attend conferences to further their understanding of planning processes.
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		Updates to the Unified Development Code occur on a regular basis. To date, there have been twenty versions of the UDC since initial publication in 2000.
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		The Capital Improvements Element is a section of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan which is updated annually along with the short term work program and impact fee program.
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on the natural resources inventory of our community.	X		The Forsyth County future land use map designates commercial nodes where the county would like to direct commercial and other high intensity growth. The Forsyth County future land use map also designates certain areas as Corridor Transitional. These areas are located along major transportation corridors and contain a mix of agricultural, residential and isolated commercial uses.
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X		The Forsyth County Unified Development Code, the Application Guide for Public Hearings and other development checklists are available to the public in the Office of Planning and Development and on the county's website.
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development process in our community.	X		Each rezoning application has a public participation component that requires all affected and interested parties be notified of intended projects. A sign must be posted on all properties that are being considered for rezoning, variances or conditional use permits. Public notice hearing notifications are placed in the local paper and posted at the meeting location. Public hearings are video taped and available for viewing via the county's website. All proposed changes to the Unified Development Code and Comprehensive Plan, along with proposed drafts, are also available on the county's website.

9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X	A sign must be posted on all properties that are being considered for rezoning, variances or conditional use permits. Public notice hearing notifications are placed in the local paper and posted at the meeting location. Public hearings are video taped and available for viewing via the county's website. All proposed changes to the Unified Development Code and Comprehensive Plan, along with proposed drafts, are also available on the county's website.
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X	Community meetings, public hearings and other methods of public participation have been utilized and will continue to ensure that the community is informed of Comprehensive Plan updates and processes.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets, and weaknesses and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce has completed a Target Market Analysis that covers the county's strengths, challenges and opportunities.
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce has completed a Target Market Analysis to determine the economic development strengths of Forsyth County and recommend actions that may potentially increase the amount and diversity of industry.
3. We recruit businesses that provide or create sustainable products.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce is actively involved in the recruitment of companies that create sustainable products and create an environmentally friendly footprint based on their product and corporate philosophy.
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.	X		According to data from September 2008 provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, the following industries employ the highest percentage of workers in Forsyth County: Construction; manufacturing; wholesale trade; retail trade; professional, scientific, and technical services; administrative support; educational services; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services; and local government.

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

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X		The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce operates a Small Business Services Center.

2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		According to data from September 2008 provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, approximately 15.9% of Forsyth County's workforce is employed in jobs that require construction, metal, machine, computer and electrical skills.
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		According to data from September 2008 provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, approximately 19.4% of Forsyth County's workforce is employed in the following industries for unskilled labor: Retail; arts, entertainment and recreation; and accommodation and food services.
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		According to data from September 2008 provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, approximately 26.3% of Forsyth County's workforce is employed in the following industries with professional and managerial jobs: Professional, scientific and technical services; education services; health care and social assistance; and federal, state and local government positions.

**Housing Choices: A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.**

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	X		Detached and attached accessory apartments are permitted by right and as a conditional use in the majority of the residential districts. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains regulations specific to these structures.
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X		Data from the 2006 American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, states that 43% of the Forsyth County workforce is employed in management, professional and related occupations. The 2006 American Community Survey data also shows that 41% of the Forsyth County population has obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, indicating that a considerable portion of the population is likely to be employed in professional and skilled labor sectors.
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate, and above-average).		X	Forsyth County does not have enough housing choices for those with a low income. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, in September 2008, approximately 20.3% of the Forsyth County workforce earns a weekly wage of less than \$500. These workers are primarily employed in service-providing industries.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	X		The Master Planned District and Planned Unit Development District allow for innovative design that may include reduced setbacks and traditional street design.
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo-traditional" development.	X		Both the Master Planned District and Planned Unit Development District allow for flexibility in design and mixed uses, including vertical integration of residential and commercial uses.
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X		There are vacant parcels with zoning designations where multi-family housing is a permitted use.



7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		Multi-family housing is allowed in the R3, Res4 and Res6 zoning districts.
8. We support community development corporations building housing for lower-income households.	X		Forsyth County is a part of the North Central Georgia Habitat for Humanity.
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		X	At this time, there are no specific housing programs within the county.
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	X		The Res6 zoning district allows development on 4,000 sq. ft. lots with public sewer. There are no minimum lot sizes for the Planned Unit Development District and Master Planned District.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides work-force training options for our citizens.	X		The Lanier Technical College branch in Forsyth County offers a QuickStart workforce training program.
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X		The QuickStart program works with businesses and industries that are currently located in the community or are looking to locate to the community to provide appropriate training for their workforce.
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X		A branch of Lanier Technical College is located in Forsyth County. North Georgia College and State University currently has a satellite MBA program based in the City of Cumming. Other nearby communities that have higher educational opportunities include the City of Gainesville, the City of Dahlonega, the City of Waleska, the City of Alpharetta and the City of Atlanta.
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X		Forsyth County is home to many North American headquarters of international companies and Fortune 500 companies that offer positions that require advanced degrees.

### Governmental Relations

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

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X		Forsyth County participates in the Lanier Joint Development Authority with Hall and Cherokee Counties. Forsyth County is part of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC), which provides economic development assistance to all of its communities.

2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X		Forsyth County is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and participates in the implementation of the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) through the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X		Forsyth County works with the City of Cumming to provide these services to the citizens of both the unincorporated county and the city.
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X		Forsyth County is involved with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), and the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) to coordinate with surrounding communities on regional issues.

**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	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for Comprehensive Planning purposes		X	Forsyth County and the City of Cumming are completing separate comprehensive plan updates, but city and county staff coordinate information on a regular basis.
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies	X		Forsyth County and the City of Cumming completed an update to their Service Delivery Strategy in 2003. Another update could possibly be completed during the full update of the Comprehensive Plan to be completed by 2012.
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region wide strategies.	X		Forsyth County periodically initiates contact with local governments and institutions as needs arise and participates with other jurisdictions regarding regional issues such as water conservation. County staff keeps informed of policy trends within metropolitan Atlanta and will contact other local government staff for information when seeking solutions for current issues.
We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	X		Representatives from Forsyth County participate in meetings of the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission, the Land Use Coordinating Committee (LUCC) of the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Transportation and with other various regional organizations as necessary.

## Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

### Traditional Neighborhood

*Traditional neighborhood development is comprised of human scale development with mixed uses located within easy walking distance of one another. This scale and mix creates a pedestrian friendly environment for residents of the community.*

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains regulations that allow for certain aspects of traditional neighborhood development. Commercial, residential and retail uses are not separated in all districts. Limited commercial uses are allowed in almost all of Forsyth County's residential districts with a conditional use permit. For example, daycares serving ten persons or less are allowed as a conditional use in all residential districts while daycares serving more than ten persons are allowed as a conditional use in one of the multi-family residential districts. Schools for dance, martial arts and other disciplines are allowed as a conditional use in all residential districts with the exception of the mobile home park district. The planned unit development district encourages a mix of uses through recommendations for the provision of a mix of housing types; sites for community uses such as churches, schools and community or club buildings; commercial uses; office uses; and possibly light industrial uses. Developments in the master planned development district require a mix of uses, which must consist of a minimum of twenty-five percent commercial and office uses with a minimum of twenty-five percent residential uses.

Other aspects of neo-traditional development addressed in the Forsyth County Unified Development Code include the provision of common areas, pedestrian amenities as well as provisions for pedestrians and bicycle traffic. Code regulations also call for the provision of a common or amenity area for those subdivisions with fifty units or more and for all utilities to be located underground. The Forsyth County conservation subdivision regulations allow for lot sizes smaller than a typical subdivision, require a connected system of pedestrian and multi-purpose paths in the open space areas and encourage an interconnected grid pattern of streets in village areas. Master planned district developments are encouraged to provide a functional town center, community green space or park or other focal point to create an identity for the development. A grid street pattern is also preferred over cul-de-sacs and pedestrian scale development is encouraged with pedestrian amenities available in the public spaces. Two of Forsyth County's design overlay districts encourage certain aspects of neo-traditional development. The Castleberry-Bethelview Crossroads overlay zoning district requires pedestrian connections and walkways to be provided throughout commercial and mixed use developments. Pedestrian amenities such as outdoor seating, water fountains and public art are preferred. The Ronald Reagan/Union Hill overlay district promotes mixed use and pedestrian circulation.

Forsyth County has several regulations and programs in place to create comfortable, safe areas for walking in commercial and public areas. The Forsyth County Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance requires that developers meet a site density factor for all non-residential developments and all residential subdivisions comprised of single-family detached and duplex dwellings of more than six homes. The site density factor is calculated by a pre-determined number of tree units per acre. The number of required tree units is specific to the type of development. When the site density factor cannot be satisfied with existing trees on the property, the developer must prepare a tree protection and replacement plan. If a developer is unable to satisfy the site

density factor requirements due to site conditions, they may obtain approval to make a contribution to the tree replacement fund. These funds are used to plant trees in public areas throughout unincorporated Forsyth County. The Forsyth County recommended plant list provides developers with a selection of native and non-native species that can be used to satisfy the site density factor and other landscaping requirements. The Forsyth County recommended plant list also indicates plants with low, moderate and high tolerance to drought conditions. Keep Forsyth County Beautiful participates in several tree planting programs such as seedling and tree giveaways in January and on Arbor Day of each year. Keep Forsyth County Beautiful also provides assistance in obtaining trees for groups that do mass tree plantings in various locations throughout Forsyth County.

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code has regulations for the continued maintenance and safety of commercial developments. General provisions require that all commercial sites be free of trash and debris and any damage to the on-site landscaping and buildings be repaired immediately. Regulations for retail establishments seventy-five thousand square feet and larger contain specific requirements for the provision of on-site security patrols to deter vandalism or other illegal activities.

Forsyth County has provisions for the safety and maintenance of public areas. The Forsyth County Public Facilities Department maintains all sidewalks and other landscaping in public areas around the county. This department provides security for county properties as well. The Parks and Facilities Division of the Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department provide maintenance and security for all county parks. Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Park Ordinance, Ordinance #102, provides details of the rules and regulations that govern all county parks. This ordinance includes regulations for park hours, personal conduct, location of fires, operation of vehicles, possession of weapons and possession of pets within the parks.

In some areas of Forsyth County, there are mixed use and larger commercial developments that contain a sidewalk network that permit pedestrian traffic to travel to and from residential areas. For example, The Avenue Forsyth is composed primarily of commercial retail and restaurant establishments with square footage devoted to personal services and office space. This development contains an internal pedestrian network that connects to the external sidewalk adjacent to the development. This network makes it possible for people who work within the development to run errands on foot within and immediately adjacent to the development. Another example is Vickery Village, which is a mixed use community that has a well defined internal sidewalk network. This sidewalk network allows residents to walk to retail shops, restaurants, offices and the YMCA, which is located in the village center.

The elementary, middle and high schools in Forsyth County are evenly distributed throughout the county near denser concentrations of residential neighborhoods. Future school sites have been selected to build new facilities between 2009 and 2013 to cover those areas of the county where increased residential development is occurring. Several schools in Forsyth County are located along existing sidewalks or sidewalks currently under construction. The proximity to sidewalks enables many of the students attending these schools to walk or bike to school safely. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan indicates that the majority of Forsyth County schools will be located near a sidewalk, multi-use path or green-

way trail by 2025. When these projects are completed, most Forsyth County students will have the infrastructure in place to walk or bike to school safely. The Forsyth County Board of Education has a policy that allows elementary school children to walk or bike to school under parental supervision. There are currently six schools within the county that have enrolled in the Georgia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Resource Center and two schools, Vickery Creek Elementary and Middle School, that will receive funding from the SRTS program through the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

### Infill Development

*To maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land, the development or redevelopment of sites within targeted areas of a community should be encouraged.*

The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce maintains an inventory of vacant sites and buildings in the county that are available for redevelopment or infill development using the CoStar Real Estate Database. This database provides a comprehensive listing of available industrial, commercial, office and retail properties. The majority of the commercial and industrial real estate agencies in Forsyth County utilize this resource as well.

The Development Authority of Forsyth County acts as a partner with the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce in the facilitation of brownfield and greyfield development projects at the request of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners. Currently, the Development Authority is actively working with Forsyth County government on a brownfield redevelopment project involving a closed municipal waste landfill in the northern part of the county.

The Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates ten areas as commercial nodes. These nodes are located along state routes and at key intersections throughout the county. The intent of these nodes is to concentrate commercial and high intensity development into compact patterns with the more intense development located towards the center with transitional developments located around the periphery. Following this pattern of development should lessen scattered, strip oriented commercial development.

Forsyth County allows for both commercial and residential development on lots five thousand square feet or smaller. In all commercial districts there are no minimum lot sizes for development, but there is a maximum allowable building coverage. This coverage ranges from eighteen percent of the lot in the office residential district to seventy percent of the lot in the commercial business district. If a developer satisfies all of the performance standards for a commercial district with a lot that is five thousand square feet or smaller, then the development is allowed to proceed. Residential development on lots five thousand square feet or smaller is also allowed in one of the multi-family residential zoning districts in which the minimum lot size is four thousand square feet when the residence is connected to an approved public or private sewer system. Lot size is flexible in both the master planned district and the planned unit development district and is approved during the rezoning stage.

### Sense of Place

*Activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged through the maintenance or redevelopment of a community's areas where people choose to gather. These places should be attractive, contain mixed use development and be pedestrian friendly.*

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains regulations that allow for mixed use developments, require large scale retail establishments to provide a minimum of two public spaces or focal features with continuous pedestrian walkways and promote outdoor amenities within one of the county's design overlay districts. Architectural and landscaping standards are required within all commercial districts with additional standards for large scale retail establishments, senior housing developments and commercial uses within design overlay districts. Sidewalks are to be provided per the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan to create a walkable environment. The Forsyth County Sign Ordinance has specific provisions for pedestrian oriented signage for select commercial districts and projects. The master planned district must satisfy design criteria that support, when appropriate, streets that terminate at a focal point with architectural design to be applied at a pedestrian scale. Master planned districts are encouraged to have clear pedestrian paths with streetscape amenities such as street furniture, kiosks, drinking fountains and trash receptacles. Design guidelines for public spaces, streetscape improvements and pedestrian connections are also addressed for the neighborhood shopping district, urban village district and the planned unit development district. These code requirements and guidelines are intended to improve the quality of commercial and mixed use projects through a variety of performance standard measures that address site design, architectural features, landscaping, public outdoor space and general connectivity.

Distinctive natural features within Forsyth County include Lake Sidney Lanier, Chattahoochee River, Etowah River and Sawnee Mountain. These areas are protected by various federal, state and local regulations that assure these natural and cultural resources remain both a functional and aesthetic enhancement for citizens and visitors alike. These features lend unique character while providing recreational opportunities and scenic viewsheds. Distinguishing built environments include both historic resources that are found throughout the county as well as new development such as the Avenue Forsyth, a pedestrian oriented retail center located on a state route and Vickery, a mixed used project that includes a YMCA as a neighborhood amenity. These developments function as activity centers and exemplify pedestrian access, shared parking, high quality architectural standards, attractive landscape areas and public spaces, which include elements such as seating plazas, outdoor fountains, sculpture and pedestrian scaled buildings.

Forsyth County analyzes each rezoning request per the survey of historic resources filed with the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Any existing resource related to a rezoning request is acknowledged within a staff technical report that is forwarded to the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners prior to any rezoning approval. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code has a demolition stay for sixty days pertaining to properties identified by the historic resource survey that are proposed for destruction per a site development permit application. This stay allows time for a third party to analyze the resource and propose demolition options. Although preservation is not mandated, the code does provide for alternatives to be investigated and be presented to the property owner.

The aesthetics of development are regulated by the Forsyth County Unified Development Code via numerous sections and chapters. These include general commercial standards that address elements such as the screening of outdoor merchandise and storage areas, landscaping and vegetative screening of parking lots, exterior building material requirements, screening of dumpsters, building and utility appurtenances as well as fencing and lighting regulations. Specific uses such as mini-warehouses, convenience stores and drive-through facilities have to meet further standards. Large scale retail establishments have additional design standards above the general commercial criteria as does senior housing and mixed use projects. These performance standards are intended to improve the visual and functional context of commercial development throughout the county. Specific areas, as designated by three design overlay districts, must express a particular design thematic or exhibit increased design standards due to the high visibility of the vicinity.

The Forsyth County Sign Ordinance regulates all signage within the county for purposes related to public health, safety and welfare; business interests; and aesthetic reasons. Sign regulations help communities maintain their scenic heritage and unique character, which is essential to long-term economic viability. Sign control is an integral part of improving visual character and quality of life as stated within the sign ordinance. Although the county does not have a development guidebook, three codified design overlays districts have aesthetic controls. In addition, a design guidelines booklet for pedestrian oriented signage has been produced to assist the community with the portion of the sign ordinance pertaining to select zoning districts that must adhere to these particular performance standards. In addition, there are specific architectural features within the Castleberry-Bethelview Design Overlay District that must be integrated by commercial developers within this district's boundary. Large scale retail establishments must demonstrate, when located within rural and rural-residential areas, landscaping and architectural treatment integration with surrounding land character.

There is not a plan to protect designated farmland, but the Forsyth County Greenspace Plan (Appendix B of the Comprehensive Plan) indicates that agricultural land is an important future component of protected greenspace. The need for passive recreation space is also indicated with a targeted acquisition strategy by land type that includes agricultural land. The designation of scenic roadway corridors is also identified as one of the Comprehensive Plan's goals to protect and preserve the beauty and integrity of natural features. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code specifies that conservation easements are required for conservation subdivisions, which must include all primary and secondary conservation areas counted as open space. Farmland is considered a secondary conservation area.

A criterion for the secondary conservation areas includes the siting of homes be located at the edges of fields if farmland and meadow preservation are principal objectives. Another criterion is to create unblocked scenic views and vistas through selective pruning and tree felling. Prime agricultural land is identified in the natural resources section of the Comprehensive Plan, which was determined by analyzing soil types. The Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of grassy pastures as prime plant and animal habitats while the rolling topography and rural character of the northern portion of the county is characterized as having significant vistas. Agricultural land is a consideration for greenspace acquisition areas for the stated reasons above.

## Transportation Alternatives

*To promote better connectivity, reduce traffic congestion and promote better stewardship of the environment, communities should offer transportation alternatives such as mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities. As these alternatives become available, the public should be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.*

Forsyth County provides public transportation to all of its citizens through the Dial-A-Ride program. The Dial-A-Ride program is operated by the public transportation division of the Forsyth County Fleet Services Department. The program is funded by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, the Georgia Department of Transportation and passenger fees. Fees are based on the number of stops a person must make. The five vans operate Monday through Friday by appointment only. The vans are utilized for medical appointments, shopping, employment, education and personal errands. Unincorporated Forsyth County also has one park and ride lot for the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress bus. This lot is located on the southbound side of SR 400, off of exit 14 near the Lakeland Plaza shopping center. The Forsyth County stop is part of the Xpress Route 400. Riders can choose from four schedules to depart Cumming for either the North Springs MARTA rail station near Perimeter Center or direct service to downtown Atlanta. The Xpress bus offers the same number of return routes in the evening.

In order to limit automobile trips using major highways or streets, the Forsyth County Unified Development Code contains regulations for commercial and office development requiring interparcel connections for pedestrians and automobiles between adjacent properties when the uses of these properties are compatible. If the adjacent parcel is currently undeveloped, then a future connection point must be provided. Parking and loading regulations in the Forsyth County Unified Development Code allow for the sharing of parking facilities for commercial and office developments when the respective hours of need do not normally overlap. Authorization from the planning director is required. The Ronald Reagan/Union Overlay District allows for shared parking at three-and-one-half spaces per one thousand square feet of gross leasable area or gross building area for retail or office uses provided proper documentation supporting the feasibility is provided.

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code calls for sidewalks to be provided in accordance with the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan was updated in 2008 and provides an implementation strategy for the following improvements: Sidewalks, multi-use trails, greenways, signed shared roadways and bicycle friendly shoulders. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code also requires large scale retail developments, defined as forty-thousand square feet or larger, to install an internal sidewalk network and sidewalks along the public street. The Castleberry-Bethelview Crossroads Overlay Zoning District requires internal pedestrian walkways. Single-family dwellings within senior housing developments require a sidewalk system as well as paths connecting open space. The majority of the sidewalks that currently exist or are under construction are located in the south-eastern portion of the county and in the larger residential, commercial and office developments. When an improvement from the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan is located along the road frontage of a new project, the developer may be asked to install the improvement or provide funding for the future installation of that improve-

ment. When existing sidewalks are present along roadways, new developments are expected to connect with them. The county hopes to have the planned system of trails, sidewalks and roadway improvements completed by the year 2025. When this system is in place, it will facilitate alternative transportation use throughout the county.

### Regional Identity

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

The Forsyth County Historic Resources Survey Report identified over 500 resources, most of which were single-family residential structures. Other original uses included general stores, churches, schools, bridges and commercial structures. The majority of these resources are of vernacular design with some resources displaying elements of architectural styles including Craftsman, Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne and Greek Revival. According to the survey, common details include full façade porches, sawn work trim, exposed rafters, gable vents, corner boards and gable returns. The resources that remain intact lend character to the county and provide a sense of history alongside contemporary settlement patterns. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code specifies standards for exterior building materials in commercial and industrial districts; encourages the retention of agricultural structures in conservation subdivisions as part of secondary conservation areas; requires open space for select residential districts as well as all commercial and industrial zoning districts. These standards contribute to the retention of natural or rural character and provide a measure towards quality development that will not detract from the county's sense of place. One overlay district specifies an equestrian thematic in order to provide continuity with pre-existing land uses. Additionally, large scale retail establishments must offer architectural detailing and landscape design that complements a rural atmosphere when located in areas that are predominately agricultural or rural residential.

Agricultural production continues to exist within the county through businesses such as a poultry processing plant and a local farmers market that make available produce to residents on a seasonal basis. The county's agricultural economic base has steadily declined over the past two-and-a-half decades with shifts primarily to professional and business services, manufacturing and construction industries. Transitions away from a historic agricultural community have occurred throughout the region, but the county retains a connection to its agricultural heritage through the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce highlighting both agri-business and tourism. This marketing focus on behalf of the Chamber directly links current employment strategies with the county's historical traditions and natural resources. Forsyth County has partnered with the City of Cumming for inclusion in the Georgia 400 Hospitality Highway tourist campaign that draws attention to cultural events while engaging multiple communities across the corridor. The particular slogan for Forsyth County and the City of Cumming is "Come Play in Our Backyard" with a lake symbol emphasizing the recreational opportunities of Lake Sidney Lanier and the Chattahoochee River. The purpose of this campaign is to attract tourists to the myriad of entertainment opportunities provided, many of which relate to the county's customs. This heritage is expressed, for example, by the Cumming Country Fair and Festival, which has grown to an eleven day event that highlights the agricultural and rural lifestyle once prevalent in the county.

Sawnee Mountain Preserve is the largest passive recreation park within the county which is comprised of over 963 acres with 3.5 miles of trails. This trail network will be expanded to total over 7.5 miles in the future providing residents and visitors continued access to a site that has natural and cultural significance. Sawnee Mountain is an important landmark, providing vistas for hikers and a rich history of Native American inhabitants and settlers intent on gold mining the area. A recent addition of a visitor center illustrates this past and provides both residents and visitors a deeper appreciation for the area. The central location of the county between the City of Atlanta and the Appalachian mountains draws people to both live and play in a county that has both a rural and rapidly expanding suburban character.

### Heritage Preservation

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

There are no historic districts within the county, but two sites are on the National Register of Historic Places, the Fowler family farm and Poole's Mill covered bridge; the latter is located within a county owned park. The Historical Society of Forsyth County, Inc. is an active organization that has an office in the restored Cumming Public School, also on the National Register within the City of Cumming. This organization holds monthly meetings whose members have been associated with the publication of texts on county history.

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code has a demolition stay of sixty days for properties that are listed within the Forsyth County Historic Resources Survey Report filed with the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. This stay allows time for a third party to analyze the resource and propose demolition options. Although preservation is not mandated, the code does provide a time period for a property owner to consider various preservation opportunities.

New commercial development must comply with design standards including building exterior materials, open space regulations, merchandise and storage screening requirements and various other standards intended to maintain a visually pleasing context with existing as well as future built environments.

### 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 and wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.*

The Forsyth County Greenspace Plan was instituted in 2000 and officially adopted as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan in 2004. This plan focuses on greenspace goals with proposed methods of implementation, an existing conditions analysis and the identification of potential

funding opportunities. The Forsyth County Department of Parks and Recreation has participated in the acquisition of greenspace through the purchase of property for the Sawnee Mountain Preserve via SPLOST and other funding mechanisms. The Georgia Urban Forestry Council awarded the Preserve's master plan as the "Most Outstanding GreenSpace Plan" for 2005. On February 5, 2008, Forsyth County voters approved the issuance of a \$100 million parks/recreation and green space general obligation bond. The bond language specified that it is for "the purpose of financing parks and recreational areas, programs and facilities, including, but not limited to, green spaces and conservation areas for the protection of lakes, rivers, forest and wildlife habitats." In September of 2008, county staff and community stakeholders created a definition for county greenspace, which is defined as "protected natural, ecological and cultural resources provided and maintained to benefit residents, businesses and visitors. It preserves undisturbed open space; protects air and water quality; offers passive outdoor recreation opportunities; and promotes and enhances the quality of life of the community. Greenspace is land that remains in a relatively natural state. It helps make the community attractive, livable, and economically competitive and viable." This definition is currently being used in conjunction with a final selection process for potential greenspace acquisition areas for bond purchase consideration. This selection method is being created by a consulting firm in close association with the county's GIS Department under direction of the Board of Commissioners.

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code requires that open space be provided for select residential districts, all commercial districts and industrial zoning districts. In addition, master planned districts and conservation subdivisions must also designate open space. Master planned districts have to provide a minimum of twenty percent open space, but the actual calculation, which is based on the proposed residential lot sizes, can increase. Conservation subdivisions are required to protect forty percent open space that is composed of both primary and secondary conservation areas. Primary areas include habitats for endangered or threatened species, wetlands, flood plains, state waters, shorelines and associated buffers, historic cultural and archaeological sites and steep slopes. Secondary areas include prime farmland or open meadows, tree coverage areas and mature woodlands, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes and scenic views and sites. These areas may also include newly created open spaces such as village greens, but cannot be composed of individual yards. Secondary areas shall primarily be undivided and must compose at least fifteen percent of the total percentage so that it is accessible to every resident. Open space in conservation subdivisions is to be permanently protected from further development and unauthorized use through the implementation of conservation easements.

The Big Creek Greenway multi-use trail is currently under construction. This is a multi-phased project with three phases being developed at the present time. These initial phases comprise approximately seven miles of trail with a future build out plan to connect with the Sawnee Mountain Preserve. Another greenway is proposed that will run from the Sawnee Mountain Preserve to Poole's Mill Park. The Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department has investigated the feasibility of a canoe trail along the Etowah River and has pursued grant assistance for both trail planning and property acquisition. This effort is a multi-jurisdictional enterprise and the county has met with various stakeholders to discuss this prospect. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan also identifies proposed greenway sites along the Chattahoochee River and Etowah River to increase recreational opportunities so that residents and visitors can enjoy the natural resources present within the county.

## 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.*

The Forsyth County GIS Department maintains data pertaining to natural resources including the state environmental planning criteria, which encompasses water supply watersheds, groundwater, wetlands, protected rivers and protected mountains. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code provides natural resource protection for these areas through overlay districts which are consistent with state standards. In addition, information pertaining to the Etowah Habitat Conservation Boundary, local watersheds, slopes exceeding fifteen percent, streams and ponds are also maintained to provide assessment of subject properties in the process of a rezoning application or land disturbance permit submittal. Staff technical analyses use this data when creating monthly reports for rezoning requests and they form the basis for a variety of planning activities across departments. Environmentally sensitive areas are notated in these reports along with watershed identification. The Forsyth County Department of Engineering does field visits to ascertain resources such as state waters prior to permit issuance, which is initially based on GIS data and institutional knowledge.

In addition to the Part V protection via overlay districts, the Forsyth County Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance requires compliance for all new development and is actively enforced by the county arborist and the Forsyth County Department of Code Enforcement. Landscape strips, parking lots and buffers all require compliance with the tree ordinance in which site development plans are reviewed by a certified arborist and checked in the field after installation. The Forsyth County Unified Development Code has vegetative buffer standards that pertain to exterior buffers for major residential subdivisions, multi-family or residential facilities within senior housing developments, plantings along the SR 400 corridor, side and rear yard buffers for commercial and industrial districts that abut residential or agriculturally zoned property and increased buffer widths for large scale retail establishments. Landscaping standards are to be found within the code in addition to the tree ordinance. Such regulations necessitate that parking lots provide a ratio of one tree for every ten parking spaces and every parking space shall be within fifty feet of a trunk of a tree. Large scale retail establishments must have façade plantings and walkways located within these developments must adjoin landscaped areas for not less than fifty percent of their length. Parking above the minimum requirement for large scale retail establishments are obliged to be constructed of a pervious material.

Stormwater best management practices are mandated through the Forsyth County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance, which is administered by the Forsyth County Engineering Department. This department works in tandem with the Department of Planning and Development to ensure that water quality is protected by means of federal, state and local regulations.

## Growth Preparedness

*A community should identify the type of growth that it would like to achieve. Through the comprehensive planning process, a community can begin to lay the groundwork for desired growth. Infrastructure, workforce training, development regulations and capable leadership are ways a community can prepare for desirable future growth.*

Forsyth County government and other decision making entities have access to several sets of population projections. The population projections that are most commonly used by the Forsyth County Department of Planning and Development are those in the latest full update of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan completed in 2004. The population projections were completed by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. in 2002 and run through 2025. Additional sources of population projections are the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Atlanta Regional Development Center (ARC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). When the Forsyth County Major Transportation Plan was updated in 2006, population projections for 2030 and 2025 were used from the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan 2004 update, the Forsyth County Major Transportation Plan 2002 update, the Atlanta Regional Commission Mobility 2030 Approved Travel Demand Model and the Georgia Department of Transportation Suburban County Study. The Forsyth County Sewer System Master Plan update of 2002 utilized population projections for 2010, 2020 and 2030 from the State of Georgia Office of Planning and Budget, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, the Tri-State Water Compact and the Georgia Mountain Regional Development Center. During the Forsyth County Water Distribution System Master Plan update in 2008, population projections through 2058 were provided by Reilly Economics Consulting that were then utilized for the most recent 2009 sewer system plan update. The Forsyth County Board of Education uses data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census to compile their own projections for future growth.

The development regulations, zoning codes and overlay standards for Forsyth County are contained in one document, the Forsyth County Unified Development Code. The code was first written in its present format in 2000. To date, different portions of the code have been revised and the department is currently on version twenty. The code is regularly updated to reflect changing local, state and national conditions and to correspond with any updates to the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan.

The Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan identifies areas of the county where the community feels growth should be directed. The Forsyth County future land use map designates ten commercial nodes along state routes and critical intersections where the county would like to direct commercial and high intensity growth. Future growth in these areas should concentrate the higher intensity developments toward the center of the nodes with less intense development being located along the periphery. Another category on the Forsyth County future land use map that directs growth is the Corridor Transitional future land use category. This category focuses on those portions of the major transportation corridors that presently contain a mix of agricultural, residential and isolated commercial land uses. Future growth in these areas should concentrate the higher intensity developments adjacent to the major roadways with the less intense developments abutting existing agricultural and residential properties. Forsyth County has a Capital Improvement Element (CIE) that supports current and future growth. The Forsyth County CIE

is a component of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan and covers service areas and funding sources for public safety, parks and recreation and public libraries. The CIE is updated on an annual basis along with the short term work program and impact fee program. The last update to the CIE was formally adopted in July of 2009.

Forsyth County staff strives to excel in keeping the elected officials and the public informed and educated in regards to development guidelines and procedures as well as the comprehensive planning processes. The Forsyth County Department of Planning and Development has compiled an Application Guide for Public Hearings that provides detailed instructions on submitting the different types of plans reviewed and permitted by the department. This guide, along with all ordinances and plans, is available for public review in the department office and online via the Forsyth County website.

Forsyth County operates under the commission-county manager form of government. Forsyth County has five commissioners elected to four year terms. The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners meet in regular session twice a month and hold called work sessions twice a month. During these called work sessions, staff engages the Board of Commissioners and answers any questions regarding specific developments, the development process or planning policy. The Forsyth County Planning Commission is comprised of five members, each appointed by the County Commissioner for every district. The Planning Commission holds meetings once a month and work sessions a week before the regularly scheduled meeting. These work sessions are designated times when staff is available for commission members to answer any questions regarding specific developments or the development process.

The Forsyth County Department of Planning and Development has procedures in place to help educate citizens and ensure that all interested parties are made aware of new developments, the development process and any changes made to ordinances and regulations. Each rezoning, conditional use, home occupation and sketch plat application has a public participation component. This component entails notification of all adjacent property owners, those listed on the interested parties notification list kept on file by the department and all applicable home owner associations. Signs are posted on the properties describing the action being taken and the public hearing dates. All public hearings are open to the public and notices are published in a newspaper of general circulation in Forsyth County at least fifteen days, but not more than forty-five days, prior to the date of the public hearing. Notices are also posted at the meeting location and on the Forsyth County website. All public hearings are recorded on video and available for viewing on the county's website. All public hearing minutes and draft code, ordinance or comprehensive plan changes are available for viewing on the county's website as well.

During the last complete update to the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan, numerous public hearings and subarea meetings were held to gain citizen input into the content of the plan and to gain insight as to how residents and other members of the community envisioned the future growth of the county. When minor updates were made to the Comprehensive Plan, public hearings were held to educate the community and receive feedback on the proposed changes. Public hearings will also be held to inform the community and receive feedback on the proposed partial update of the Comprehensive Plan in a similar fashion. When the full update of the Comprehensive Plan is undertaken, community meetings, public hearings and other methods of public

participation will be undertaken to ensure that as much of the community as possible will be able to participate in the update.

### Appropriate Businesses

*A community should encourage the development and expansion of businesses and industries that are compatible with the goals and resources of the area. Communities should not only consider the job skills required, but the sustainability, cohesiveness with other economic linkages, impact on resources, the potential for expansion and the creation of higher skilled job opportunities of a business or industry as well.*

The Development Authority of Forsyth County, in conjunction with Forsyth County government and the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce, has completed the first target market analysis for the City of Cumming and Forsyth County. This analysis covers strengths, challenges and opportunities for both the city and county, which was incorporated into the development of the county's business strategy plan. The analysis determined that despite the recent decline in activity, the sagging national housing market and dipping consumer confidence, Forsyth County has and will continue to experience growth due to factors such as its location within the Atlanta metropolitan region, its workforce talents and lower tax rate in comparison to surrounding jurisdictions. The business analysis strategy has taken into consideration not only the factors listed above, but also input from the community, the existing economic base and desired industries as well as national industrial trends.

Pharmaceutical manufacturing and testing is a new growth industry target that the county is interested in pursuing in addition to companies that create sustainable products and an environmentally 'green' footprint based on their product and corporate philosophy.

The County has a mixed job base, ranging from professional and business services, which constitute forty-three percent of the current workforce, to manufacturing that also holds a strong presence in the county by comprising twelve percent of the current workforce. Other job classifications include but are not limited to financial services, education and health services, leisure and hospitality, trade, transportation and utilities.

### Employment Options

*A community should strive to provide a range of job types to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.*

The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce operates a small business center, which develops programs and initiatives to assist the local small business community. Forsyth has been labeled as Georgia's 30th Entrepreneur Friendly County and, through the Chamber, it offers year round small business classes such as long range strategic planning, job market trends and advertising 101, in addition to a business expo and entrepreneur conference.

In 2008, the Chamber created the community's first small business accelerator that is designed to seek out small business owners and entrepreneurs who are established and ready to grow in their business. This service also provides mentoring and business coaching through community busi-

ness leaders and stakeholders to foster business growth and an initiative centered around new job creation and community based "economic gardening."

Forsyth County is a community offering a diverse field of employment opportunities from technology to manufacturing. Because of the highly educated and easily trainable workforce, thirty international companies are currently housed within the county. Corporations such as Scientific Games, Inc., United Parcel Services Worldwide Data Center and Alltel, have found their home in Forsyth County. Forsyth County residents enjoy a variety of employment options from entrepreneurial start up companies to Fortune 500 firms.

### Housing Options

*A community should be able to provide a variety of housings options such as size, cost and density so that those who work in the community can also live there. Through the provision of housing options, a community will promote a mixture of incomes and age groups in areas where these populations would otherwise become segregated and isolated.*

In January of 2008, Forbes Magazine, an American publishing and media company, listed Forsyth County as the thirteenth richest county in the nation and the richest county in Georgia, based on 2006 U.S. Census data regarding median household income. With a median household income of \$83,682 and housing prices at \$1 million dollars for a six bedroom house, Forsyth County does not have enough housing choices for its low income population. Although the majority of the people who work in the county also reside there, housing stock is limited for those with low median income levels.

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code allows multi-family housing in three residential zoning districts. There are currently vacant parcels within the county that have been rezoned to one of the above districts and are awaiting development. There are also provisions for both a planned unit development district and master planned district that promote mixed-use communities, which may incorporate multi-family units. These developments are intended to provide for neo-traditional development and allow design flexibility including vertical integration of residential and commercial uses with no minimum lot size requirements.

The Forsyth County Unified Development Code allows for attached and detached accessory apartments in most residential districts, with some requiring a conditional use permit. The county's code contains specific supplementary regulations that are required in the development of these structures once they have been approved.

Although the county does not currently meet the need for affordable housing nor does it sponsor any programs that focus on households with special needs, the county, along with North Fulton, Cherokee and Dawson Counties merged to form Habitat for Humanity-North Central Georgia in 2006. To date, Habitat for Humanity-North Central Georgia has built over 250 homes throughout their service area.



## Educational Opportunities

*Education and training opportunities should be readily available in each community. Residents should have access to programs and facilities that will enable them to acquire improved job skills, keep pace with technological advances or pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.*

Lanier Technical College serves as the leading workforce development resource for eight counties, including Forsyth County, by providing adult education and technical training to support the economic development and well being of the community. Lanier Technical College has a branch located in Forsyth County, which provides an economic development program called Quick Start. This program specializes in customized workforce training free of charge to qualified businesses in Georgia. Today, the program is one of the state's key assets for supporting new and expanding industries by training and educating residents within the community to successfully obtain and excel in various employment opportunities.

Forsyth County firmly believes that investment in educational infrastructure is the foundation for success with both its businesses and residents. Lanier Technical College provides technical certificates of credit, technical diplomas and associate of applied science degree programs. North Georgia College and State University emphasizes strong liberal arts, pre-professional, professional and graduate programs, including a satellite Masters in Business Administration (MBA) program in the City of Cumming.

Being located on Georgia's science and technology corridor, Forsyth County hosts a number of renowned corporate locations including Tyson Poultry, Inc., Johnson Controls, Scientific Games International, Siemens Energy and Automation, Inc.. College graduates within the county have a wealth of opportunity to obtain professional employment without relocating outside of the area.

## Regional Solutions

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

Forsyth County is part of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC), which was created by local governments in 1962. The GMRC offers a variety of services to 51 local governments, which includes 13 counties and 38 municipalities. The county also participates in the Lanier Joint Development Authority, administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with neighboring Hall and Cherokee Counties. Regional partnerships are rewarded in the State of Georgia in the form of additional job tax credits for companies hiring new employees. The Development Authority was created in 1995 and is an additional development tool for the community.

Forsyth County is within the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and participates in the implementation of the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA), which was enacted in 1973 by the Georgia General Assembly to establish a 2000-foot corridor on both sides of the Chattahoochee River from Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek. In 1998, an additional 36 miles of corridor was added to MRPA. GMRC oversees the plan to maintain the corridor and reviews

all development proposals along the river for compliance.

Forsyth County falls under the non-attainment area of the Atlanta region for ozone and particulate matter, which means that the county exceeds the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Because the county is classified as a non-attainment area, all developments of regional impact (DRIs) are reviewed by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to reduce negative impacts on the county's transportation network.

The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce is a joint effort between the city and the county to provide information and resources to the citizens both within the city limits and in the unincorporated areas. The Chamber provides information on community events, education, economic development, new arrivals and sporting events. The county thinks regionally and is involved with various regional organizations as mentioned above as well as the Atlanta Regional Commission and Appalachian Regional Commission. The county's affiliation and participation with these organizations allows it to incorporate planning strategies that benefit its residents and the surrounding communities.

## Regional Cooperation

*In order to ensure that ventures, such as protection of shared natural resources or the development of transportation networks are successful, regional cooperation should be encouraged. Such cooperation is also helpful when setting priorities, identifying shared needs and finding collaborative solutions.*

Although Forsyth County and the City of Cumming participate in a joint chamber of commerce endeavor, they do not work together on comprehensive planning issues. For the past twenty years, there has been a joint agreement between the two jurisdictions in regards to the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funding where a percentage of the collected tax revenues is agreed upon and distributed between the two parties.

In 2003, Forsyth County and the City of Cumming updated their Service Delivery Strategy. The county will be initiating another update required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs that must be adopted by mid-year 2012.

Forsyth County periodically initiates contact with local governments and institutions and fully participates with other jurisdictions regarding regional issues such as water quality and conservation.

In an effort to maintain and strengthen contacts with neighboring jurisdictions, a representative from the county participates in routine meetings with the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission (GMRC), the Land Use Coordinating Committee (LUCC) through the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), in addition to other agency meetings as necessary.

## Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities

The following represents issues and opportunities for Forsyth County as identified through the Comprehensive Plan partial update process. This list also incorporates concerns as noted within departmental master plans. Forsyth County shall consider this inventory during future activities as it moves forward with the Comprehensive Plan full update in 2012.

### Population

#### Issues

- Significant population growth has put a strain on the county's infrastructure. Water, sewer, roads and public services including police, fire, schools and parks, have all been affected because of the county's rapid growth.
- Forsyth's population growth has exceeded that of the state and nation for nearly two decades. From 1990 to 2000 the county's population increased by approximately 123%. From 2000 to 2009 the population is estimated to have increased again by approximately 77%.
- The rise in population has increased the demand for housing leading to large residential developments.
- Continued rapid increase in population could necessitate adjustments of county regulations, which may lead to future moratoria on development while code and policy modifications are being completed.
- The U.S. Bureau of the Census shows Forsyth County as having a lack of diversity in the community. American Indians and African Americans are the two ethnic groups least represented.
- The USDA Economic Research Service indicated that the number of residents 60 years and older grew by 15% in the county between 1990 and 2000 due to immigration.

#### Opportunities

- An increase in population also means an increase in revenue for the county via taxes.
- The increase in population enhances the possibility of a more diverse community.
- Based on the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census data, the prominent age group in the county is between 35 to 39 years, with a median age of 34.6 years. This could be beneficial to both new and existing industries that are looking to establish or increase their employee base.
- County residents are categorized as having higher disposable incomes than those in the surrounding jurisdictions. Based on the U.S. Census Bureau of Economic Analysis, the per capita income in 2006 for Forsyth County, Georgia and the U.S. was \$31,560, \$23,567 and \$25,267, respectively.

## Housing

#### Issues

- The county currently needs additional affordable housing opportunities for its low income residents.
- The county is currently facing an excess inventory in the housing market.
- The county currently needs more mixed use communities in selected areas of the county.

#### Opportunities

- Forsyth County can address the need for affordable housing through future code revisions that may incorporate an incentive-based provision for the development of workforce housing.
- Based on the county's 2010 GIS data, approximately 16% of its jurisdiction is classified as undeveloped land, which would help to meet the needs of future growth and development. The current excess housing inventory will be immediately available as the market improves throughout the metro region.
- The county's Unified Development Code provides guidance and regulations for the future development of both mixed use and neo-traditional communities via its residential, planned unit and master plan districts. Code revisions can continue to be made as needed to incentivize mixed use developments.

## Natural and Cultural Resources

#### Issues

- As one of the 10 fastest growing counties in the nation since 2000 based on population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, pressure on natural resources continues to grow.
- The recent extreme drought conditions across the state have severely impacted Lake Sidney Lanier as both a water supply reservoir and a recreation destination for county as well as Atlanta metropolitan area residents and visitors.
- Existing and future development within the county will have long term impacts on rivers and streams including the Chattahoochee and Etowah Rivers.
- Future development will impact viewsheds across the county due to topographical variability found throughout the jurisdiction.
- The continual rezoning and development of former agricultural property is reducing the amount of farmland and pastures.
- Existing tree canopy continues to be reduced from land clearing for new development.
- Impervious surfaces are increasing from the expansion of residential and commercial

development.

- Demolition of historic resources occurs as property is rezoned and then cleared for development.
- Archeological resources may be compromised as land is developed, particularly along the Etowah River where such resources have been documented.
- Agricultural outbuildings and historic landscapes are in jeopardy with substantial increases in population that necessitate more land development.

**Opportunities**

- Forsyth County can continue opportunities to educate the public on water conservation.
- Forsyth County can implement additional water conservation measures such as potential code changes that address drought tolerant landscapes that will aide in addressing the regional wide issue of drought conditions and the need to safeguard water supply.
- Forsyth County may pursue the construction of a future water reservoir along the Etowah River as a long term solution to water supply concerns.
- Forsyth County will continue to evaluate the tiered water rate system in order to sustain conservation efforts.
- Forsyth County has completed an initial survey for groundwater wells and will move forward with test drilling in the future. The use of groundwater wells would supplement water supplies during peak use times when surface supplies are down.
- Forsyth County will maintain cooperation with agencies involved with water supply and conservation including the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water District, City of Cumming, the state Environmental Protection Division and other Atlanta metropolitan jurisdictions.
- Forsyth County has code requirements in place to protect state waters, floodplains and wetlands. In addition, both the Chattahoochee and Etowah Rivers have protection overlay districts to comply with state law. The county will continue to refine code requirements to ensure adequate protection of water resources.
- Forsyth County has created a greenspace acquisition plan to address areas that would be suitable for purchase through a voter approved greenspace bond as well as donations. One of the criteria for selection is the preservation of scenic resources. The county still has a substantial amount of agriculturally zoned property from which conserved open space can be created.
- Initiatives to preserve open space and scenic viewsheds include the future implementation of the master plan for the Sawnee Mountain Preserve, which consists of 963 acres. Other

plans within the county include upcoming phases of the Big Creek Greenway, Sawnee Mountain Greenway and the implementation of greenways along the Etowah and Chattahoochee Rivers.

- Forsyth County will be able to move forward to expand the greenspace plan in order to incorporate data from the greenspace acquisition study to identify areas suitable for open space preservation.
- Forsyth County’s tree ordinance and other code measures require the replacement of trees when new development clears existing vegetation in order to generate an adequate canopy over the long-term. Future donations to the county tree fund and pursuing grant opportunities can assist with tree plantings throughout the county to increase tree canopy to supplement code requirements.
- Impervious surface is limited with maximum building coverage code regulations as well as requirements for large scale retail to provide pervious parking if exceeding the minimum parking space requisite. There is further opportunity to address impervious surfaces through potential code revisions.
- Forsyth County can continue to utilize resources available from Georgia Mountains Regional Commission to determine the feasibility of a historic preservation program.

**Community Facilities and Services**

**Issues**

- Private sewer systems could fail, resulting in environmental contamination or Forsyth County taking over the systems sooner than expected.
- Topography makes the provision of infrastructure to the Lake Lanier drainage basin difficult.
- Currently, there are a large number of individual on-site sewage disposal systems in the Lake Lanier drainage basin. Septic tanks are considered a consumptive use by the proposed Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Basin (ACF) Compact, which means that the water used is not credited as a return to the watershed from which it was withdrawn. Also, many of the existing septic tanks in this basin are located in close proximity to the primary drinking source, Lake Sidney Lanier, and contamination is a potential problem.
- In those areas currently not serviced by public sewer, there is the possibility of water supply contamination due to septic tank failure. As development increases in areas that do not have access to public sewer, eventual contamination of the water supply may occur from failed septic systems.
- Year to year fluctuations in population and demand have made it difficult to anticipate future infrastructure demands.
- Drought conditions continue to be a possibility throughout Forsyth County and the entire

southeast region.

- Over the short term, one to two years, rainfall has a larger impact on water demands in Forsyth County than either population growth or conservation.
- Projections from the Water Master Plan show that between 2005 and 2025, the population connected to the Forsyth County service area could increase by up three times from approximately 99,000 to 340,000. Infrastructure planning will need to accurately anticipate this increase in order to properly serve an enlarged population. Updates to the water distribution plan must be executed as conditions change in order to meet future demand.
- Forsyth County's current water contract with the City of Cumming ends in 2012. This contract will have to be renegotiated in the future. The Water Distribution System Master Plan does consider future scenarios with and without water being supplied by the City of Cumming.
- Receiving water from neighboring counties could be costly for Forsyth County.

**Opportunities**

- Forsyth County can take over private sewer systems and increase projected future capacity either by contracting with the current systems' owners or by using revenue and tap fees to purchase the present assets at the plants and assume ownership.
- Forsyth County can continue the current practice of using treated wastewater effluent for irrigation and expand the service area in the future.
- Forsyth County can continue studying the advantages and disadvantages of returning treated effluent to the Chattahoochee River and Lake Sidney Lanier.
- Persisting drought conditions could create community support for Forsyth County to research more efficient ways of storing and conserving water.
- Receiving water from neighboring counties could be very beneficial for Forsyth County in times of emergency.
- Forsyth County will expand and upgrade its water and sewer infrastructure in accordance with master plans or as directed and approved by the county's Water and Sewer Authority.

**Economic Development**

**Issues**

- The lack of public transportation in the county is a concern for some businesses relocating into the area.
- With the county's rapid growth and current water issues, it may be difficult for new businesses to sustain long-term returns on their investments.

**Opportunities**

- Forsyth County is located off of SR 400, approximately 30 miles from the City of Atlanta. It is strategically placed along Georgia's science and technology corridor, which is a benefit in attracting new corporations.
- The county has relatively low taxes compared to other jurisdictions. Based on data provided by the Georgia Department of Revenue, during the past five years, the county collected an average of \$130 per capita in property taxes, which is less than the average of \$163 per capita collected by similarly-sized counties within the state.
- The county has several business parks that are available for new corporations to quickly move into the area.
- Because the county has much to offer new businesses in terms of current growth, investment trends and a high quality of life, it has the advantage of being selective when recruiting firms.
- Amenities such as proximity to the mountains and the City of Atlanta, the availability of higher education and recreational possibilities, make the county very appealing to both first and second career workers.
- The county has nine state designated truck routes that could serve as a catalyst for future industrial growth.
- The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce has a wide variety of programs that assist both entrepreneurs and Fortune 500 firms.
- The county's decision making body exhibits a 'pro-business' mind set by encouraging new businesses into the area through accommodating codes and policies.

**Land Use**

**Issues**

- There is a need for more mixed use developments that optimize pedestrian connectivity and vertical integration of commercial and residential uses. The location of these developments would require specific analysis to ensure adequate infrastructure and compatibility with surrounding land uses since such uses would be appropriate in some, not all, areas of the county.

- Forsyth County does not currently provide an extensive sidewalk network.
- More safe routes to schools are needed to promote alternative modes of transportation for school age children and teenagers.
- Forsyth County does not offer design guidebooks that illustrate desired development forms for new developments.
- Conservation subdivisions do not presently represent a substantial portion of residential housing projects in subareas where rural character is an objective.
- Open space, although required by the code, does not necessarily result in usable and contiguous areas.
- Natural and cultural resources need to be protected as the county continues to experience rapid population growth. As part of this protection, green infrastructure should continue to be identified and linked with regional planning initiatives.

**Opportunities**

- There is a need for more mixed use developments that optimize pedestrian connectivity and vertical integration of commercial and residential uses. The location of these developments would require specific analysis to ensure adequate infrastructure and compatibility with surrounding land uses since such uses would be appropriate in some, not all, areas of the county.
- Forsyth County does not currently provide an extensive sidewalk network.
- More safe routes to schools are needed to promote alternative modes of transportation for school age children and teenagers.
- There is a need for more mixed use developments that optimize pedestrian connectivity and vertical integration of commercial and residential uses. The location of these developments would require specific analysis to ensure adequate infrastructure and compatibility with surrounding land uses since such uses would be appropriate in some, not all, areas of the county.
- Forsyth County does not currently provide an extensive sidewalk network.
- More safe routes to schools are needed to promote alternative modes of transportation for school age children and teenagers.
- Forsyth County does not offer design guidebooks that illustrate desired development forms for new developments.
- Conservation subdivisions do not presently represent a substantial portion of residential housing projects in subareas where rural character is an objective.

- Open space, although required by the code, does not necessarily result in usable and contiguous areas.
- Natural and cultural resources need to be protected as the county continues to experience rapid population growth. As part of this protection, green infrastructure should continue to be identified and linked with regional planning initiatives.

**Transportation System**

**Issues**

- Traffic congestion is prevalent along some arterial roads in Forsyth County during peak hours.
- Developments along the county line have resulted in congestion problems on major county roads.
- Recent trends indicate that, geographically, residential growth continues to outpace employment growth, thereby increasing the jobs/housing balance.
- The limited number of east/west connectors in Forsyth County causes congestion on these facilities. East/West travel is generated in large measure by trips from adjacent counties connecting with SR 400.
- Forsyth County has nine state designated truck routes and an additional nine county roads that serve as truck routes. Truck traffic contributes to congestion along the 2-lane sections of roadway throughout Forsyth County.
- The increase in traffic volume on all roads indicates the need to have a balanced program that addresses the needs of both county roads, which are the responsibility of the county and state roads that are the responsibility of GDOT.
- In 2010, those roads in Forsyth County with segments having a traffic volume to road capacity (v/c) ratio of 0.85 and greater are state routes except for McGinnis Ferry Road, Old Alpharetta Road, James Burgess Road and Buford Dam Road. Forsyth County has little control over the type and timeline for improvements on state routes.
- Projections show that 37% of Forsyth County roadways will operate at a level of service (LOS) of “E” or “F” in 2030 even after currently funded roadway improvements are completed. If funding shortfalls arise and some projects are not completed, those roadways could experience increased congestion resulting in additional county-wide traffic problems. Even if funding is secured and the 2030 planned road improvements are completed, over 22% will operate at unacceptable levels of service (LOS “E” or “F”).
- All but four of the Forsyth County roads that are projected to operate at a LOS of “E” or “F” in 2030 are state routes. Those four county routes identified are Old Atlanta Road, Burruss Mill Road, Waldrip Road and Old Alpharetta Road.

- As state, federal, and local government budgets experience shortfalls, funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects could be hard to find.
- The Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation & Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan identifies three roadways in Forsyth County as located in the Strategic Bicycle Corridor: SR 9, McGinnis Ferry Road and Buford Highway. In regards to the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) network, the level of accommodation for bicycles and pedestrians on these roads is below average.
- It could be difficult for Forsyth County to coordinate connections with the Big Creek Greenway in the City of Alpharetta due to large areas of privately owned land bisecting the routes.
- Funding shortfalls and intergovernmental disputes could delay or eliminate the possibility of the coordination and continuation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities among local governments.

**Opportunities**

- Forsyth County has representation on the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). The TCC, along with the ARC Transportation Division planning staff, is responsible for providing technical advice to the Transportation and Air Quality Committee (TAQC) regarding metropolitan or multi-jurisdictional transportation matters potentially affecting the Atlanta Region.
- The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) area located in southern Forsyth County provides opportunities for mixed use development that could decrease traffic in and around Forsyth County.
- Several federal and state funding sources are available that Forsyth County could potentially use for transportation improvements. Funding sources include: National Highway System (NHS) for major roadways; Recreational Trails Program (RTP) for the creation, rehabilitation and maintenance of multi-use trails; Surface Transportation Programs (STP) for improvements for roads classified as urban collectors or higher; programs that improve quality of life such as Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) projects; Safe Routes to Schools for pedestrian and bicycle projects within two miles of a school; and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs such as Section 5310, Elderly and Persons with Disability.
- The Forsyth County Department of Planning and Development shall continue periodic reviews of the Forsyth County Unified Development Code to improve and expand upon bicycle and pedestrian facility requirements within developments.
- Forsyth County planners, engineers and geographic information systems (GIS) personnel have the opportunity to continue working together as a technical resource for the implementation and future updates of the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan.
- As more roadways in Forsyth County are added, widened or reconstructed, the opportunity

arises for the implementation of projects outlined in the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan.

- The Forsyth County Board of Education can continue implementing programs that may make the school system eligible for Safe Routes to Schools funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).
- The infrastructure is either currently in place or shall be in place by 2030 so that the majority of Forsyth County school students will have the option to walk or bike to school.
- Forsyth County has the opportunity to increase the level of accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians on the three roadways identified in the Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan through the addition of sidewalks, multi-use trails or bicycle friendly shoulders. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan calls for sidewalks and multi-use paths to be installed over the entire length or portions of these roadways by the year 2025.
- Forsyth County can remain eligible for funding from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for projects such as the construction of sidewalks in the McFarland-Stoney Point Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study area by demonstrating progress toward implementation of the LCI plan.
- Forsyth County should encourage the development of additional park and ride lots as well as additional public transit programs to supplement the Dial-A-Ride bus service.
- Forsyth County and Cherokee County can work together to ensure the continuation of the signed shared roadways for bicyclists along Drew Campground Road and Bentley Road, and the continuation of the Etowah River Greenway through both counties.
- Forsyth County and the City of Milton can coordinate bicycle and pedestrian facility connections at Bethany Bend, Morris Road, Francis Road and Lively Road.
- Forsyth County and the City of Alpharetta can work together to coordinate bicycle and pedestrian facility connections at McGinnis Ferry Road, Union Hill Road and Windward Parkway as well as connections for the Big Creek Greenway.
- Forsyth County has the opportunity to continue bicycle and pedestrian facility projects along McGinnis Ferry Road, Brookwood Road and Peachtree Parkway currently being completed in the City of Johns Creek.
- Forsyth County and Gwinnett County can coordinate the construction of a multi-use trail along the abandoned steel truss bridge in Settles Bridge Park.
- Forsyth County, Gwinnett County, the City of Johns Creek and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area should take steps to ensure the creation of an integrated system of trails along the Chattahoochee River.

- Forsyth County has the opportunity to continue bicycle and pedestrian facilities from Hall County along Browns Bridge Road (SR 369) and Dawsonville Highway (SR 53).
- Forsyth County can create a scenic route connection with Dawson County along SR 9 by continuing bicycle access from the existing signed shared roadway along Bannister Road north to SR 9 into Dawson County where SR 9 is frequently used by bicyclists.

### Intergovernmental Coordination

#### Issues

- Forsyth County and the City of Cumming do not prepare a joint comprehensive plan. This could lead to discrepancies in future plans for both jurisdictions, especially in those areas of unincorporated Forsyth County most likely to be annexed into the City of Cumming.
- The City of Cumming challenged Forsyth County in two separate lawsuits in regards to the legality of the SPLOST VI resolution before and after the February 2008 election where the measure was approved by Forsyth County citizens. An intergovernmental agreement between the City of Cumming and Forsyth County was reached in May 2008 to resolve the dispute. Future challenges concerning SPLOST funds between the city and the county could lead to additional legal interventions and potential funding shortfalls for the county.

#### Opportunities

- The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce can continue to improve their efforts to promote economic development as well as brownfield and greyfield projects.
- Forsyth County and the City of Cumming can enhance the marketing of the area in terms of agri-business and cultural events through the Georgia 400 Hospitality Highway tourist campaign.
- Forsyth County has the opportunity to expand the existing relationships with higher education institutions to make additional programs available to the residents of Forsyth County through satellite campuses and study programs.
- Forsyth County can coordinate with adjacent communities to create an interconnected bicycle and pedestrian facilities network including the Etowah River Greenway, the Big Creek Greenway and a proposed greenway along the Chattahoochee River.
- Forsyth County can continue working with adjacent jurisdictions to ensure the protection of the region's natural resources such as Lake Sidney Lanier, the Chattahoochee River and the Etowah River.
- The Forsyth County Water and Sewer Department can extend the current intergovernmental agreements that supply Forsyth County with water and wastewater treatment.
- Forsyth County can maintain its role in regional and state organizations such as the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission (GMRC), the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the Georgia Regional Transportation

Authority (GRTA) and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water District.

### Policies

The initial policies presented below aim to incorporate implementation practices necessary to address the identified potential issues and opportunities.

#### Housing

- We will continue to seek opportunities to expand affordable housing opportunities to assist those who work in the county with a viable option to live in the county.
- We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
- We will promote the concept of 'lifecycle' housing within the community by encouraging the development of a variety of housing types, styles and price ranges.
- We will encourage interactive neighborhoods where people have easy access to parks, common open space, residences and businesses through walkways, bike paths and roads.
- We will work to ensure that high quality housing is constructed and maintained in the county.
- We will encourage the development of senior living facilities in order to keep up with the changing demographics of our community.
- We will continue to encourage subdivision designs that highlight the layout of the land and that are screened from the major roadways with natural buffers or geographical features.

#### Natural and Cultural Resources

- We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of surface and ground water sources.
- We will recommend more compact development in order to preserve natural and cultural resources.
- We will be committed to preserving greenspace and meaningful open space.
- We will maintain tree replacement efforts including the pursuit of funding, when available, for tree planting projects.
- We will encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces including the use of pervious parking surfaces, where appropriate.
- We will support cultural resource preservation education in order to promote available preservation options for property owners.
- We will support waste reduction and recycling initiatives throughout the county.

#### Community Facilities and Services

- Our community will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new or expanded facilities.
- We will protect existing infrastructure investments by encouraging infill development and compact development patterns.
- We will ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.
- We will monitor development within our community to ensure that new areas of growth are served by public infrastructure.

- We will continue to coordinate provisions for public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact development.
- The community will use sequential, phased extension of utilities and services to encourage rational expansion of development to areas immediately contiguous to already developed areas of the community.
- Our community will use planned infrastructure expansion to support development in areas identified in our comprehensive plan as suitable for such development.
- We will continue to invest in accessible parks, open space, recreational facilities and public gathering places to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.
- We will support the local school board and encourage school location decisions that sustain the community's overall growth and development plans.
- We will continue to ensure that new and existing development is supported adequately by necessary infrastructure, particularly roads, schools, public safety protection and wastewater treatment systems.
- We will continue to encourage high design standards for community facilities to generate local community pride and to establish standards for quality private sector development within the community.
- The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office will continue to serve and protect the citizens and visitors of the county through dedication, professionalism, active cooperation with the community and respect for human dignity.
- The Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department will continue to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the county by providing quality programs, facilities and opportunities.
- The Forsyth County Board of Education will continue to provide quality education, programs and facilities to the citizens of the county.
- We will continue to investigate water conservation measures for the community to offset prolonged drought conditions.

### Economic Development

- We will seek to balance the supply of housing and employment in our community and consider their location in relation to each other.
- We will explore alternatives to improve the county's existing Dial-A-Ride program and other options to promote public transit opportunities.
- We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that enhance our economy.
- We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.
- We will continue to partner with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce and other entities to find solutions to establishing diverse, long-term employment opportunities and to advance the economic development of the county.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will target reinvestment in declining, existing corridors to further encourage private sector redevelopment and accommodate future growth.
- We will continue to work closely with the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce,

citizens and land developers to promote the county as an attractive area for high tech corporations to locate.

### Land Use

- We will be committed to encouraging pedestrian scaled developments in select areas of the county that are mixed use and focused on multi-modal transportation options.
- We will support walkable and safe neighborhoods. Where appropriate, these neighborhoods should have easy access to a variety of land uses including schools, parks and necessary commercial services without having to travel by motorized vehicle.
- We want design elements that add value to the community and enhance visual context.
- We will endorse compact, nodal commercial development to increase land use efficiency and improve the appearance and functionality of major roadways.
- We will encourage development that is environmentally sensitive, receptive to cultural resource protection and that maintains or creates a sense of place for community members.
- We will preserve portions of the community's rural character through greenspace planning, encouragement of conservation subdivisions and the utilization of functional open space.
- Creation of greenspace is important to our community and we will support land uses that contribute to natural resource conservation.
- We will be committed to providing public gathering spaces, parks and recreational facilities throughout the county.
- We want to contribute to the retention of our historic built environment through the support of cultural resource preservation education for area residents and property owners.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a sense of place for our community.
- We will be open to land development concepts that may be new to our community, but have been tried successfully in other places.

### Transportation System

- We will ensure that prime commercial and industrial acreage is served with the necessary transportation infrastructure.
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will continue to be designed to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities and bicycle routes as well as local vehicular circulation.
- Our new and reconstructed roadways will be appropriately designed, using context sensitive design considerations, to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.
- We will continue to encourage mixed use development and other options to allow residents to live in close proximity to their place of employment.
- We will continue to make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling and other alternative transportation choices.
- We will continue to support the creation of a community-wide pedestrian and bike path network.
- We will encourage new development that supports and ties in well with existing and planned public transit options in the community.
- We will continue to enhance our transportation corridors with upscale design regulations.
- We will explore alternatives to improve the existing Dial-A-Ride program.



- We will explore the possibility of starting a county-wide public transportation system.
- We will continue to coordinate bike and pedestrian trails and greenways with the local school board and neighboring jurisdictions.
- We will continue to implement the McFarland-Stoney Point Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan so that we can provide alternative transportation options in that area.

#### Intergovernmental Coordination

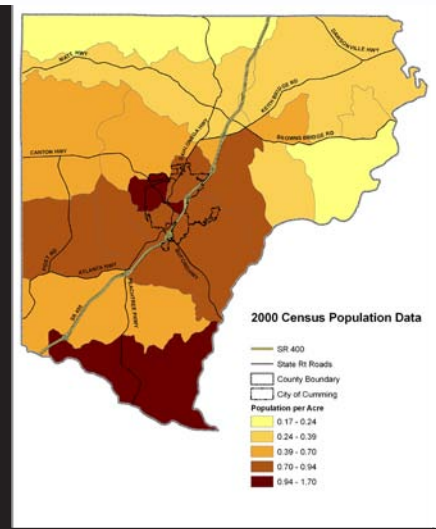
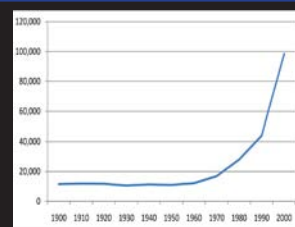
- We will continue to seek opportunities to share services, facilities and information with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- We will continue to share services and information with other public entities within the jurisdiction.
- We will continue to work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues such as growth management, alternative transportation, watershed protection and the provision of services.
- We will continue to pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision making with neighboring jurisdictions.
- We will continue to consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- We will continue to provide input to other public entities when they are making decisions that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.
- We will engage in cooperative planning between the local government and local school board.
- We will continue to support existing educational institutions and encourage development of new opportunities to educate our citizens.
- We will work together to achieve community objectives and promote community involvement in future county improvement efforts.
- We will continue to participate in regional economic development organizations.
- We will continue to participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives.
- We will continue to meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections and discuss issues of regional concern.
- We will continue to think regionally, especially in terms of issues such as land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.

# Population

Age Group	1970	Percent	1980	Percent	1990	Percent	2000	Percent
0 to 4	1,760	10.40%	2,148	7.70%	3,377	7.70%	9,366	9.50%
5 to 9	1,754	10.40%	2,371	8.50%	3,129	7.10%	7,977	8.10%
10 to 14	1,700	10%	2,731	9.80%	2,974	6.70%	6,734	6.80%
15 to 19	1,482	8.80%	2,493	8.90%	3,132	7.10%	5,232	5.30%
20 to 24	1,376	8.10%	2,268	8.10%	3,099	7%	4,171	4.20%
25 to 29	1,351	7.90%	2,265	8.10%	3,915	8.90%	6,583	6.70%
30 to 34	1,110	6.60%	2,509	9%	4,262	9.70%	9,940	10.10%
35 to 39	992	5.90%	1,948	6.90%	3,920	8.90%	11,012	11.20%
40 to 44	936	5.50%	1,804	6.50%	3,578	8.10%	9,002	9.10%
45 to 49	859	5.10%	1,289	4.60%	2,947	6.70%	6,958	7.10%
50 to 54	835	4.90%	1,358	4.90%	2,314	5.20%	6,318	6.40%
55 to 59	771	4.60%	1,241	4.40%	1,892	4.30%	4,850	4.90%



**U S C E N S U S B U R E A U**  
Helping You Make Informed Decisions



## Introduction

Forsyth County has undergone explosive growth for the past four decades. The county experienced a 65.2% increase in 1980 from the previous decade, a 57.7% gain during the 1980s, a 123.2% rise from 1990 to 2000 and an estimated 77.3% upsurge during the first decade of the current millennium. These increases ranked the county nationally as the second and six fastest growing county in the United States during the 1990s and 2000s respectively, with the latter calculation based on the U.S. Bureau of the Census population estimates. These statistics are in keeping with a recent national trend in which outlying counties located within metropolitan statistical areas are outpacing central counties during the 2000-2007 period. This trend has been most prevalent within the South as compared to other regions.

It is through examining the historic, current and potential shifts in population that an opportunity emerges to assess trends in the county's demographic characteristics. When combined with the opportunities and constraints for future growth related to natural and cultural resources, projections can then be made concerning housing, employment opportunities and community facilities needed to support population expansion. From these findings, the county vision and land use patterns can be designed to reflect community goals. This element inventories and analyzes past population tendencies, the county's present status as well as projected future growth patterns. Breakdowns in composition and characteristics are discussed while implications for future development are considered.

## Inventory and Assessment

### Total Population

Forsyth County experienced periods of both population increase and decrease during the twentieth century as shown in Table 1. Prior to 1920, cotton was the main crop grown in the county with the cotton crash of the 1920s being responsible for the 9.6 percent decrease in population during that decade. Throughout the Great Depression, Forsyth County's population was boosted by a general exodus from urbanized centers to rural areas due to the large reduction in urban job opportunities and the appeal of an agrarian economy. The decade of the 1940s caused a slight drain in the county's population attributed to wartime relocations, defense industry job opportunities in large cities and the rapid urbanization of metropolitan Atlanta which fostered a general population decrease in many rural Georgia counties. In addition, farming transformed the county as a turn from cotton to poultry took place after the cotton crash and contributed to the population stabilizing during the 1930s and 1940s before expanding in subsequent decades.

TABLE 1: POPULATION 1900 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
11,550	11,940	11,755	10,624	11,322	11,005	12,170	16,928	27,958	44,083	98,407

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The 1950s brought a gradual population rise, followed by accelerated growth during the 1960s and 1970s with a 39.1% and 65.2% advance in population numbers respectively. The factors which contributed to these increases included improved transportation, the location of industries in the county and the recreational amenities of Lake Sidney Lanier. It was in the course of this

twenty-year period between 1960 and 1980 that Forsyth County began an urbanization process in which housing construction shifted from vacation cottages to permanent residences county-wide, adding to the existent number of year-round dwelling units.

Although the demand for Lake Sidney Lanier's recreational features was an important influence fostering growth in Forsyth County during the 1980s, the expansion of metropolitan Atlanta northward became the predominant reason for growth. In 1980, the density in Forsyth County was 124 persons per square mile, which exceeded the state's total density of 94. This was the first time that the county density surpassed the state total, emphasizing the magnitude of the county's development.

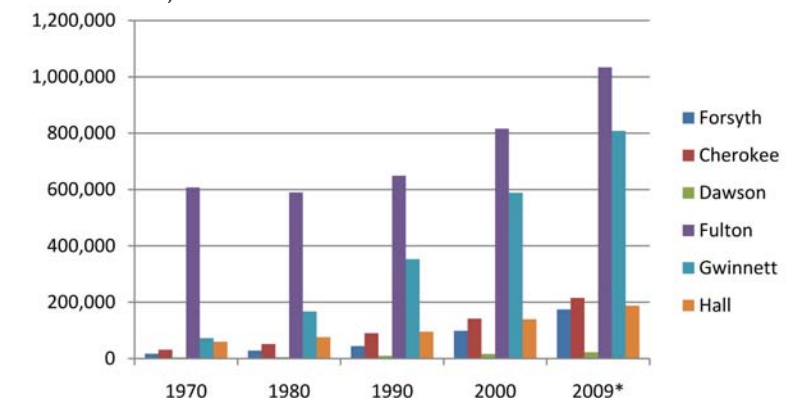
The rapid pace of an advancing population has continued to the present. Table 2 shows the 65.2% county population increase during the 1970s and the 57.7% expansion from 1980 to 1990, exceeding three times the state average for both periods. The 1990s brought more intense levels of growth due to accessibility provided by Georgia State Route 400 that allowed a feasible commute to metropolitan Atlanta from all areas within the county. It was during this decade that Forsyth County surpassed adjacent counties in its rate of growth, represented in Figure 1. This chart shows the county's 123% increase as compared with Gwinnett County's population rise of 66% and Cherokee County's population enlargement by 57%. Despite the high growth percentages, Table 3 shows that Forsyth County continues to be lower in actual population numbers as compared with adjacent, rapidly expanding counties. In 2000, Forsyth County's population was 490,041 less than Gwinnett County. Even with Forsyth County's population surge during the 1990s, the county still had only 98,407 residents in 2000. Of this number, 95.7% of the county's population was living in the unincorporated parts of the county, as indicated in Table 4.

TABLE 2: TOTAL POPULATION AND PERCENT CHANGE 1970 - 2009  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Jurisdiction	1970	1980	1970-1980	1990	1980-1990	2000	1990-2000	2009*	2000-2009*
	Population	Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
Forsyth County	16,928	27,958	65.20%	44,083	57.70%	98,407	123.20%	174,520	77.30%
Georgia	4,589,575	5,463,105	19%	6,478,216	18.60%	8,186,453	26.40%	9,829,211	20.10%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

FIGURE 1: GROWTH RATE COMPARISON 1970 - 2009  
FORSYTH COUNTY, SURROUNDING COUNTIES AND STATE OF GEORGIA



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census  
\* 2009 based on population estimates

TABLE 3: TOTAL POPULATION 1970 - 2009  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

County	1970	1980	1990	2000	2009*	Total Change 2000 - 2009*
Forsyth	16,928	27,958	44,083	98,407	174,520	77.3%
Cherokee	31,059	51,699	90,204	141,903	215,084	51.6%
Dawson	3,639	4,774	9,429	15,999	22,555	41%
Fulton	607,592	589,904	648,951	816,006	1,033,756	26.7%
Gwinnett	72,349	166,903	352,910	588,448	808,167	37.3%
Hall	59,405	75,649	95,428	139,277	187,743	34.8%

\*2009 based on population estimates  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 4: PAST POPULATION DISTRIBUTION 1970 - 2009  
CITY OF CUMMING AND FORSYTH COUNTY

Jurisdiction	1970	Percent	1980	Percent	1990	Percent	2000	Percent	2009*	Percent
City of Cumming	2,031	12%	2,094	7.5%	2,828	6.4%	4,220	4.3%	5,896	3.4%
Unincorporated County	14,897	88%	25,864	92.5%	41,255	93.6%	94,187	95.7%	168,624	96.6%
Total Forsyth County	16,928	100%	27,958	100%	44,083	100%	98,407	100%	174,520	100%

\*2009 based on population estimates  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The robust population expansion of the county continues into the new millennium. For the first decade of this century, the U.S. Bureau of the Census declared Forsyth County as the 6th fastest growing county in the nation with a 77.3% change since the last decennial census in 2000, which is based on population estimates.

As Figure 2 indicates, the highest population densities of the county are in the southern portion of the county with additional buildup within the City of Cumming and areas adjacent to the city according to the decennial census of 2000.

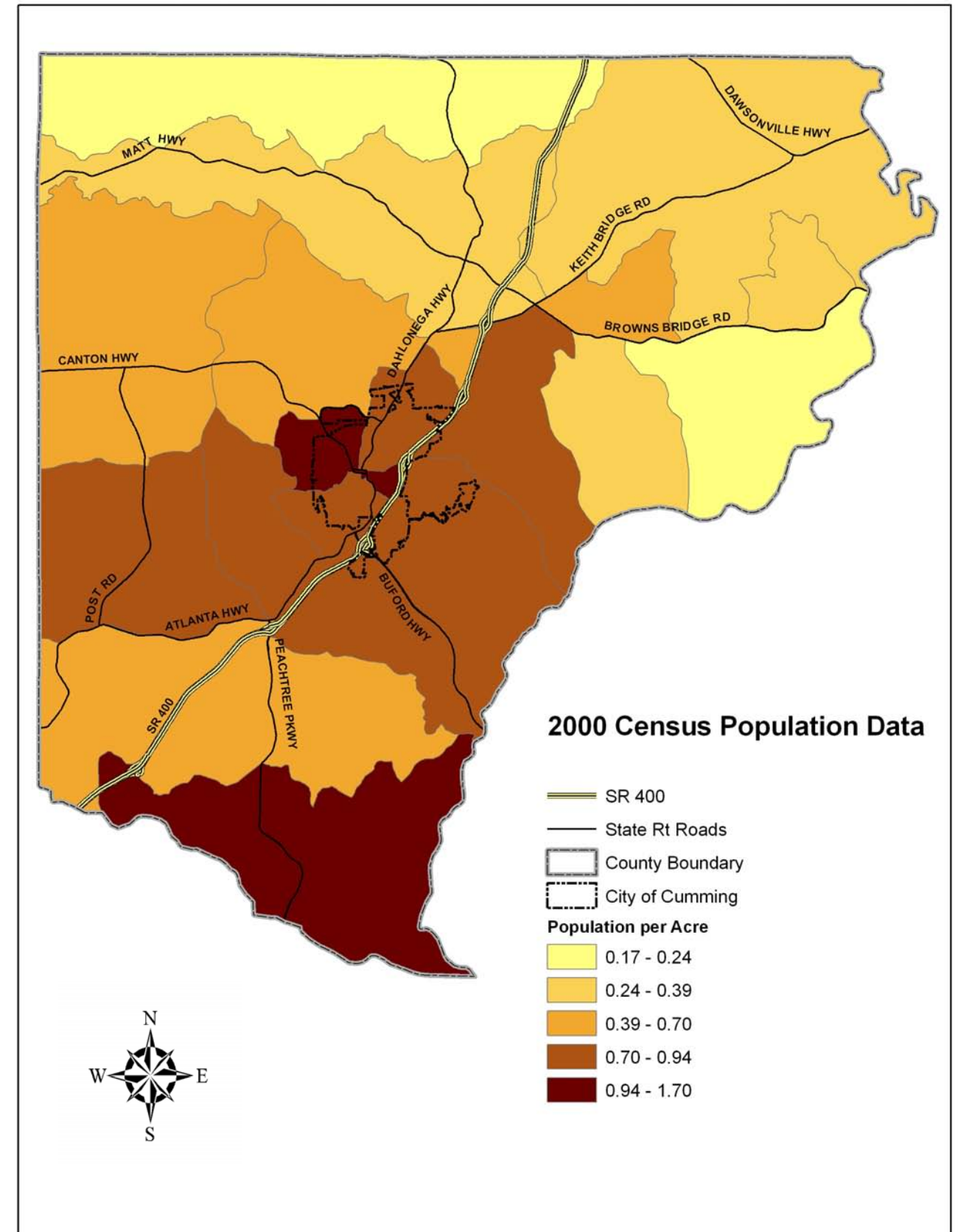
Population projections are shown in Table 5. From the year 2010 to 2030, Forsyth County is expected to add 187,473 new residents to its population, which more than doubles the county population from the current 2010 estimate. Households are projected to rise from 73,316 to 156,677 equaling an increase of 83,361 households by 2030. These significant increases are fueled by available land, economic development opportunities and local as well as regional amenities.

TABLE 5: POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2010 - 2030  
FORSYTH COUNTY

	2010	2015	% Change	2020	% Change	2025	% Change	2030	% Change
Population	183,006	204,966	12%	250,059	22%	305,070	22%	370,479	22%
Households	73,316	80,857	10%	100,262	24%	124,325	24%	156,677	26%

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

FIGURE 2: POPULATION DENSITY OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Daytime Population

The daytime population of Forsyth County is affected by its employment centers and Lake Sidney Lanier. Although a large percentage of the county's residents commute outside the county for employment, the county is also gaining reverse commuters. According to the 2000 census data, 21,470 workers entered Forsyth County from the surrounding areas each day as compared with 4,019 in 1990. The 2000 figure represents half of the county's workforce for that period. In the summer months, recreational opportunities on Lake Sidney Lanier also attract seasonal daytime visitors to the county.

### Households

A household is defined as a group of people, who may or may not be related, occupying a single housing unit. A housing unit may be a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms or a single room that is used as separate living quarters. The number of households in Forsyth County is increasing due to net population increases and declining household size. In 1970, there were a total of 5,126 households in Forsyth County which increased to 34,565 in 2000, representing a 574% expansion over three decades as denoted in Table 6.

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE 1970 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Year	# of Households	Household Size
1970	5,126	3.29
1980	9,395	2.97
1990	15,938	2.75
2000	34,565	2.83

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The average household size has fallen from 3.29 persons per household in 1970 to 2.83 in 2000. By the year 2030, it is projected that there will be 156,677 households in the county. It is expected that Forsyth County will continue to follow the state trend of decreasing household size over the next twenty years.

It is anticipated that the rate of growth in housing units should meet the future demands of the population. Some of the new housing stock will consist of redevelopment and infill for existing developed areas, particularly those locales in proximity to state highways and other significant transportation corridors although a demand shall remain for the conversion of rural land to suburban development to accommodate forthcoming housing needs.

### Age Distribution

The data in Table 7 indicates the age distribution in Forsyth County is changing. The largest percentage of the population was tied between the 0 to 5 and 5 to 9 year old groups in 1970 with 20.8% of the total spread among these two categories. In 1990, the largest percentage, 9.7%, was comprised of the 30 to 34 year old grouping. By 2000, the largest percentage had shifted to persons 35 to 39 years of age with the median age being 34.6, slightly higher than the state, but

a little lower than the regional and national median as denoted in Table 8. Compared with state figures as shown in Table 9, the county is not widely divergent in its age distribution proportions.

By 2030, it is projected that the largest proportion of the population will be 65 years of age and older, as indicated in Table 10, although there will be more individuals within the 30 to 50 year old range when compared with persons under 20 years, between the ages of 20 and 30 years old and 55 years of age and older. The aging of Forsyth County will have an impact on the types of housing and community facilities needed in the county. Smaller homes designed with low maintenance features will most likely increase in popularity while recreational needs will shift from active sports to more passive forms of recreation. The demand for alternative modes of transportation will also rise. Also, an increase in healthcare facilities and associated services should be expected.

Despite the shift in age distribution, the number of school age children will continue to grow as shown in Table 10. This will maintain the demand for additional educational facilities throughout the community.

TABLE 7: HISTORIC AGE DISTRIBUTION 1970 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Age Group	1970	Percent	1980	Percent	1990	Percent	2000	Percent
0 to 4	1,760	10.4%	2,148	7.7%	3,377	7.7%	9,366	9.5%
5 to 9	1,754	10.4%	2,371	8.5%	3,129	7.1%	7,977	8.1%
10 to 14	1,700	10.0%	2,731	9.8%	2,974	6.7%	6,734	6.8%
15 to 19	1,482	8.8%	2,493	8.9%	3,132	7.1%	5,232	5.3%
20 to 24	1,376	8.1%	2,268	8.1%	3,099	7.0%	4,171	4.2%
25 to 29	1,351	7.9%	2,265	8.1%	3,915	8.9%	6,583	6.7%
30 to 34	1,110	6.6%	2,509	9.0%	4,262	9.7%	9,940	10.1%
35 to 39	992	5.9%	1,948	6.9%	3,920	8.9%	11,012	11.2%
40 to 44	936	5.5%	1,804	6.5%	3,578	8.1%	9,002	9.1%
45 to 49	859	5.1%	1,289	4.6%	2,947	6.7%	6,958	7.1%
50 to 54	835	4.9%	1,358	4.9%	2,314	5.2%	6,318	6.4%
55 to 59	771	4.6%	1,241	4.4%	1,892	4.3%	4,850	4.9%
60 to 64	691	4.1%	1,180	4.2%	1,623	3.7%	3,324	3.4%
65+	1,311	7.7%	2,353	8.4%	3,921	8.9%	6,940	7.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,928</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>27,958</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>44,083</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98,407</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 8: MEDIAN AGE COMPARISON 2000

Forsyth County	Georgia	South Region	U.S.
34.6	33.4	35.3	35.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 9: AGE DISTRIBUTION 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Age Distribution	Forsyth County	Georgia
Below 18 years of age	27.9%	26.5%
18 - 24 years of age	6.1%	10.2%
25 - 44 years of age	37.1%	32.4%
45 - 64 years of age	21.8%	21.3%
65 and over	7.1%	9.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 10: PROJECTED AGE DISTRIBUTION 2010 - 2030  
FORSYTH COUNTY

AGE GROUP	2000*	2010	% Change	2020	% Change	2030	% Change
0 to 4	9,366	14,457	7.9%	19,505	7.8%	29,268	7.9%
5 to 9	7,977	13,908	7.6%	18,254	7.3%	27,415	7.4%
10 to 14	6,734	12,993	7.1%	16,004	6.4%	24,452	6.6%
15 to 19	5,232	11,529	6.3%	15,004	6.0%	21,858	5.9%
20 to 24	4,171	11,346	6.2%	17,254	6.9%	22,599	6.1%
25 to 29	6,583	16,105	8.8%	23,255	9.3%	34,084	9.2%
30 to 34	9,940	14,457	7.9%	22,005	8.8%	36,307	9.8%
35 to 39	11,012	14,091	7.7%	19,505	7.8%	32,232	8.7%
40 to 44	9,002	15,189	8.3%	15,504	6.2%	27,045	7.3%
45 to 49	6,958	15,556	8.5%	15,254	6.1%	23,340	6.3%
50 to 54	6,318	11,712	6.4%	15,754	6.3%	17,413	4.7%
55 to 59	4,850	8,601	4.7%	14,503	5.8%	15,560	4.2%
60 to 64	3,324	7,869	4.3%	11,003	4.4%	16,672	4.5%
65+	6,940	15,189	8.3%	27,256	10.9%	42,235	11.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,407</b>	<b>183,006</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>250,059</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>370,479</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*2000 based on U.S. Bureau of the Census counts  
Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

### Racial Distribution

In 1980, there were 169 non-white residents in Forsyth County, as indicated in Table 11. By the year 2000, the non-white population had increased to 4,876, representing 4.9% of the total population. The black population has shown the largest percent change of 4785.7% from 1990 to 2000. The Hispanic population, regardless of race, has increased by 762.5% from 1990 to 2000 as denoted in Table 12. Although this percentage increase is very large, the total proportion of minority groups remains well below state and national figures as indicated in Table 13 and Table 14.

In the future, the non-white population is expected to increase at a faster pace than the white population. The Hispanic population is also expected to continue to expand. However, due to

the overall increase of the total population, the percentage of these minority populations is expected to remain low.

TABLE 11: RACIAL COMPOSITION 1970 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

	1970		1980			1990			2000		
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total	% Change	Population	% of Total	% Change	Population	% of Total	% Change
Total Population	16,928	100%	27,958	100%	65.2%	44,083	100%	57.7%	98,407	100%	123.2%
White	16,908	99.9%	27,789	99.4%	64.4%	43,573	98.9%	56.8%	93,531	95%	114.7%
Black or African American	5	0.02%	1	0	0	14	0.03%	13%	684	0.7%	4785.7%
American Indian & Alaskan Native	4	0.02%	126	0.45%	30.5%	98	0.22%	-22.20%	247	0.25%	152%
Asian or Pacific Islander	7	0.04%	16	0.06%	1.29%	81	0.18%	406.3%	798	0.81%	885.2%
Other	4	0.02%	26	0.09%	5.5%	317	0.72%	1119.2%	2,236	2.27%	605.4%
Two or More Races	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	911	0.93%	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 12: PERSONS OF HISPANIC ORIGIN 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

1980	1990	2000
90	635	5,477

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 13: RACIAL COMPOSITION COMPARISON 2000

Racial Composition	Forsyth County	Georgia	U.S.
White alone	95%	65.1%	75.1%
Black or African American alone	0.7%	28.7%	12.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%
Asian alone	0.8%	2.1%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	0.01%	0.05%	0.14%
Some other race alone	2.3%	2.4%	5.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 14: HISPANIC POPULATION COMPARISON 2000

Forsyth County	Georgia	U.S.
5.6%	5.3%	12.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 15: PROJECTED RACIAL COMPARISON 2010 - 2030  
FORSYTH COUNTY

	2010			2020			2030		
	Population	% of Total	% Change	Population	% of Total	% Change	Population	% of Total	% Change
<b>Total</b>	183,006	100%	111.14%	250,059	100%	36.64%	370,479	100%	50.3%
<b>White</b>	148,784	81.3%	67.24%	201,623	80.63%	35.51%	296,605	80.06%	47.11%
<b>Black or African American</b>	6,222	3.4%	809.68%	8,752	3.5%	40.66%	12,967	3.50%	48.16%
<b>Am Ind</b>	366	0.2%	68.24%	425	0.17%	16.14%	519	0.14%	23.78%
<b>Asian</b>	8,601	4.7%	977.85%	12,253	4.9%	42.45%	18,524	5%	51.18%
<b>Other</b>	4,209	2.3%	531.87%	5,751	2.3%	36.64%	8,521	2.3%	48.16%
<b>Hispanic</b>	14,823	8.1%	170.65%	21,255	8.5%	43.39%	33,343	9%	56.87%

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

### Educational Attainment

The educational attainment level of a population can be an indicator of the types of businesses and industries that are appropriate for a community. In the year 2000, 23.5% of Forsyth County residents over 25 years of age had reached high school graduation, while 6% earned an associate degree, 26.1% held a bachelor's degree and 8.5% achieved a graduate or professional degree as show in Table 16. In comparison, Table 17 and Figure 3 indicate that Dawson, Cherokee and Hall Counties had a higher percentage of adults attaining high school diplomas, but possessed a lower percentage of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The same applies to the state, which has a high school graduation rate of 28.7% and the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher at 24.3%.

TABLE 16: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS 25 YEARS AND OLDER 1990 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Category	1990*	Percent	2000	Percent
Total Adult Population 25 Years & Over	28,372	100%	65,027	100%
Less than 9th Grade	3,734	13.2%	3,617	5.6%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	5,457	19.2%	5,669	8.7%
High School Graduate (Includes GED)	8,698	30.7%	15,272	23.5%
Some College (No Degree)	4,676	16.5%	14,062	21.6%
Associate Degree	1,384	4.9%	3,917	6%
Bachelor's Degree	3,161	11.1%	16,950	26.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1,256	4.4%	5,540	8.5%

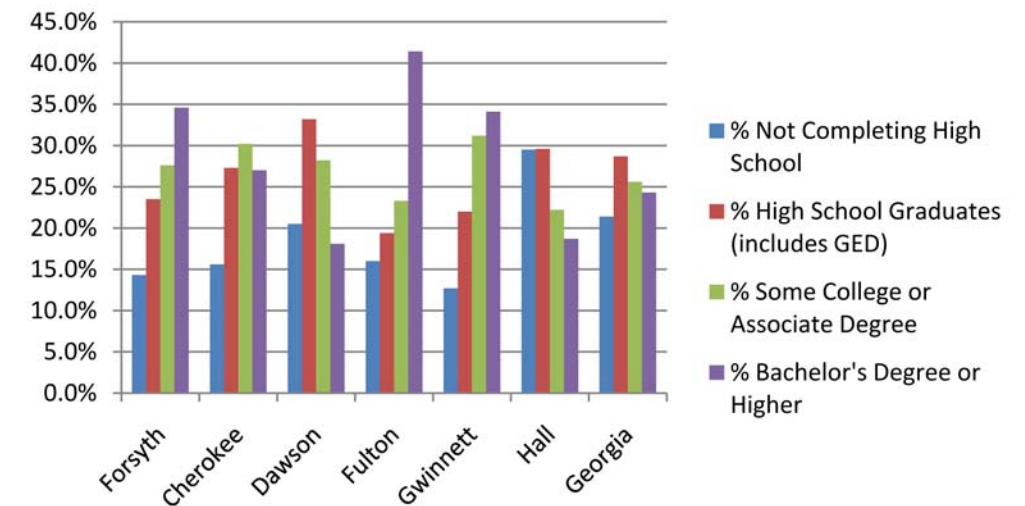
\*Please note that 1990 population total is discrepant with breakdown tally; data is pulled from Summary Tape Files 1 and 3  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 17: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS 25 YEARS AND OLDER 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Education Level	Forsyth	Cherokee	Dawson	Fulton	Gwinnett	Hall	Georgia
% Not Completing High School	14.3%	15.6%	20.5%	16%	12.7%	29.5%	21.4%
% High School Graduates (includes GED)	23.5%	27.3%	33.2%	19.4%	22%	29.6%	28.7%
% Some College or Associate Degree	27.6%	30.2%	28.2%	23.3%	31.2%	22.2%	25.6%
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	34.6%	27%	18.1%	41.4%	34.1%	18.7%	24.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

FIGURE 3: COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS 25 YEARS AND OLDER 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY, SURROUNDING COUNTIES AND STATE OF GEORGIA



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

As indicated in Table 18, the percentage of Forsyth County high school dropouts has decreased from 2.5% in 2007 to 2.0% in 2009 and is lower than state percentages. The high school graduation test scores in Forsyth County have been consistently above state averages; the county's graduation rate has also exceeded the state for the same period. Forsyth County's high level of educational attainment, above average test scores and relatively low dropout rate, indicate that businesses and industries requiring a skilled workforce should be encouraged by the county's educational demographics.

TABLE 18: EDUCATION STATISTICS  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Jurisdiction	Graduation Rate											
	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Forsyth County	83.4				85.8				87.5		
Georgia	72.3				75.4				78.9			
	Georgia High School Graduation Tests Pass Rate											
	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	English	Math	Social Science	Science	English	Math	Social Science	Science	English	Math	Social Science	Science
Forsyth County	98	97	93	84	94	98	93	93	97	99	99	97
Georgia	96	93	88	75	91	93	87	87	92	95	88	91
	High School Dropout Rate											
	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Forsyth County	2.5				2.1				2.0		
Georgia	4.1				3.6				3.8			

\*Graduation rates only reflect the issuance of 'regular diplomas' rather than all diploma levels  
Source: Governor's Office of Student Achievement

### Household Income

Table 19 compares the per capita income and median household income between Forsyth County and the State of Georgia; both the county's per capita income and the median household income continue to be higher than state averages. When compared with neighboring jurisdictions, Table 20 indicates that the county is significantly above other median income figures and is on the upper end of per capita income. In addition, the percentage of those below the poverty level, of the total county population for whom poverty status was determined, represented 5.5% as compared with the state's 13%. Those under the poverty level were primarily among labor force age residents, with a majority of this group being married couple families. The poverty estimate for the county in 2008 from the U.S. Bureau of the Census is 5%, expressing a slight decrease from the last decennial census.

The distribution of households by income group is compared in Table 21. In 2000, the highest percentage of households in Forsyth County earned between \$75,000 and \$99,999, representing 17.6% of the total number of households. This exceeded the state's highest income group range of \$60,000 to \$74,999, which characterized 10.5% of the state total. It also signified an increase for this particular income range from the 1990 census in which it accounted for 9.4% of the county total. Family households have considerably higher median incomes than non-family households; non-family households' highest percentage, 14.1%, is below \$10,000. The U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates that the median household income for 2008 is \$88,626 as compared with the estimated figure of \$50,834 for the state. In 2000, the mean household income was \$82,533 for the county compared with \$56,612 for the state. The high household income can be partially attributed to the rapid development of upscale housing subdivisions made possible through proximate access to major transportation routes such as Georgia State Route 400, allowing skilled workers to commute to areas both within and without the county.

TABLE 19: INCOME PER CAPITA AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

		1980	1990	2000
Income per Capita	Forsyth County	\$6,656	\$15,763	\$29,114
	Georgia	\$6,402	\$13,631	\$21,154
Median Household Income	Forsyth County	\$16,845	\$36,642	\$68,890
	Georgia	\$15,033	\$29,021	\$42,433

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 20: INCOME PER CAPITA AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

County	Per Capita	Median Household Income
Forsyth	\$29,114	\$68,890
Cherokee	\$24,871	\$60,896
Dawson	\$22,520	\$47,486
Fulton	\$30,003	\$47,321
Gwinnett	\$25,006	\$60,537
Hall	\$19,690	\$44,908

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 21: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME GROUP 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Income	Total Households	Percent	Family Households	Percent	Non-family Households	Percent
Less than \$10,000	1,494	4.3%	677	2.4%	874	14.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	997	2.9%	607	2.1%	434	7.0%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	1,127	3.3%	622	2.2%	502	8.1%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	1,164	3.4%	826	2.9%	374	6.0%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	1,328	3.8%	921	3.2%	405	6.5%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	1,347	3.9%	1,010	3.6%	378	6.1%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	1,359	3.9%	1,042	3.7%	381	6.1%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	1,486	4.3%	1,173	4.1%	305	4.9%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	1,440	4.2%	1,203	4.2%	260	4.2%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	2,958	8.5%	2,533	8.9%	437	7.0%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	4,396	12.7%	3,763	13.3%	606	9.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,081	17.6%	5,366	18.9%	603	9.7%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	3,676	10.6%	3,473	12.2%	147	2.4%



TABLE 21: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME GROUP 2000 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Income	Total Households	Percent	Family Households	Percent	Non-family Households	Percent
\$125,000 to \$149,999	2,148	6.2%	1,930	6.8%	191	3.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,962	5.7%	1,752	6.2%	184	3.0%
\$200,000 or more	1,640	4.7%	1,490	5.2%	134	2.2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>34,603</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28,388</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,215</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

# Housing



## Introduction

Housing is an important aspect of Forsyth County's land use and economy. The type, size, location, affordability and quality of housing determine the variety of neighborhoods within the county. A deficiency of housing choices will result in a lack of accommodation for some populations. In addition to the importance of having a range of housing options, concern over dilapidated housing is a community issue since the absence of proper maintenance can depress entire neighborhoods. Chronic disrepair may also provide a location for illegal activities as well as create conditions for vermin infestation. Conversely, well-designed and preserved neighborhoods comprised of individuals with varying socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds foster strong communities and are an asset to the county.

Housing also impacts economic development. Commercial development generally follows the number of housing units while employers are concerned with securing a locally available workforce. Housing construction creates jobs and fosters immediate spending for construction materials and interior finishes. While the housing industry creates positive economic activity, neighborhood expansions also represent further demands for government services. New residential development may exacerbate existing traffic, pollution and water usage problems at the same time creating additional costs to the local government for schools, recreational facilities, social services, streets, sewer lines and other infrastructure improvements.

An inventory of the existing housing stock and its condition, occupancy and affordability characteristics will assist with an assessment of housing suitability for serving the county's future population and economic development needs. All sectors of the population require adequate housing provisions thereby necessitating an analysis of existing conditions while projecting what the potential housing needs are likely to be in the long-range planning period.

## Inventory and Assessment

### Types of Housing Units

Data on housing types provides a measure of housing stock diversity and can offer insight on future community housing needs and goals. The current and historic numbers of housing types, including single-family, multi-family and manufactured dwellings, are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: HOUSING TYPES 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Year	Single Family		Multi-Family		Manufactured		Total**
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
1980*	7,830	75.9%	312	3%	2,179	21.1%	10,321
1990	13,439	75.2%	581	3.3%	3,736	20.9%	17,869
2000	31,921	87.4%	795	2.2%	3,771	10.3%	36,505

\*Does not include vacant seasonal and migratory units

\*\*Includes boats, RVs, vans, etc. for 1990 - 2000

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

From 1980 to 2000, multi-family units have experienced a decline from 3% to 2.2% of the total

housing stock while the percentage of single-family has increased 11.5% over this same period. The availability of multi-family units is an essential component of a diversified housing stock, which contributes to a community's economic health. One possible outcome of a lack of housing choices is a housing supply that is inconsistent with local household incomes. Forsyth County will need to continue to develop policies and methods that ensure that those who work in the county will have a viable opportunity to live in the community.

Forsyth County has experienced a significant reduction in the number of manufactured dwelling units, as a percentage of the total housing stock. Manufactured dwelling units represented over 20% of the housing stock in 1980 and 1990, but fell to 10% by the year 2000. A continued decline in the number of manufactured dwelling units, as a percentage of total dwelling units, is anticipated over the twenty-year planning horizon. The continued suburbanization of Forsyth County combined with development regulations requiring increased lot sizes for manufactured homes will most likely be the primary cause of this projected lower percentage.

Analyzing household and family size is an important component of determining whether existing housing stock is currently adequate and what housing needs are likely to emerge in the long-range planning period. The average household size in the county per the U.S. Bureau of the Census is 2.83 as indicated in Table 2. More detailed census data indicates that owner-occupied households have a 2.82 average and renter-occupied households possess a 2.88 average size.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Year	Number of Households	Average Household Size	Average Family Size
1980	9,395	2.97	3.29
1990	15,938	2.75	3.07
2000	34,565	2.83	3.12

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Since multi-family housing is a concern given their proportional decline between 1990 and 2000, the number of units and unit types bear consideration. There are approximately 1,325 apartment units within the unincorporated part of the county; the major apartment complexes are denoted in Table 3. While the average household and family size slightly increased in 2000, the majority of available units consist of a two- bedroom floor plan, suggesting the proportion of larger apartments may need to be increased to meet the demands of family households within the county who require or prefer rental housing options.

TABLE 3: LARGE APARTMENT COMPLEXES WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

Development	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	Total Units
Columns @ Pilgrim Mill	88	116	34	238
Alta @ Johns Creek	85	108	22	215
Oxford Summit	123	219	3	345

TABLE 3: LARGE APARTMENT COMPLEXES WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY continued

Development	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	Total Units
Century Windermere formerly Preston Pointe	88	202	56	346
<b>Totals</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>1144</b>

### Seasonal Units

Beginning in the 1950s, the development around Lake Sidney Lanier consisted mainly of vacation cottages for seasonal lake users. Since the 1960s, there has been an ever rising shift to year-round housing. Most of the existent cottages have been converted into permanent residences. In 2000, the U.S. Bureau of the Census identified a total of 828 vacant housing units used for seasonal, recreational or occasional uses within the county. This number is too low to be a significant housing factor in the community.

### Condition of Housing

The age and condition of housing in a community can be an important indicator of housing needs and can assist in identifying housing that requires special attention to continue providing safe and adequate shelter.

Table 4 contains information on the age and condition of housing units in Forsyth County and the State of Georgia. In 1990, 3% of the county's housing stock was built prior to 1939 as compared with the state's 8%. In 2000, 1.5% of the county housing stock was built prior to 1939 while the state decreased to 5.9%. When contrasted with the state, Forsyth County has a comparatively low number of housing units that were built prior to 1939.

The housing stock of Forsyth County fares better than the state when examining the number of units lacking plumbing, complete kitchen facilities and heating fuel of any type. For instance, in 1990 and 2000, the percentage of housing units in Forsyth County without plumbing was approximately half that of the state as a whole. Although the actual number of housing units lacking complete kitchen facilities increased in 2000, the percentage decreased; compared with state statistics, the percentages are much lower. Regarding occupied housing units where heating was not present, the actual numbers increased minimally for 2000 and remained lower than the state percentage.

Housing conditions in Forsyth County have been steadily improving over time based on the number of units built prior to 1939 and the percentage of units without plumbing, complete kitchen facilities or heating fuel. There are no concentrated areas of substandard housing. However, the elimination of individual cases of dilapidated housing is an obstacle. The creation of a housing authority could help to address this issue and at the same time ensure that property owners are responsibly managing their property.

TABLE 4: AGE AND CONDITION OF HOUSING 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

	1980		1990		2000	
	Forsyth County	Georgia	Forsyth County	Georgia	Forsyth County	Georgia
Total Housing Units	10,969	2,028,350	17,869	2,638,418	36,505	3,281,737
Housing Units Built Prior to 1939	Not Available	Not Available	530	212,938	545	192,972
%	N/A	N/A	3%	8%	1.5%	5.9%
Housing Units Lacking Plumbing	331	75,618	102	28,462	147	29,540
%	3%	3.7%	0.6%	1.1%	0.4%	1%
Housing Units Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	Not Available	Not Available	84	24,014	121	31,717
%	N/A	N/A	0.5%	0.9%	0.3%	1%
Occupied Housing Units where Heating Fuel is not used	Not Available	Not Available	13	4,193	16	9,039
%	N/A	N/A	0.07%	0.2%	0.04%	0.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Owner- and Renter-Occupied Units

Forsyth County must contain the right mix of housing units in order to maintain economic vitality through attracting and retaining residents. In addition to ownership characteristics, an analysis of vacancy rates can help identify whether or not the community should encourage or discourage the development of various types of housing.

Information on owner- and renter-occupied housing units are displayed in Table 5. Compared to the State of Georgia, Forsyth County has a much higher ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied units. In addition, vacancy rates for renter-occupied housing significantly decreased from 1990 to 2000 within the county. This information suggests Forsyth County likely has too few rental opportunities in the community.

TABLE 5: OWNER- AND RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

	1980		1990		2000	
	Forsyth County	Georgia	Forsyth County	Georgia	Forsyth County	Georgia
Owner-Occupied Units	7,780	1,216,459	13,052	1,536,829	30,426	2,029,154
Owner-Occupied Vacancy Rate	2.9	1.7	4.1	2.5	1.6	1.9
Renter-Occupied Units	1,575	655,193	2,886	829,786	4,139	977,215
Renter-Occupied Vacancy Rate	9	7.9	9.8	12.2	4.1	8.2
Owner to Renter Ratio	4.9:1	1.9:1	4.5:1	1.9:1	7.4 :1	2.1 : 1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Cost of Housing**

The cost of housing in a community should be compatible with the income of its residents. If affordable housing is not available in a community, many workers will be forced to live elsewhere and commute to their jobs. Conversely, if there is not an adequate supply of middle and upper income housing, the future economic development potential of the community may be hindered. Table 6 and Figure 1 contain information on current and historic median property values and median rent for Forsyth County, the Atlanta Regional Commission's 10-county jurisdiction and the State of Georgia.

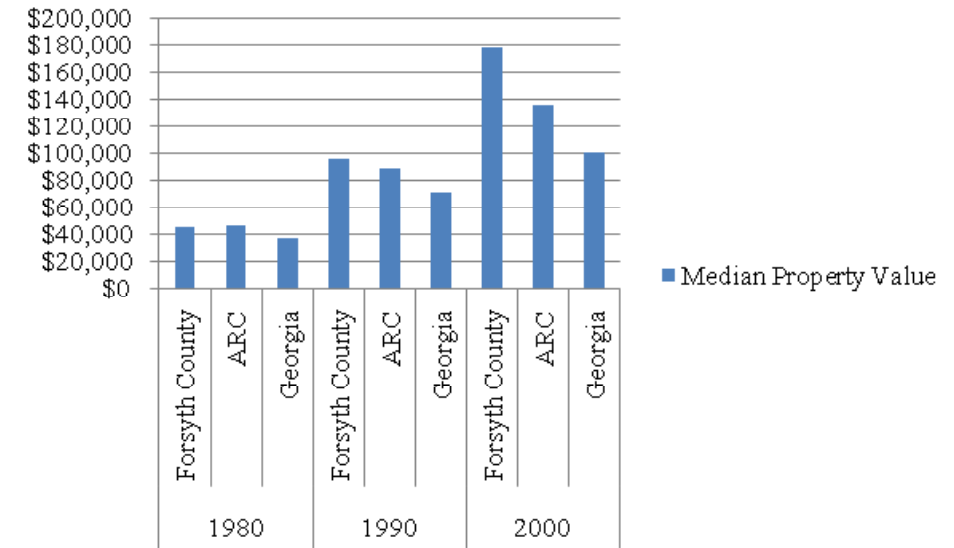
TABLE 6: MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUES AND MEDIAN RENT 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY, ARC COUNTIES AND STATE OF GEORGIA

	1980			1990			2000		
	Forsyth County	ARC	Georgia	Forsyth County	ARC	Georgia	Forsyth County	ARC	Georgia
Median Property Value	\$44,700	\$46,550	\$36,900	\$96,200	\$88,800	\$71,300	\$177,900	\$135,900	\$100,600
Median Rent*	\$141	\$184	\$153	\$497	\$551	\$433	\$683	\$749	\$613

\* Median rent for 1980 is based on contract rent, which is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any utilities or services

that may be included; median rent for 1990 and 2000 is based on gross rent, which is contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities and fuels if these are paid by the renter.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

FIGURE 1: MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE AND MEDIAN RENT 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY, ARC COUNTIES AND STATE OF GEORGIA



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The continued suburbanization of Forsyth County has resulted in a significant increase in housing prices over the last twenty years. Outside metropolitan Atlanta's expansion, there are no significant, special circumstances that impact housing costs in Forsyth County. If historic trends continue, increases in the median property values will begin to put Forsyth County outside the average price range of the local metropolitan region. This will likely contribute to a significant portion of the county's workforce having to purchase property outside of the county if they are unable to secure rental housing or if they wish to become property owners. Table 7 indicates that 40.4% of the owner-occupied units within the county are valued at \$200,000 and above as compared with 17.3% in Hall County, 22% percent in Cherokee County, 28.5% in Dawson County, 19.6% in Gwinnett County and 43.7% in Fulton County.

TABLE 7: VALUE FOR ALL OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

	Forsyth	Cherokee	Dawson	Fulton	Gwinnett	Hall
Less than \$10,000	266	273	61	484	923	470
\$10,000 to 14,999	222	184	42	229	862	386
\$15,000 to 19,999	205	200	26	491	554	478
\$20,000 to 24,999	97	245	49	398	344	335
\$25,000 to 29,999	65	149	48	552	409	442
\$30,000 to 34,999	155	124	48	663	208	432
\$35,000 to 39,999	143	120	25	1,179	239	375

TABLE 7: VALUE FOR ALL OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS 2000 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

	Forsyth	Cherokee	Dawson	Fulton	Gwinnett	Hall
\$40,000 to 49,999	308	416	114	3,716	499	884
\$50,000 to 59,999	364	571	210	5,235	822	1,001
\$60,000 to 69,999	463	565	216	7,143	1,322	1,675
\$70,000 to 79,999	497	894	270	8,000	2,721	2,266
\$80,000 to 89,999	924	2,131	240	9,896	5,483	2,710
\$90,000 to 99,999	1,002	2,815	272	8,326	9,990	2,846
\$100,000 to 124,999	2,923	8,064	634	12,176	29,162	5,520
\$125,000 to 149,999	3,592	7,500	630	12,768	31,602	4,165
\$150,000 to 174,999	3,606	4,968	352	11,964	19,920	2,332
\$175,000 to 199,999	3,301	3,155	294	10,829	12,800	1,551
\$200,000 to 249,999	4,610	3,627	444	16,241	13,555	1,617
\$250,000 to 299,999	2,901	2,585	315	13,874	7,160	1,417
\$300,000 to 399,999	2,636	1,756	330	17,782	4,798	1,279
\$400,000 to 499,999	871	466	121	9,726	1,505	688
\$500,000 to 749,999	849	306	125	9,284	987	462
\$750,000 to 999,999	324	183	51	3,314	371	193
\$1,000,000 or more	112	206	24	2,841	329	157
<b>TOTAL Units:</b>	<b>30,436</b>	<b>41,503</b>	<b>4,941</b>	<b>167,111</b>	<b>146,565</b>	<b>33,681</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The selection of available rental unit types within the county includes the following percentages based on the total number of units as shown in Table 8: 1.3% studios; 12.3% 1-bedroom units; 39.6% 2-bedroom units; and 46.8% percent 3-bedroom units. The majority of all rental unit types cost under \$1,000 per month. The availability of studio and one-bedroom units represents a minority of the units with the price for both types primarily in the \$500-\$1,000 range.

TABLE 8: BEDROOMS BY GROSS RENT 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

	Number	Percent
<b>No Bedrooms</b>		
Up to \$499	14	0.35%
\$500-999	30	0.76%
\$1,000 or more	9	0.23%
No Cash Rent	0	0
<b>One Bedroom</b>		
Up to \$499	222	5.6%
\$500-999	232	5.9%
\$1,000 or more	8	0.2%
No Cash Rent	24	0.6%

TABLE 8: BEDROOMS BY GROSS RENT 2000 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY

	Number	Percent
<b>Two Bedrooms</b>		
Up to \$499	413	10.4%
\$500-999	845	21.4%
\$1,000 or more	144	3.6%
No Cash Rent	163	4.1%
<b>Three Bedrooms</b>		
Up to \$499	176	4.4%
\$500-999	981	24.8%
\$1,000 or more	464	11.7%
No Cash Rent	231	5.8%
<b>TOTAL Rental Units</b>		<b>3,956</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 9: MEDIAN INCOMES 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Median Non-Family Income
\$68,890	\$74,003	\$36,611

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Data related to income distributions illustrates that the largest number of households have incomes between \$75,000 and \$99,999, representing 17.6% of the total number of households with this same range being the predominate span for family income, comprising 18.9% of the total number of families per the 2000 decennial census. Table 9 shows the difference in median incomes for 2000, which indicates that non-family income is significantly lower. Specifically, the prevailing income level among non-family households was less than \$10,000 at 14.1% revealing that these households would have considerably more difficulty meeting housing costs.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, in regards to commuting patterns between home and places of employment, worker travel time is at least 30 minutes for 52.1% of employed persons not working at home, with the majority having a commute between 45 to 59 minutes; almost 60% of county residents work outside the county. This suggests that housing costs are likely a factor in the choice of residence location. Within the county, 72.3% of the population 16 years of age and older are in the labor force, .89% of households are on public assistance and 16.9% have income from social security. Of those on public assistance, 70.9% are residing in owner-occupied units. In terms of households receiving social security, 88.4% dwell in owner-occupied units with 8.8% of those households below the poverty line. Households below the poverty level in owner-occupied units total 4.1% while households below the poverty line in renter-occupied units equal 17.1%. The predominate age of the householder for households

below the poverty line is 35 to 44 years for owner-occupied units and 25 to 34 years for renter-occupied units. These statistics indicate that younger householders within renter-occupied units struggle more to meet housing costs within the county.

**Cost Burdened and Overcrowded Households**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has determined that households should spend no more than thirty percent of their incomes on housing. Using definitions established by HUD, cost burden is calculated as gross housing costs, including utility costs, as a percentage of gross income. Households that pay more than thirty percent of their incomes on housing are considered to be cost burdened; households that pay more than fifty percent are considered to be severely cost burdened. Cost burdened households will find it difficult to meet all their household's needs; severely cost burdened households may be in danger of homelessness. By considering the number and characteristics of these households, the community can begin to consider options for addressing housing needs.

An analysis of the cost of housing compared to household income can provide valuable information on the availability of workforce housing. Tables 10 and 11 provide a breakdown of cost burdened and severely cost burdened households for owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units. In Forsyth County, renter-occupied households are more likely to be cost burdened, or severely cost burdened, than owner-occupied households. Over 78% of owner-occupied households expend less than thirty percent of their income on housing while less than 57% of renter-occupied households fall into this same category. Within renter-occupied households, 19% are cost burdened and 12.8% are severely cost burdened. When comparing actual numbers, the amount of cost burdened owner-occupied households totals 5,539 while the sum of cost burdened renter-occupied households equals 1,257. Both numerical totals indicate a sizeable quantity of households experience financial difficulty related to housing costs. In reviewing income levels of cost burdened households, 28.6% of cost burdened renters had household incomes under \$35,000, which is 50.8% of the county's median, while 13.9% of cost burdened owners had household incomes under \$50,000 per the 2000 decennial census. In reviewing poverty statistics, a total of 5.5% of the county population, for which poverty status was determined in Census 2000, was below the poverty level.

Table 12 provides information on the relationship of cost burdened and severely cost burdened households to housing type. From this information, it is clear that housing affordability is particularly a significant problem for multi-family housing. Specifically, 43.8% of multi-family households fall into the cost burdened or severely cost burdened classification.

TABLE 10: MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	% of Units*
Total Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	26,287	100%

TABLE 10: MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2000  
continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	% of Units*
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	3,656	14%
30% to 49% (cost burdened)	1,883	7.2%
50% (severely cost burdened)	20,639	78.5%

\*Cost burdened housing does not add up to 100% due to units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE II: GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	% of Units*
Total Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	3,956	100%
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	2,247	56.8%
30% to 49% (cost burdened)	750	19%
50% (severely cost burdened)	507	12.8%

\*Cost burdened housing does not add up to 100% due to units for which no cash rent was paid and units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 12: MEDIAN GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY HOUSING TYPE 2000 FORSYTH COUNTY

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	Single-Family Detached or Attached		Multi-Family		Mobile Home	
	Units	% Burdened or Severely Burdened	Units	% Burdened or Severely Burdened	Units	% Burdened or Severely Burdened
30 Percent or more (burdened or severely burdened)	597	28.8%	301	43.8	359	30.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The age of householders within renter-occupied cost burdened or severely cost burdened households, representing a majority among all age groups, are between the ages of 25 to 34 years of age; within owner-occupied households the majority is between the ages of 35 to 44 years of age as enumerated in the 2000 decennial census. The percentage of median gross rent as related to household income by the race of the householder is shown in Table 13 with Table 14 indicating householder race in cost burdened or severely cost burdened owner-occupied units. Variability is clearly present between the two tables, but both indicate that non-white householders, race unidentified, are near or over the cost burdened threshold of thirty percent.

TABLE 13: MEDIAN GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER 2000 FORSYTH COUNTY

	White Alone Householder	African American Alone Householder	American Indian/Alaska Native Alone Householder	Asian Alone Householder	Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander Alone Householder	Some Other Race Alone Householder	Two or More Races Householder
Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	23.3%	17.5%	19.8%	36.7%	0	29.1%	20.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 14: PERCENTAGE OF COST BURDENED OR SEVERELY COST BURDENED OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER 2000 FORSYTH COUNTY

	White Alone Householder	African American Alone Householder	American Indian/Alaska Native Alone Householder	Asian Alone Householder	Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander Alone Householder	Some Other Race Alone Householder	Two or More Races Householder
Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income: 30% or higher representing cost or severely cost burdened households	21%	15.2%	30.9%	15.2%	0	32%	31.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Seniors, 65 years of age and older, represent a specific population of concern in relation to housing costs since incomes often remain at a relatively fixed level. The median household income for householders 65 to 74 years of age is \$36,083 and for householders 75 years and over it is \$19,764 per the 2000 decennial census as compared with the overall median of \$68,890. As per the U.S. Bureau of the Census, households that have an income of less than \$10,000, for those householders 65 to 74 years of age, comprise 8.9% of that group while, for householders 75 years and over, it encompasses 25.9% of that specific classification. The percentage of seniors 65 years and older who inhabited renter-occupied units that were cost or severely cost burdened equaled 36.3% compared with 28.5% for those living in owner-occupied units. Family households living below the poverty level in which the householder was 65 years and older represented 12.4% of households in this category while nonfamily households below the poverty level for the same age group totaled 46.5%. These figures point to the need to ensure affordable housing, particularly for seniors in rental units and those who are not living with other family members.

In regards to overcrowding, units with more than one occupant per room are typically considered to be crowded. As Table 15 illustrates, overcrowding is not an issue with owner-occupied housing units since over 98% of the housing units have one occupant or less per room. In renter-occupied units, 6% of the housing units are overcrowded and 3.5% are severely overcrowded. This indicates that there is a need for increased rental availability and affordability within Forsyth County. Specifically, rental products with three or more bedrooms would assist with accommodating housing demand given that households of three or more persons occupied 49.7% of rental units as shown in Table 16. Although cost burdened housing is more significant for renter-occupied units, 21.2% of owner-occupied units are burdened or severely burdened indicating a need for some lower price point housing. Workforce income housing with three or more bedrooms, in particular, would help meet housing needs since 50.3% of owner-occupied units had households of three or more persons. Additionally, the majority of owner-occupied units have three bedrooms with the number of three-bedroom rental units almost equivalent to the majority held by two-bedroom floor plans, further suggesting the need for larger, affordable living space.

TABLE 15: OVERCROWDED HOUSING UNITS 2000 FORSYTH COUNTY

Occupants Per Room	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Units	%	Units	%
1.0 or Less	29,964	98.4%	3,738	90.5%
1.01 to 1.50	354	1.2%	246	6%
1.51 or more	118	0.4%	145	3.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



TABLE 16: TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Household Size	Occupied Housing Units	
	1990	2000
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	30,436	
1 person household	4,086	
2 person household	11,030	
3 person household	6,123	
4 person household	6,153	
5 person household	2,099	
6 person household	602	
7 or more person household	343	
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	4,129	
1 person household	1,032	
2 person household	1,044	
3 person household	765	
4 person household	648	
5 person household	377	
6 person household	159	
7 or more person household	104	
<b>TOTAL Occupied Units</b>	<b>34,565</b>	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 17: TENURE BY BEDROOMS 1990 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Bedrooms	Occupied Housing Units	
	1990	2000
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	13,052	30,436
No Bedroom	60	42
1 Bedroom	211	299
2 Bedrooms	2,546	2,972
3 Bedrooms	7,853	14,035
4 Bedrooms	1,903	9,975
5 or more Bedrooms	479	3,113
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	2,886	4,129
No Bedroom	28	53
1 Bedroom	214	486
2 Bedrooms	1,430	1,629
3 Bedrooms	1,057	1,593
4 Bedrooms	138	301
5 or more Bedrooms	19	67
<b>TOTAL Occupied Units</b>	<b>15,938</b>	<b>34,565</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Housing and Community Characteristics

Certain population characteristics can have a direct impact on current and future housing needs including elderly residents, persons with disabilities, the homeless, migrant workers, victims of domestic violence, persons with HIV/AIDS and those recovering from substance abuse. The county's elderly population, defined in this context as 65 years of age and over, was 7.1% in 2000 per the U.S. Bureau of the Census. According to statistics provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 1,022 police actions related to family violence occurred in 2000; a total of 22 AIDS cases were reported from 1981-2000; and 6,710 persons were in need of adult substance abuse treatment as reported in 2001. There were no recorded seasonal workers within the county per these state-provided statistics. In addition, disabilities numbered 21,354 in 2000 as indicated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Please note that a single person may have more than one disability, therefore this figure does not represent the actual number of disabled persons. Elderly persons accounted for 26.7% of the disabilities total and over 39% of the disabled, who are of workforce age, had an employment disability as indicated in Table 18.

Housing for some of these populations may consist of modifications to existing structures such as the installation of handicap accessible entries and remodeling of kitchen as well as bath facilities. This is particularly the case for senior housing, which has become an emerging housing type within the county encompassing active adult living, assisted living and skilled nursing care. The 2000 decennial census indicates householders 65 years of age and older inhabit 11.9% of all owner-occupied units while the same age group dwells in 11.5% of renter-occupied units showing the significant presence of elderly persons within the county. The range of senior housing options often target individuals 55 years and above who fill 27% of all owner-occupied units and 18.5% of renter-occupied units illustrating an even more substantial segment of the population with potential housing requirements specific to their age group.

In addition to senior housing, there are also specialized living quarters for those recovering from substance abuse and domestic violence including group homes and safe shelters. These special populations should be assessed regularly to ensure adequate housing exists to accommodate their needs.

TABLE 18: AGE BY TYPES OF DISABILITY FOR THE CIVILIAN  
NON-INSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

<b>Total disabilities age 5 to 15 years</b>	<b>719</b>
Sensory disability	113
Physical disability	58
Mental disability	473
Self-care disability	75
<b>Total disabilities age 16 to 64 years</b>	<b>14,940</b>
Sensory disability	1,188
Physical disability	2,945

TABLE 18: AGE BY TYPES OF DISABILITY FOR THE CIVILIAN  
NON-INSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER 2000 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY

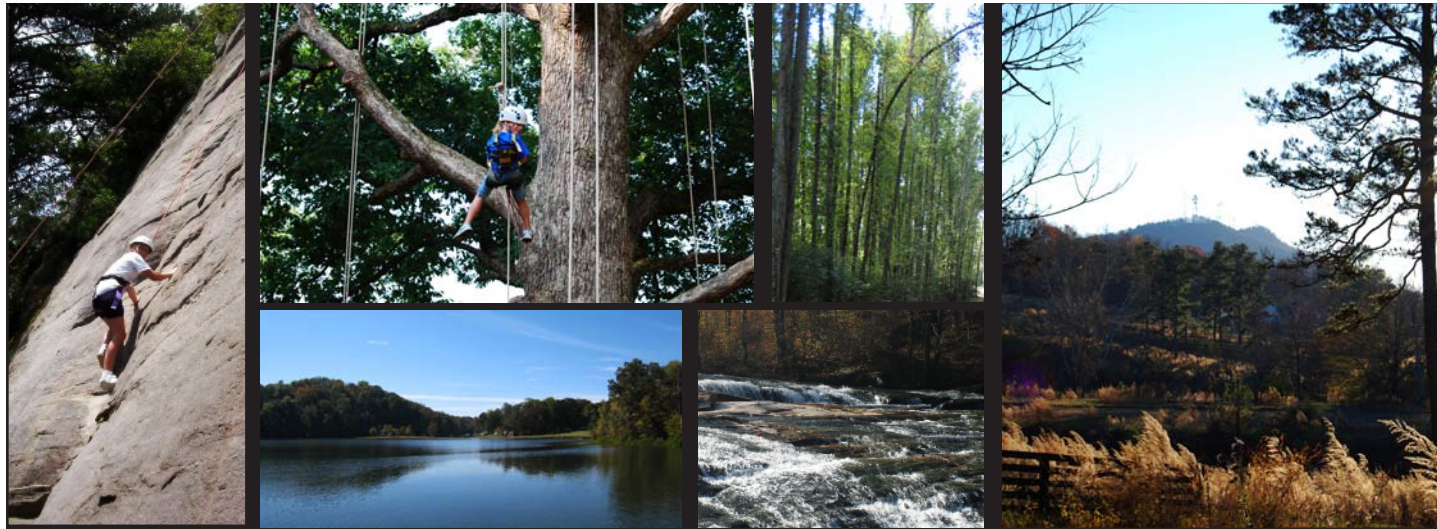
Mental disability	1,435
Self-care disability	734
Go outside of home disability	2,787
Employment disability	5,851
<b>Total disabilities age 65 years and over</b>	<b>5695</b>
Sensory disability	1,004
Physical disability	1,919
Mental disability	738
Self-care disability	577
Go outside of home disability	1,457
<b>TOTAL Disabilities</b>	<b>21,354</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Future Housing Needs

The analysis of probable future housing demand in relation to projected population growth is a critical component of the Community Assessment. Housing development is typically market driven, but the market may not provide the appropriate types of housing for various sectors of the population or the market may strain the local government revenue stream by providing too much of a single housing type. Based on projections in the Population and Economic Development elements of the Community Assessment, Forsyth County will have to establish policies and procedures to encourage a wider range of residential options. Specifically, Forsyth County's historic land use patterns, subdivision ordinances and infrastructure may result in a challenging environment for the future development of renter-occupied housing units. Also, as the county's population ages, there will be an increased demand for housing that accommodates senior lifestyles. One-story dwellings equipped with universal design elements that have minimal outdoor maintenance requirements will likely become more desirable. Neighborhoods that provide close access to everyday goods and services will offer greater opportunities to older residents who are no longer comfortable or able to drive. As the statistics in this element indicate, the demand for affordable owner- and renter-occupied dwellings will be present. A variety of dwelling types in terms of price as well as size will be necessary if local housing is going to serve the varying population sectors within the county.

# Natural Resources



## Introduction

An important aspect of land use planning is the inventory, analysis and preservation of natural resources. Growth patterns are inextricably tied to the limitations of the natural environment. Topography, soils and water availability can be assets or hindrances to various types of development. The understanding of biological patterns and physical processes will allow for the determination of the best manner in which to utilize, manage and conserve these resources. The intention of this element is to inventory the current status of the county's natural resources and analyze this assessment in order to suggest areas best suited for conservation or development.

Forsyth County has already taken extensive steps to protect its environmental resources. Measures include compliance with state mandates such as the Environmental Planning Criteria, Georgia Water Quality Control Act, Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act, Georgia Metropolitan River Protection Act as well as federal regulations including the Endangered Species Act, Federal Water Pollution Control Act and identification of flood hazard areas based on federal flood insurance studies.

Protecting the state's vital environmental resources was one of the goals of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Included in this Act are minimum standards and procedures known as the Environmental Planning Criteria or Part 5 Criteria, the latter so called because it represented part five of House Bill 215. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) are responsible for ensuring that local governments comply with the Environmental Planning Criteria. The adoption and enforcement of ordinances applicable to these criteria is required in order for local governments to maintain their eligibility to obtain certain state grants, loans and permits. The rules for the Environmental Planning Criteria establish protection efforts to conserve critical environmental resources. Within Forsyth County, these resources include the Big Creek small water supply watershed, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands and the Etowah River. Although the Chattahoochee River meets the protected river definition, this corridor is further regulated under the Metropolitan River Protection Act. Additional legislative mandates and regulatory agencies related to environmental protection will be reviewed in subsequent sections.

## Inventory and Assessment

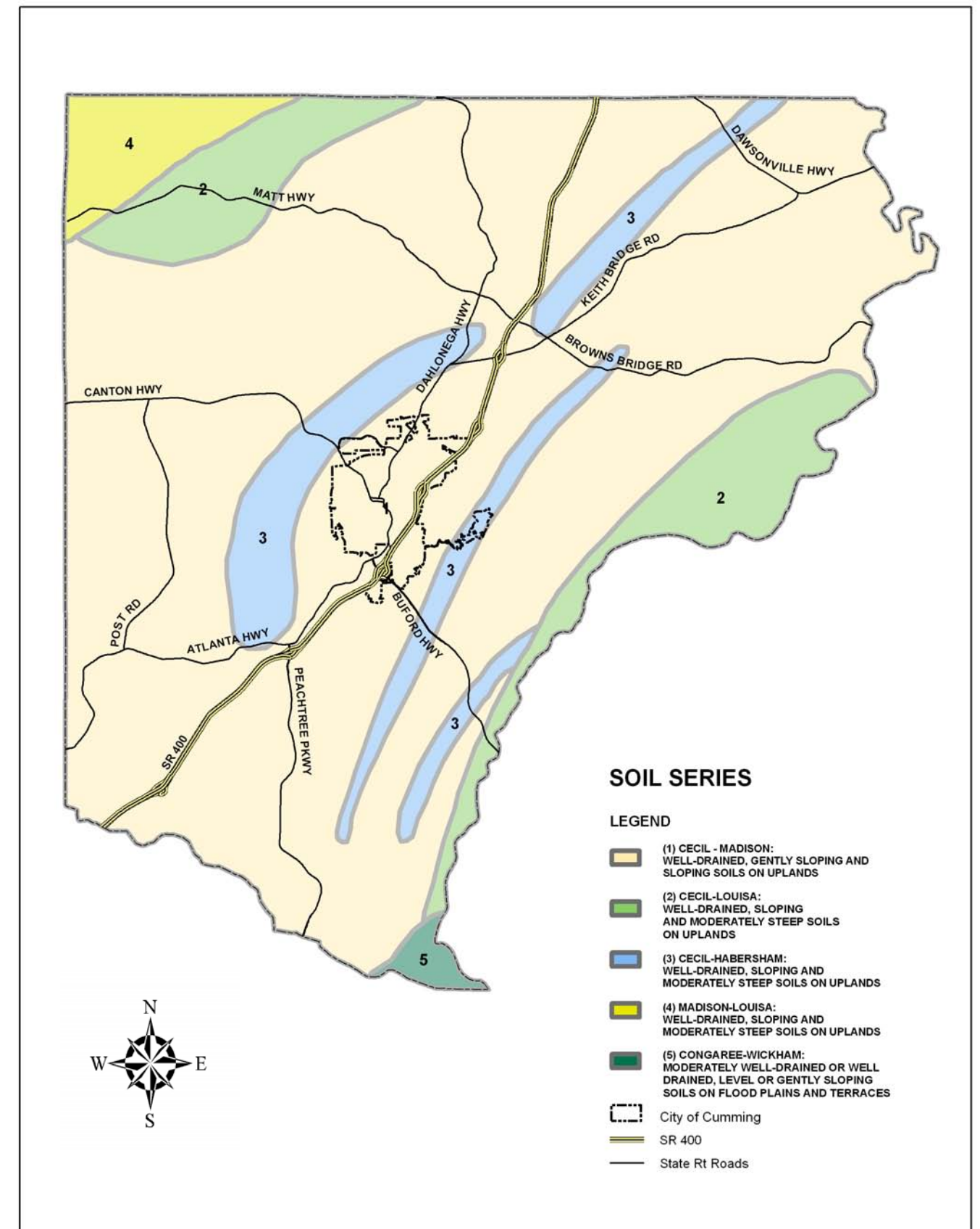
### Geology

### Soils

An understanding of soil properties and characteristics is essential in determining the suitability of various land uses in a particular area. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Soil Conservation Service, provides data on the different soils within the county including their locations and compositions.

The soils in Forsyth County are generally acidic with a few areas having very sandy surface layers. The primary rocks within the county are granite, gneiss, schist, quartzite, hornblende gneiss, mica schist and quartz mica schist. The different soil types within the county are developed from these rocks.

FIGURE 1: SOIL SERIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: USDA Soil Survey

Forsyth County contains approximately ninety-six different soil types based on the USDA General Soil Survey, but the soils can be grouped under five basic series as shown in Figure 1. A soil series is a group of soils formed from the same or related primary materials under similar conditions of climate, drainage, vegetation and time. The five soil series within Forsyth County are Cecil-Madison, Cecil-Louisa, Cecil-Habersham, Madison-Louisa and Congaree-Wickham as illustrated in Figure 1. Table 1 lists the different soil series along with their percentage of coverage and their agricultural suitability.

TABLE 1: SOIL SERIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY

SOIL SERIES	PERCENTAGE OF THE COUNTY	SUITABILITY
<b>CECIL-MADISON:</b> Well-drained, gently sloping soils on uplands	Covers approx. 74% of the county	Well suited for corn, cotton, small grains, legumes and grass
<b>CECIL-LOUISA:</b> Well-drained, sloping and moderately steep soils on uplands	Covers approx. 9% of the county	Suited for forestry, pulpwood, timber and pines
<b>CECIL-HABERSHAM:</b> Well-drained, sloping and moderately steep soils on uplands	Covers approx. 9% of the county	Suitable for pasture or woodlands
<b>MADISON-LOUISA:</b> Well-drained, sloping and moderately steep soils on uplands	Covers approx. 3% of the county	Slightly suitable for cultivation
<b>CONGAREE-WICKHAM:</b> Moderately well-drained or well-drained, level or gently sloping soils on flood plains and terraces	Covers approx. 5% of the county	Suitable for cultivation

Source: USDA Soil Survey Series

The basic knowledge of both texture and soil materials is very important. In the building of roads in particular, it is essential to know the location of poorly drained soils and whether or not the soil material swells and shrinks.

Table 2 indicates a list of soils in the county that are important for engineering purposes, building construction and agricultural uses. These twenty-two different soils are part of the original ninety-six soil types within the county. The remaining soils not included in this list are not suitable for either engineering or agricultural uses without being significantly modified.

TABLE 2: SUITABILITY OF SOIL ASSOCIATIONS FOR SELECT LAND USES

SOIL TYPE	EARTH WORK DURING EXTENDED WET PERIODS	SEPTIC TANKS AND DRAINAGE FIELDS	BUILDING FOUNDATIONS	AGRICULTURE
Alluvial land – moderately well-drained	Fair	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Well suited for cultivated crops
Altavista – fine sandy loam, level phase	Fair	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the area
Appling –sandy loam, very gently sloping phase	Fair	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the county

TABLE 2: SUITABILITY OF SOIL ASSOCIATIONS FOR SELECT LAND USES continued

SOIL TYPE	EARTH WORK DURING EXTENDED WET PERIODS	SEPTIC TANKS AND DRAINAGE FIELDS	BUILDING FOUNDATIONS	AGRICULTURE
Buncombe – loamy fine sand	Good	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable for close-growing crops
Cecil – sandy loam, very gently sloping phase	Good	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the area
Chewacla – silt loam	Poor	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Excellent suited for all crops grown in the county
Congaree – silt loam	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Well suited for cultivated crops
Edgemont –stony sandy loam, moderately steep phase	Good	Good	Good	Best suited for pine trees
Gullied land (all materials)	Good	Good	Good	Best suited for pine trees
Habersham – stony fine sandy loam, moderately steep phase	Very Good	Good	Good	Best suited for pine trees
Hiwassee – fine sandy loam, eroded gently sloping phase	Good	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the county
Lloyd – loam, very gently sloping phase	Fair	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the area
Louisa – fine sandy loam, moderately steep phase	Good	Good	Good	Best suited for pine trees
Louisburg – sandy loam, eroded gently sloping phase	Good	Good	Good	Suited for row crops
Madison – fine sandy loam, eroded gently sloping phase	Good	Good	Good	Well suited for all crops commonly grown in the county
Masada – fine sandy loam, very gently sloping phase	Good	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the county
Seneca – fine sandy loam	Fair	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Well suited for cultivated crops
Starr – loam	Fair	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Well suited for cultivated crops

TABLE 2: SUITABILITY OF SOIL ASSOCIATIONS FOR SELECT LAND USES continued

SOIL TYPE	EARTH WORK DURING EXTENDED WET PERIODS	SEPTIC TANKS AND DRAINAGE FIELDS	BUILDING FOUNDATIONS	AGRICULTURE
Thurmont and Braddock – fine sandy loams, very gently sloping phases	Good	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the area
Wehadkee - silt loam	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable for hay and pasture
Wicham – fine sandy loam, very gently sloping phase	Good	Good	Good	Suited for all crops commonly grown in the area
Worsham –sandy loam, level phase	Poor	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Suited for cultivated crops

Source: USDA Soil Survey Series

**Minerals**

The only minerals now being extracted in Forsyth County are crushed stone and construction sand and gravel. Past mining activity, while including such minerals as talc, marble, mica, manganese and iron, centered for many years on gold. Other minerals either prospected or noted in early reconnaissance reports include silver, copper, lead, platinum, building stones, clay, graphite, kyanite, olivine and semi-precious stones.

Only a few of those known minerals are commercially minable and developable as a resource. DNR’s Environmental Protection Division’s (EPD) surface mining permitting data, revised in April of 2009, listed six mining operations within the county; two are dredge operations, three are quarries and one is a pit mine. The quarries in the county are all active and range in size from one hundred and fifteen acres to over seven hundred acres.

Due to the nature of the geology in Forsyth County, the likelihood of future large scale mining of base metals and subsurface deposits would be extremely expensive and highly unlikely. The greatest potential for mineral development in the county will continue to be in crushed granite (gravel) and sand.

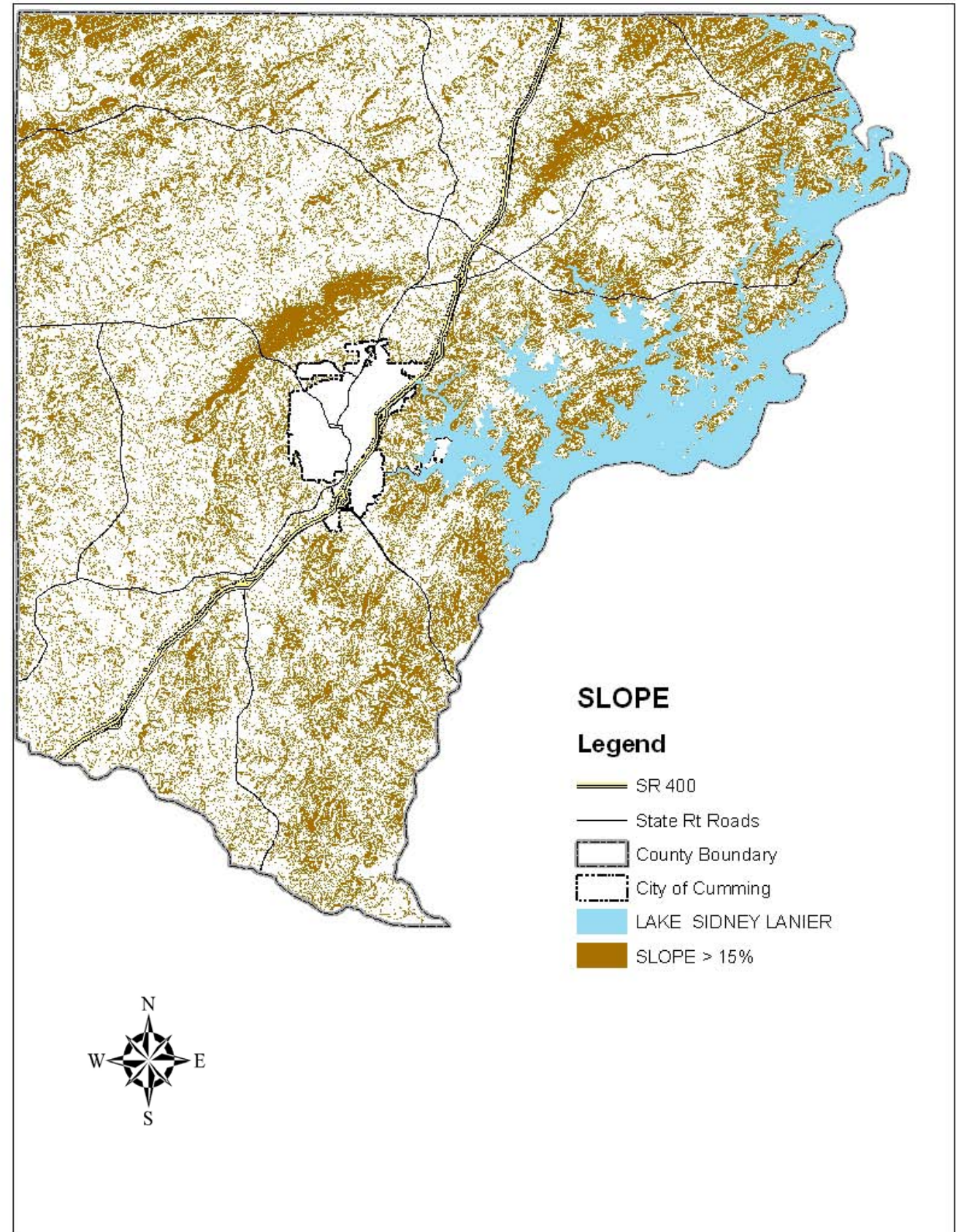
**Topography**

**Steep Slopes**

Topographical slopes over fifteen percent are defined as steep by this analysis. Because of susceptibility to erosion problems and lack of stability, steep slopes pose both immediate and future problems for buildings and infrastructure development.

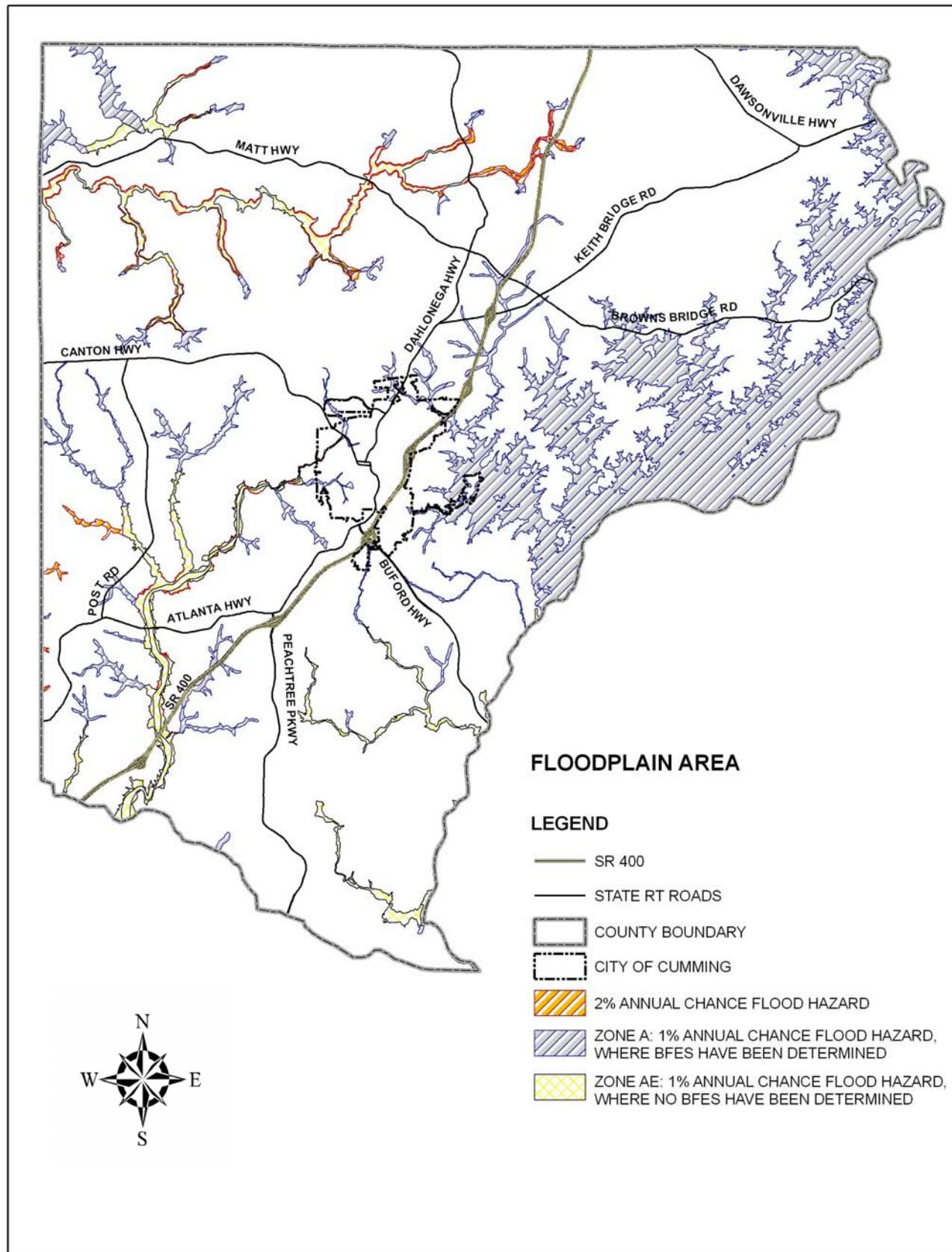
Forsyth County has approximately 44,830 acres of steep slopes, as shown in Figure 2. The county currently does not have any ordinances prohibiting development in these areas. However, due to engineering constraints, it is recommended that development be limited where steep slopes are identified. In locations such as the Sawnee Mountain ridgeline and the steep banks around Lake

FIGURE 2: STEEP SLOPES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: LIDAR Data provided by Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

FIGURE 3: FLOODPLAIN AREAS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: FEMA 2007 FIRM

Sidney Lanier and the Etowah River, low-density development or parks may be more appropriate.

**Protected Mountains**

State legislation informally referred to as the Georgia Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act classifies a protected mountain as “all land area over 2,200 feet or more above mean sea level, that has a percentage slope of 25 percent or greater for at least 500 feet horizontally, including crests, summits and ridge tops which lie at elevations higher than any such area.” There are no mountains in Forsyth County that meet the DNR protected mountains criteria.

**Floodplains**

Floodplains are a vital part of any river’s ecosystem. These low-lying lands along rivers and streambeds absorb high waters during flooding events and are important for the maintenance of water quality within the surrounding wetlands. Significant flooding within the county primarily occurs along the Big Creek, the Etowah River and the Chattahoochee River. See Figure 3 for floodplain areas within the county.

Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is defined by the county as “the land in the regulated floodplain within a community subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year.” Floodplain management is required under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1963 and the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973. Forsyth County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is a federal program that states if a community adopts and enforces a floodplain management ordinance to reduce future flood risks, then the federal government will make flood insurance available within that community as financial protection against flood losses. To meet NFIP requirements, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies and maps areas that are prone to flooding throughout the state and provides this information to the communities that participate in the NFIP.

Table 3 names rivers, creeks and branches within the county that have been identified on FEMA rate maps as SFHA. Additional information regarding state waters in the county will be provided in the water resources subsection.

TABLE 3: SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS IN FORSYTH COUNTY

Bagley Creek	Haw Creek
Baldrige Creek	Hurricane Creek
Bannister Creek	James Creek
Bentley Creek	John’s Creek
Big Creek	Kelly Mill Branch
Black Mill Creek	Little Ridge Creek
Brewton Creek	Orr Creek
Caney Creek	Sawmill Branch
Chattahoochee River	Sawnee Creek
Cheatam Creek	Settingdown Creek
Chicken Creek	Six Mile Creek
Cobb Creek	Squattingdown Creek
Cogburn Creek	Starr Creek

TABLE 3: SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS IN FORSYTH COUNTY continued

Dave's Creek	Taylor Creek
Dick Creek	Thalley Creek
Etowah River	Two Mile Creek
Four Mile Creek	Yellow Creek
Harris Creek	Young Deer Creek

Forsyth County is located within the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (the District), which sets forth strategies and recommendations for effective watershed management and stormwater control. Cities and counties within the District are required to adopt a floodplain management and flood damage prevention ordinance, modeled after a provided example. Forsyth County met the District requirements in 2004 with the adoption of its Floodplain Management and Floodplain Prevention Ordinance. In 2007, the ordinance was revised at the request of FEMA to more fully comply with their regulations. The county's Floodplain Management and Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, enforced by the county Engineering Department, includes regulations and requirements for future development adjacent to tributaries within flood hazard areas. Minimum undisturbed buffers have been established to control the alteration of stream channels and natural protective barriers.

At a rate of approximately ten percent per year, the county's Engineering Department is currently working on mapping all streams with a drainage area of one hundred acres or greater. This mapping process is in keeping with the District's requirements and, to date, the county has completed approximately thirty percent of the county.

**Lands of Conservation Interest**

**Forest Land**

The State of Georgia contains the largest area of forest cover in the South with 24.8 million acres. The USDA Forest Service Division defines forest land as "land at least 10 percent stocked by forest trees of any size, or formerly having had such tree cover, and not currently developed for nonforest use. The minimum area considered for classification is 1 acre, and the forested strips must be at least 120 feet wide." The Forest Service Division produces an annual forest statistical report for all counties within the state. This report summarizes results of an inventory of the forest resources each year. Based on the survey conducted in 2008, approximately 59,618 acres of the total 144,000 acres of land area within the county, excluding water bodies, were forested.

The three primary forest-type groups within the county are listed in Table 4:

TABLE 4: FOREST TYPE

Forest Type	Thousands of Acres	Percentage
Loblolly-Shortleaf Pine	18.5	27%
Oak-Pine	2.8	4%
Oak-Hickory	46.8	69%

Source: U.S. Forest Service, Forest Statistics for Georgia 1997

Funded in part by the Turner Foundation, the Georgia Land Use Trends (GLUT) Project tracks and examines changes in statewide land use over the last twenty-five years. GIS databases have been created and land cover maps were generated from which forested areas were determined. Table 5 has utilized this data to indicate the amount of forested land within the county.

TABLE 5: TOTAL FORESTED LAND WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

Year	1974	1985	1991	1998	2001	2005
<b>Acreage</b>	95,225	86,024	88,732	85,875	78,608	64,628

Source: NARSAL, Athens, GA

In addition to the Forest Statistic Report referenced in Table 4, the Forest Service Division oversees the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) National Program which collects, analyzes and reports information on the status, trends and conditions of America's forests. On an annual basis, the program projects how much forest exists, where it exists, who owns it and how it is changing. Table 6 represents FIA information for forested lands within the county by acres for the years following the NARSAL data.

TABLE 6: ACRES OF FORESTED LAND WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

2006	2007	2008
57,310	60,217	59,618

Source: U.S. Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis Report

One of the most effective ways to preserve the existing quality of life in Forsyth County is to preserve the existing tree cover and to encourage sustainability of the land in regards to future development. Trees serve many vital functions including the reduction of airborne pollutants, the control of stormwater runoff and erosion control. Forsyth County has adopted a Tree Preservation and Replacement Ordinance, which provides standards for the preservation and replacement of trees during the building construction process for both residential and commercial developments. In the Unified Development Code (UDC), the county has also adopted more extensive regulations for commercial zoning districts as well as areas located within established design overlay districts.

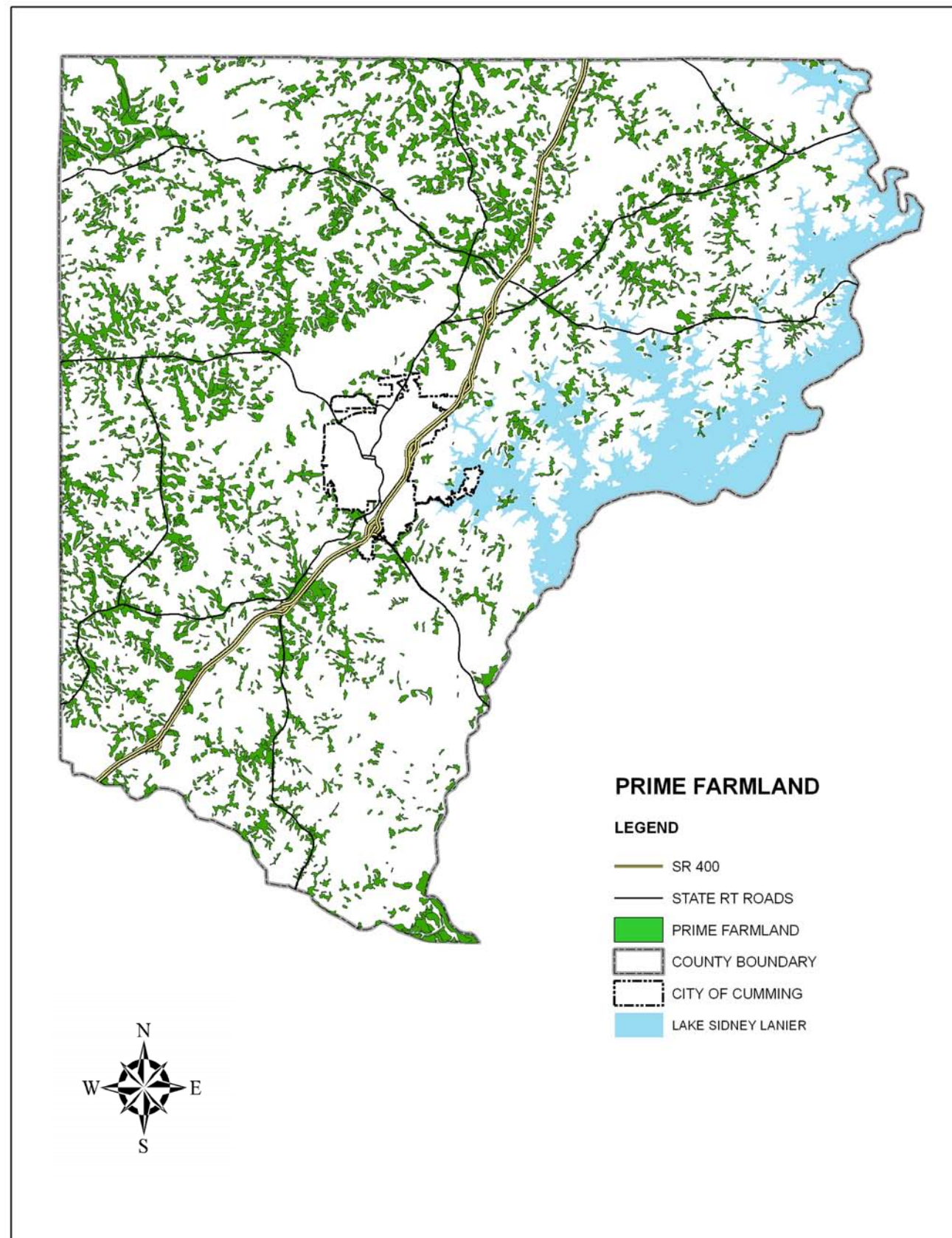
**Agricultural Land**

Agriculture is a large part of the county's history and has been a way of life for generations. According to the USDA, in 1935, there were approximately 142,759 acres of farmland within the county. By 1950, the number had decreased to 135,169 acres with harvested cropland declining from 46,303 acres in 1934 to 19,981 acres in 1954.

The 2009 Georgia County Guide produced by the Center of Agribusiness and Economic Development at the University of Georgia, reported that there were approximately 33,932 acres of farmland in the county in 2002. Those figures had decreased by 8.7 percent from the previous five years. Figure 4 indicates that 26,437 acres of land within the county are suitable to be classified as prime farmland. Prime farmland was determined by analyzing soil types per USDA data pertaining to soils that consist of fine sandy loam and that are gently sloping, which is considered good for agricultural purposes.



FIGURE 4: PRIME FARMLAND OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: USDA Soil Survey

Forsyth County continues to investigate ways to encourage the continuation of viable agricultural businesses. As a way to bridge the gap between the rural-urban interface, the county is participating in a study conducted by Utah State University and Ohio State University titled “Agricultural Adaptation in the Rural-Urban Fringe: Can Communities Make a Difference?” The project is funded by the USDA National Research Initiative Rural Development Program and will summarize the successes and challenges faced by developing agricultural communities. The findings will be made available to assist local and national policy makers in an effort to enhance development efforts targeted at advancing agricultural production and distribution.

The primary agricultural businesses currently in the county are poultry and cattle raising, neither of which are dependant on soil quality. Farming and livestock productions are steadily decreasing as new commercial development and residential growth continues to expand. In addition, the continual diminishment over the past two-and-a-half decades of the county’s agricultural economic base has occurred with shifts toward professional and business services as well as manufacturing and construction industries.

The transition away from the historic agricultural community has taken place throughout the region, but Forsyth County has maintained a connection to its agricultural roots through the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce, which highlights both agri-business and tourism. One avenue that the county expresses this heritage is through the Cumming-County Fair and Festival. This annual event emphasizes the agricultural and rural lifestyle once prevalent in the community.

**Plant Communities and Animal Habitats**

Forsyth County is home to several different species of plants and animals whose primary habitats include streams and riverbeds, bottomland and upland forests and grassy pastures. As development spreads across the county, habitat fragmentation has become an increasing dilemma.

The Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) of DNR maintains a special concerns list which includes federally protected, state protected and other rare or imperiled animals, plants and natural communities. This list is tracked by the Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program that was created by the General Assembly in 1988 and is supported by the Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Conservation Fund established in 1985. The Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program is responsible for the management and protection of the state’s nongame species.

Tables 7 and 8 list special concern animals and plants within Forsyth County, not including those species found in the Etowah River Basin, which will be discussed in the following section.

TABLE 7: ANIMALS OF SPECIAL CONCERN IN FORSYTH COUNTY

	SPECIES	HABITAT IN GEORGIA
T	Cambarus howardi – Chattahoochee Crayfish	Moderate to swiftly flowing streams with rocky or rubble substrate

“T” indicates species listed as threatened under state status

Source: GA Department of Natural Resources

TABLE 8: PLANTS OF SPECIAL CONCERN IN FORSYTH COUNTY

SPECIES		HABITAT IN GEORGIA
	<i>Amorpha nitens</i> – Shining Indigo-bush	Rocky, wooded slopes; alluvial woods
	<i>Amorpha schwerinii</i> – Schwerin Indigo-bush	Rocky upland woods
US/T	<i>Platanthera integrilbia</i> – Monkeyface Orchid	Red maple-gum swamps; peaty seeps and streambanks with <i>Parnassia asarifolia</i> and <i>Oxypolis rigidior</i>
US/T	<i>Symphotrichum georgianum</i> – Georgia Aster	Upland oak-hickory pine forests and openings; sometimes with <i>Echinacea laevigata</i> or over amphibolite

“US” indicates species with federal candidate or with partial federal status

“T” indicates species listed as threatened under state status

Source: GA Department of Natural Resources

Through federal action and by encouraging the establishment of state programs, the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides for the conservation of ecosystems upon which threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife and plants depend. The purpose of the ESA, which is implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is to conserve threatened and endangered species and their ecosystems. There are more than 1,900 species on the endangered species list. The listing of species as endangered makes it illegal to “take” a species, which is defined as a prohibition against harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, collecting or attempting to carry out these actions.

**Etowah Habitat Conservation Boundary**

The state protected Etowah River and its tributaries, drain portions of eleven counties in north Georgia. It also houses over seventy-five fish species, making it one of the most biologically diverse rivers in the United States. In addition, the Etowah River supplies drinking water, electricity and recreation opportunities to several counties along its corridor. Rapid growth and development along the Etowah River has contributed to the placement of four of its native fish species on the federal endangered species list. A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) may be required for certain development projects to save these imperiled species within the identified conservation boundary, illustrated in Figure 5, through regulations for stormwater control and water supply planning that will ultimately contribute to the permanent protection of this high priority watershed. HCPs are reviewed by the FWS and, if approved, this agency grants the applicant an incidental take permit, which safeguards the applicant from penalties for incidental loss of species as long as the plan is followed. Several jurisdictions within the conservation boundary have submitted a joint HCP for FWS consideration that will relieve development applicants from submitting individual plans within a participating jurisdiction. At the current time, Forsyth County upholds regulations to protect the Etowah River corridor through the county’s overlay protection district, which satisfies the state’s Part V Criteria for this river corridor.

Tables 9 and 10 list federal or state rare, endangered and threatened species located within the Etowah River Basin.

FIGURE 5: ETOWAH HABITAT CONSERVATION BOUNDARY

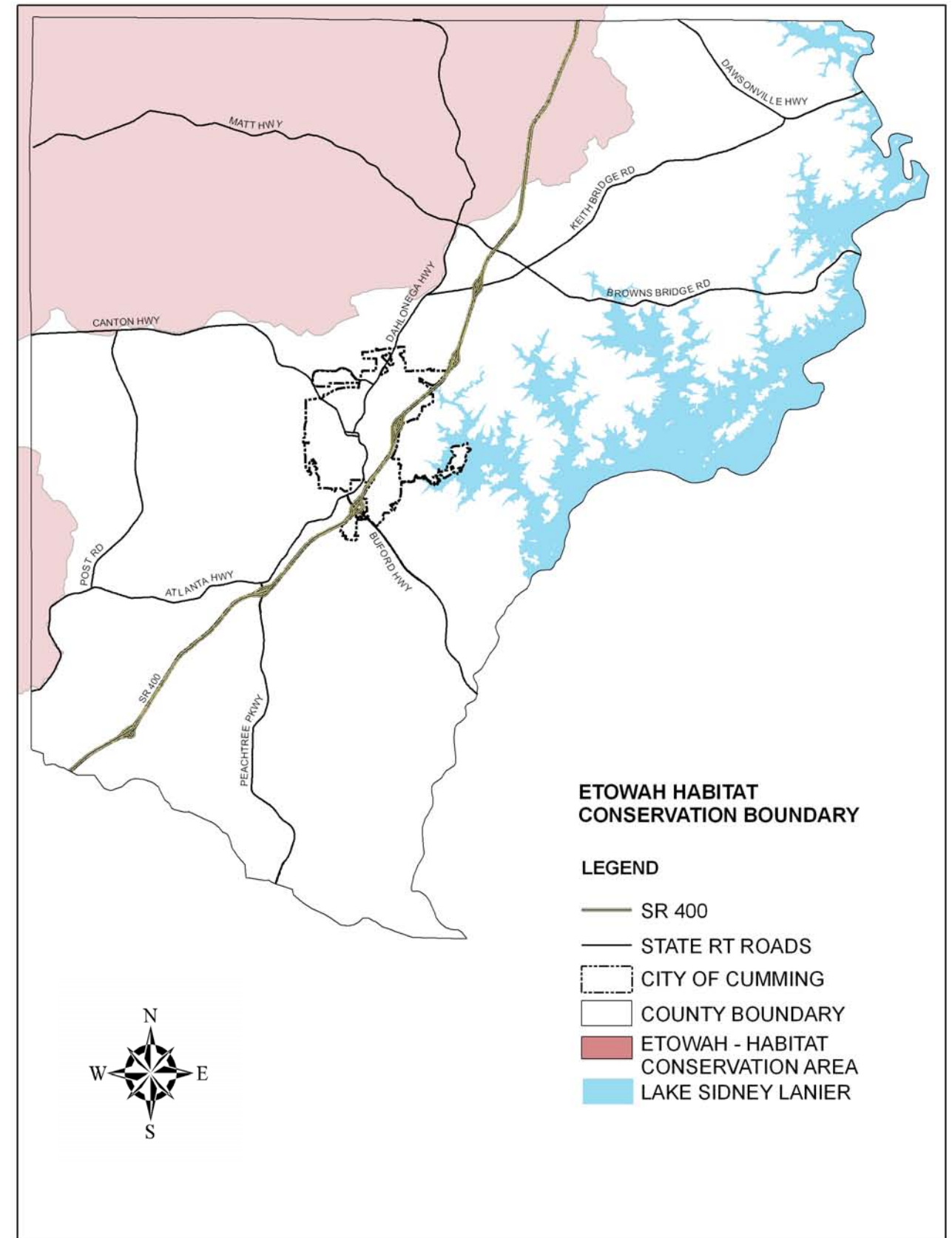


TABLE 9: IMPERILED FISH SPECIES OF THE ETOWAH RIVER BASIN  
Listing of Endangered and Threatened Species

NAME	STATUS	HABITAT
Etheostoma etowahae Etowah Darter	FED / GA	Small to medium-size streams over cobble to gravel in areas of swift current
Etheostoma scotti Cherokee Darter	FED T / GA	Small to medium-size creeks w/moderate current and rocky substrates
Etheostoma brevirostrum Holiday Darter	GA	Small creeks to moderate-size rivers in gravel and bedrock pools
Macrhybopsis aestivalis Coosa Chub	GA	Swift currents over gravel substrates
Noturus munitus Coosa Madtom	GA	Main stems of the Etowah and Conasauga Rivers
Percina antesella Amber Darter	FED / GA	Riffles and runs of medium-size river
Percina lenticula Freckled Darter	FED	Swift deep runs of main river channels probably over with rocky substrates
STATUS REFERS TO FEDERAL (FED) OR STATE (GA)		

“T” indicates species listed as threatened under state status  
Source: GA Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resource Division

TABLE 10: IMPERILED FISH SPECIES OF THE ETOWAH RIVER BASIN  
Listing of Rare (R) or Candidate (C) Species

Percina kusha – Bridled Darter	FED. C / GA. R	Riffles and flowing pools with moderate to swift currents
STATUS REFERS TO FEDERAL (FED) OR STATE (GA) CANDIDATE ( C ) REFERS TO SPECIES PRESENTLY UNDER STATUS REVIEW FOR FEDERAL LISTING		

Source: GA Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resource Division

### Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure refers to a well-designed and locally managed network of protected open space, including water resources, that incorporates passive recreation, natural resource conservation, scenic viewshed preservation and enhancement of community amenities such as the expansion of its transportation network via multi-use trails. Green infrastructure maintains ecological systems, sustains natural resources vital to its residents, contributes to community health and quality of life while serving as a component of economic development and tourism for the region.

Since 1999, the conservation and protection of open space has been an identified comprehensive plan goal and a component of the county’s implementation strategies. The purpose of such protection is to provide an interconnected network of conserved natural areas that will fulfill multiple objectives including the conservation of ecological resources and processes as well as the provision of passive recreational opportunities for human health and enjoyment. To date, approximately 2,298 acres have been acquired in the form of county-owned passive recreation parks, conservation easements per county requirements and public greenway trails. The subsections below inventory the specific features of the county’s green infrastructure network.

### Parks

The Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department owns and operates approximately 2,431 acres of parkland over half of which is passive-use. Passive-use parks are intended for recreation that does not alter the landscape substantially since natural and scenic resources are emphasized for recreational viewing and low impact activities. Facilities such as trail systems in which non-motorized uses are permitted, picnic areas and boat launches are typical passive-use amenities; such facilities do not contain designated space for organized sports. Active recreational facilities will be inventoried in the Community Facilities component. See Table 11 for passive-use parks currently in operation; greenspace bond acquisitions are listed separately in Tables 14 and 16 since these represent future parks except for the Sawnee Mountain Preserve.

TABLE II: COUNTY-OWNED PASSIVE-USE PARKS

NAME	ACREAGE
Poole’s Mill Park	9.6
Sawnee Mountain Preserve	963
Windermere Park	118.8

Poole’s Mill Park is a neighborhood park which provides creek access, a historic covered bridge, nature trail, small native plants garden, picnic areas, playground and a horseshoe pit in the north-west part of the county. Windermere Park, located within the Windermere subdivision in the southern portion of the county, is primarily a passive-use park facility that includes a nature trail.

The Sawnee Mountain ridgeline has become a central amenity for the county and region. This property has been developed into the Sawnee Mountain Preserve, which is being constructed in three phases. Phases I and II have been completed and are currently open to the public. These two phases comprise 3.5 miles of hiking trails, two picnic pavilions, a playground, 120-seat outdoor amphitheater, tree house, canopy walk learning platform, native plant garden, learning library and sustainably constructed visitor center for interpretative and passive recreational

programming. The final stage of development, Phase III, will add another four miles of hiking trails for visitors to enjoy as well as additional restroom facilities, a wilderness training area and the potential renovation of a former residence located on the ridgeline as a viewing and programming site.

In 2005, Sawnee Mountain Preserve began winning regional awards for its planning and design. Two awards were granted by the Georgia Urban Forestry Council and another from the Association County Commissioners of Georgia and Georgia Trend Magazine as noted below.

- Georgia Urban Forestry Council in 2005: ‘Most Outstanding Greenspace Plan’
- Georgia Urban Forestry Council in 2008: ‘The Grand Award for the Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center’
- The Association County Commissioners of Georgia and Georgia Trend Magazine in 2009: ‘The Georgia County Excellence Award’

**Recreational Areas**

These areas are managed by federal, state and local government agencies that ensure natural resources are safeguarded so that they may be enjoyed by the public for leisure purposes.

*State Heritage Preserve*

The Georgia Heritage Trust Act of 1975 was created to “preserve important and endangered elements of Georgia’s heritage.” The Buford Trout Hatchery is composed of 38.364 acres along the Chattahoochee River. The hatchery was dedicated in 1998 by Governor Zell Miller and DNR as a state heritage preserve to protect, conserve and manage the natural, recreational and historic resources of the area for the benefit of present and future generations. The primary purpose of the hatchery is to serve as a public fishing area and fish production facility in addition to supporting wildlife related activities such as the provision of walking trails and bird watching. The property on which the hatchery is located is to be used for habitat management, scientific research and recreational activities.

*Lake Sidney Lanier*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) owns 186 miles of shoreline within the county along Lake Sidney Lanier and has developed seventy-six recreational areas. These recreational areas include boat ramps, campgrounds, picnic tables, beaches and swimming areas. Twenty-two of these recreational areas are located within Forsyth County. Table 12 list areas along Lake Sidney Lanier within Forsyth County that are owned by the Corps.

TABLE 12: U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS RECREATIONAL AREAS WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

PARK NAME	ACREAGE
ATHENS PARK (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)	53.5
BALD RIDGE CREEK CAMPGROUND	55.6
BALD RIDGE MARINA	37.5
BETHEL PARK	85.4
CHARLESTON PARK – COUNTY OPERATED	154.3
HABERSHAM MARINA	2.54
KEITH’S BRIDGE PARK	25.4
PORT ROYALE MARINA (FORMERLY LAN MAR)	65.0
LITTLE RIDGE PARK	67.0
LONG HOLLOW PARK	28.8
LOWER POOL PARK	9.9
MARY ALICE PARK – CITY OPERATED	111.9
SAWNEE CAMPGROUND	32.6
SHADY GROVE CAMPGROUND – COUNTY OPERATED	107.4
SIX MILE PARK	13.8
TIDWELL PARK	7.4
TWO MILE PARK	35.6
VANN’S TAVERN PARK	16.5
WAR HILL PARK * – DAWSON COUNTY OPERATED	108.0
WEST BANK PARK (NO BOAT RAMPS)	23.7
WEST BANK OVERLOOK PARK (NO BOAT RAMPS)	4.0
YOUNG DEER CREEK PARK – COUNTY OPERATED	13.3

\*SPANS FORSYTH COUNTY AND DAWSON COUNTY  
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**National Park Service**

Over several centuries, even before recorded history, people have been attracted to the Chattahoochee River valley. The Chattahoochee River stretches 540 miles from the mountains of north Georgia within Habersham County to its convergence with the Flint River at Lake Seminole in the southwestern corner of the state. The river’s name means ‘painted rock’ in the Cherokee language and was used historically by both the Cherokee and Creek Indian tribes as well as white settlers. By the 1970s, the resources that made the river special were being threatened and depleted. On August 15, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed legislation to protect a portion of the river valley for natural, scenic, recreational and historic purposes, which came under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) stretches forty-eight miles along the Chattahoochee River beginning at Lake Sidney Lanier, just south of Buford Dam. The portion of the CRNRA located within Forsyth County is composed of 215.76 acres and includes sections of Bowman’s Island and Settles Bridge, which are divided between Forsyth and Gwinnett Counties. Bowman’s Island is one of fifteen land based units within the CRNRA, which provides a variety of activities for visitors including hiking, picnicking, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding and fishing. The river is rated, according to the International Scale of River Difficulty, as a Class I and II waterway with some segments assessed as Class III and may be paddled in every season. Fishing opportunities for trout, bass and catfish provide anglers a vari-

ety of species throughout the year. The CRNRA continues downstream through four additional counties before concluding at Peachtree Creek on the border of the City of Atlanta and Cobb County.

Improvements related to the McGinnis Ferry Road bridge replacement will add amenities to CRNRA within the county through the addition of a parking lot, boat ramp and picnic area adjacent to a new stormwater quality pond on land that is currently owned by the county. The county will donate the land and new facilities to the NPS in order for it to be maintained as federal park property. This facility is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010. This facility will eventually connect to planned trail networks within Forsyth and Fulton Counties by way of a pedestrian underpass connection thereby creating a linked, inter-jurisdictional trail system.

**Greenways**

The county currently has twenty-nine miles of greenway projects listed in its Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan. These projects are listed below along with their existing or proposed locations.

TABLE 13: FORSYTH COUNTY GREENWAY PROJECTS

Greenway Project	Location and Route of Greenway
Big Creek (Phase I) <i>Completed</i>	From south of McFarland Road traveling north along Big Creek and concluding at Fowler Park on SR 9
Big Creek Extension (Phase II and III) <i>Completed</i>	From SR 9 traveling north along Big Creek and ending at Bethelview Road
Big Creek Extension (Phase IV)	From Bethelview Road to Kelly Mill Road
Big Creek Extension (Phase V)	From Kelly Mill Road to the Sawnee Mountain Preserve visitor’s center
Chattahoochee River (Phase I)	From Settles Bridge to McGinnis Ferry Road
Chattahoochee River (Phase II)	From Buford Dam Road to Settles Bridge
Etowah River	From the Cherokee County border to the Dawson County border
Sawnee Mountain Greenway	From Poole’s Mill Park to Sawnee Mountain Preserve

The Big Creek Greenway project is currently under construction and is being developed in phases. Phases I, II and III were completed in the summer of 2009. Phases IV and V are still under design and are projected to be completed by the end of 2011. See Figures 6, 7 and 8 for existing and proposed phases with connections to county recreational areas. The greenway trail is composed of a twelve foot wide concrete multi-use path in addition to boardwalk and non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian bridges over floodplain and wetland areas. When completed, the Big Creek Greenway will be compatible with Americans with Disabilities (ADA) regulations and will contain approximately 15.2 miles of trails at a total cost of 14.3 million dollars. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan recommends that this greenway eventually connect with the City of Alpharetta’s Big Creek Greenway to provide an inter-jurisdictional multi-use trail network.

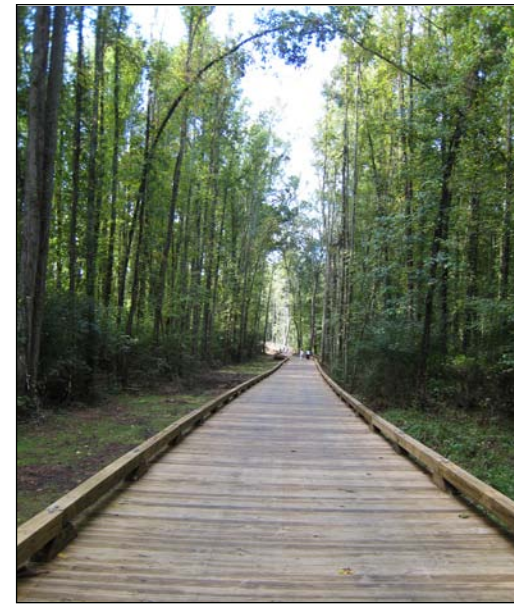


Figure 6: Big Creek Greenway



Figure 7: Big Creek Greenway

The Chattahoochee River Greenway will also be developed in phases. Phase I is proposed to be completed by the year 2019 and the overall project by 2025. The twelve foot wide multi-use path will extend from Buford Dam Road to McGinnis Ferry Road. The Chattahoochee River Greenway will contain approximately 9.47 miles of trails at an estimated cost of 10 million dollars.

The Etowah River Greenway will span from the Cherokee County border to the Dawson County border along the river corridor and will contain approximately 5.87 miles of multi-use trails. The estimated cost for the twelve foot wide concrete path is 6.2 million dollars.

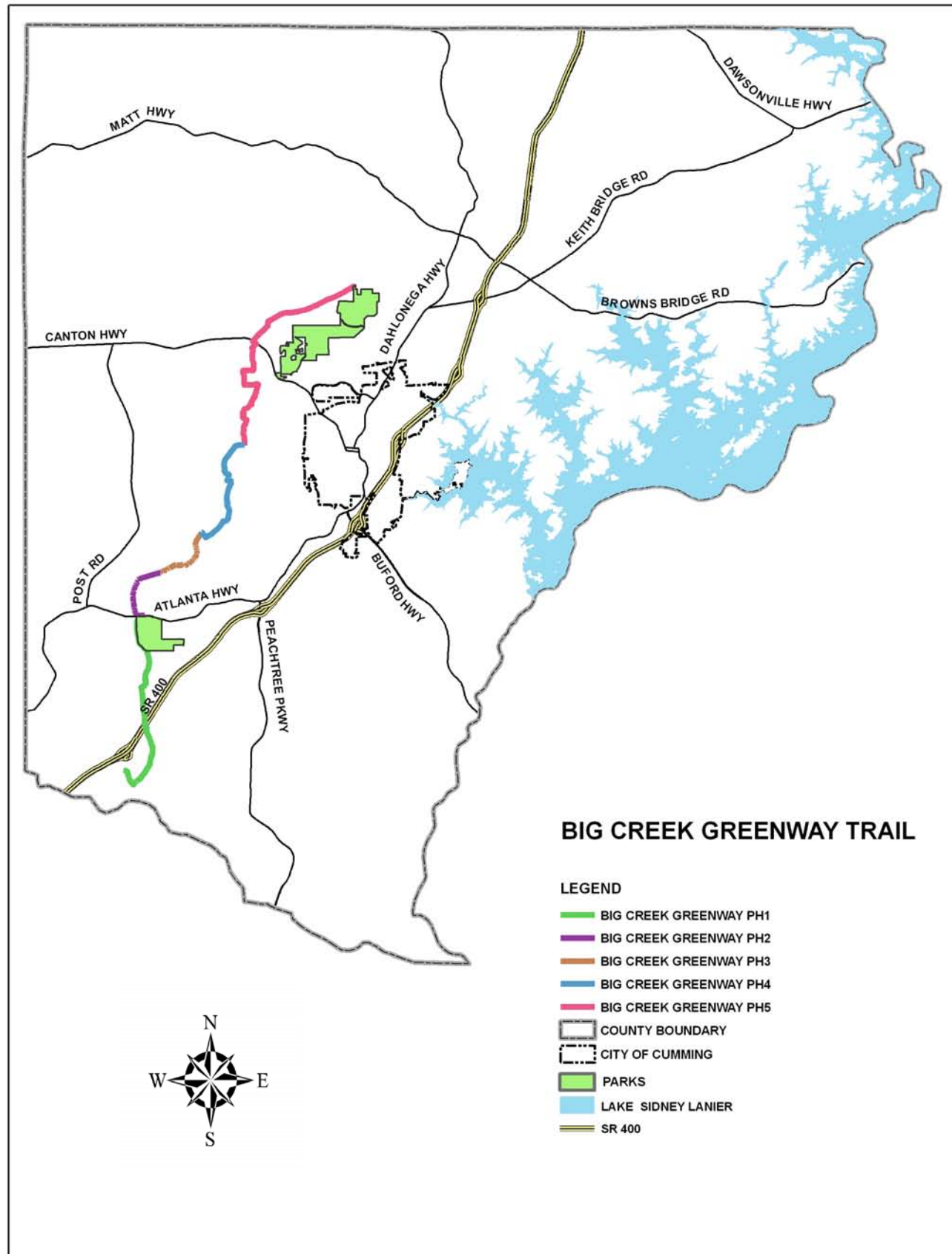
The fourth multi-use project is the Sawnee Mountain Greenway. The twelve foot wide paved concrete multi-use path will connect to Phase III hiking trails within the Sawnee Mountain Preserve. The proposed completion date of this project is 2025. The greenway will extend from the Sawnee Mountain Preserve to Poole’s Mill Park, spanning 7.96 miles. The cost of the project is estimated at 9 million dollars.

**Canoe Trails**

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the potential implementation of a blueway or canoe trail along the Etowah River based on public input. The plan also identified the City of Canton as being in the process of developing a water trail amenity that could feasibly be extended through Cherokee County to provide a future inter-jurisdictional connection within the river corridor.

In February of 2008, Forsyth County voters approved a \$100 million park, recreation and green space general obligation bond. The intentions of this bond are to improve and expand existing parks, purchase lands for future active recreational parks and acquire land for passive recreational uses.

FIGURE 8: BIG CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY



One of the proposed bond projects is a canoe trail with facilities on the Etowah River. This project is programmed to include a canoe launch, parking area, restroom facilities, natural surface trails and primitive camping. The property for these facilities, referred to as Eagle’s Beak, has been purchased by bond money as noted in the greenspace acquisition section and one million dollars from the bond will go towards the design and construction of this site.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will be funding the construction of a canoe launch site which will include a boat ramp, picnic area and a small parking lot on approximately one acre of land along McGinnis Ferry Road. The anticipated date of completion for the project is October of 2010. The property will be donated by the county to CRNRA so that they may maintain this newly constructed facility. A pedestrian underpass will connect this site with the McGinnis Ferry unit to the south located within Fulton County.

**Conservation Areas**

*Environmentally Sensitive Land*

Environmentally susceptible areas such as streambanks, floodplains and wetlands are protected through buffers and best management practices via county regulations which incorporate state and federal mandates.

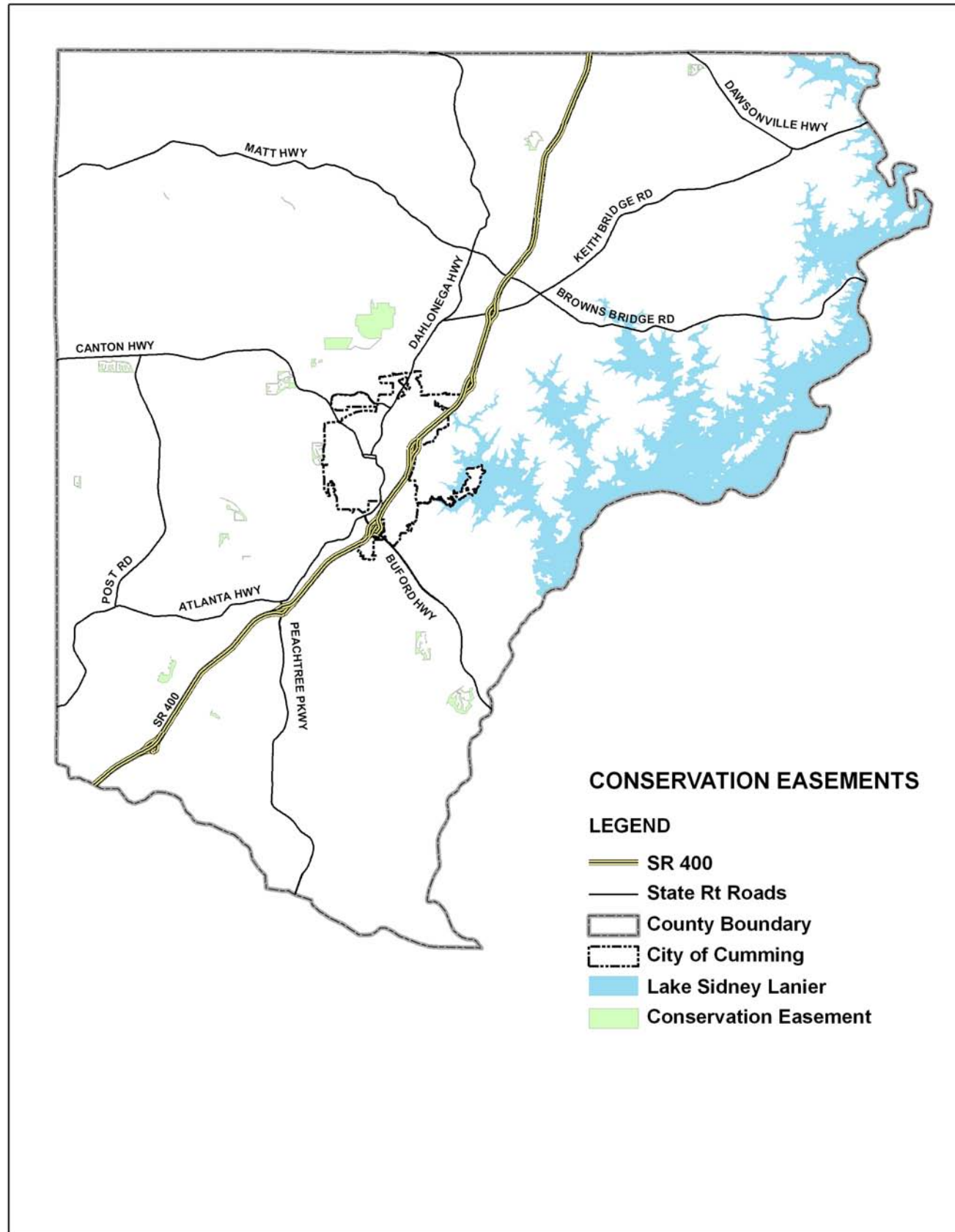
To safeguard streambanks, the Unified Development Code (UDC) requires buffer regulations that apply to all land development activities on properties containing state waters, as defined in the code, which coincides with the state definition. The code asserts that state waters must be protected with an undisturbed natural vegetative buffer, which shall be maintained for fifty feet, measured horizontally, on both banks; an additional setback shall be retained for twenty-five feet, measured horizontally, beyond the undisturbed natural vegetative buffer, wherein all impervious cover is prohibited. These regulations exceed state requirements per the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act and meet the model ordinance requisites for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.

Floodplain and wetland regulations are located in the county’s flood ordinance. This ordinance mandates that no structure or land shall be located, extended, converted or structurally altered without fully complying with county regulations and those set forth by state and federal agencies. Refer to Figure 3 for a map of floodplains and Figure 15 for wetlands located within Forsyth County.

*Conservation Easements*

The UDC defines a conservation easement as a legally enforceable agreement that guarantees permanent protection of land resources through restrictions on existing and future land uses of a defined tract. Conservation easements are required for conservation subdivisions and are sometimes necessitated by zoning conditions. Property acquired with Georgia Community Greenspace funds required conservation easements to meet state requirements. To date, the county has obliged 786.93 acres be placed under conservation easement status. These properties are denoted in Figure 9 and represent open space that will remain in a natural state in perpetuity for future generations.

FIGURE 9: COUNTY-REQUIRED CONSERVATION EASEMENTS



*Greenspace Aquisition*

The Georgia Community Greenspace Program (Program) was passed into law in 2000 under Governor Roy Barnes and properties acquired under this program continue to be administered through DNR. The Program encouraged rapidly growing counties to voluntarily set aside, either through policies or rules, twenty percent of their land area as connected open greenspace. The Program defines greenspace as “permanently protected land and water, including agricultural and forestry land, that is in its undeveloped, natural state or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with, or is restored to be consistent with, one or more listed goals for natural resource protection or informal recreation.” It states that no future development may occur on the preserved land if the construction is not compatible with the intent of the Program.

The Georgia Greenspace Trust Fund was created along with the Program and allocated \$90 million from 2001 through 2003 by the Georgia General Assembly for the acquisition of county greenspace. In 2004, the Program was not funded due to a lack of state revenues, but the regulations imposed on the existing acquired properties remain valid in perpetuity. These funds were voluntary, non-competitive and county-based. Counties eligible for grants were required to develop and implement a plan to permanently protect at least twenty percent of its geographic area as natural, undeveloped greenspace. See Table 14 for a list of properties within the county acquired through Georgia Greenspace funds.

TABLE 14: GEORGIA COMMUNITY GREENSPACE FUND ACQUISITIONS

Mashburn Property (part of Sawnee Mountain Preserve)	90 acres
Barker Property (part of Sawnee Mountain Preserve)	11.18 acres
Bethelview Trailhead Park (to be developed as a component of the Big Creek Greenway)	14.71 acres

In 2005, Governor Sonny Perdue signed into law the Georgia Land Conservation Act (Act), which created the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership (GLCP) and established ten primary land conservation goals and objectives for the state. This act essentially replaced the Georgia Community Greenspace Program. The Act created the Georgia Land Conservation Trust Fund and the Georgia Land Conservation Revolving Loan Fund, both managed by the Georgia Environmental Facility Authority (GEFA). An initial \$100 million in grants and low interest loans were provided to local governments and DNR for the purchase of conservation easements or land for eligible projects. In 2006, an additional \$5 million was included in the budget. In 2008, the Georgia General Assembly approved amendments to the Act, which included the ability for non-government entities to receive low interest loans from the program. The amendment also allows the Georgia Forestry Commission and other state agencies and authorities to be eligible to receive competitive grants. To date, the county has not received any funds due to a funding shortfall in 2008 that has remained in effect.

In addition to property acquired through the Georgia Community Greenspace Program, the county voter-approved bond in February 2008 apportioned \$36 million for greenspace land acquisition. Improvements and acquisitions for open space recreational facilities were also included, consisting of \$8 million for the Big Creek Greenway, \$1.8 million for phase three of the Sawnee Mountain Preserve, \$4 million for a northwest community park (Wallace Tatum property), \$4

million for a north community park (Lanierland) and \$1.1 million towards Corps parks.

The county defined greenspace in the context of the bond referendum as “protected natural, ecological and cultural resources provided and maintained to benefit residents, businesses and visitors. It preserves undisturbed open space; protects air and water quality; offers passive outdoor recreation opportunities; and promotes and enhances the quality of life of the community. Greenspace is land that remains in a relatively natural state. It helps make the community attractive, livable, and economically competitive and viable.” Unlike properties obtained through state greenspace funds, there are no requirements to legally protect county bond purchased acreage in perpetuity through conservation easements or deed restrictions.

In the selection of greenspace property, technical expertise was provided by county staff and consultant services. Properties within the county were first evaluated based on a ranking of the following goals: Evenly distributed greenspace throughout the county; protection of water quality; increase of passive recreation opportunities; protection and improvement of wildlife corridors and habitat; preservation of cultural resources; preservation of scenic resources; provision of alternative transportation routes; economic benefit to the county; and maximum acquisition value. Each goal had a series of identified characteristics upon which parcels would be evaluated as noted in Table 15. Potential parcels for acquisition were then scored based on the number of goal characteristics a given parcel exhibited with higher scores indicating a preferable location.

TABLE 15: FORSYTH COUNTY GREENSPACE ACQUISITION GOALS

Goal	Property Characteristics
Evenly distributed greenspace throughout the county	Population density Number of parks and population served Number of acres and population served Condition of land Accessibility Vacant lots Existing easements
Protection of water quality	Aquifer recharge areas Rivers/streams/ water bodies Wetlands Highly erodible soils Heavily vegetated parcels Length of shoreline/ stream bank 303d streams
Increase passive recreation opportunities	Topography Water features Vegetation Open space (cleared land) Size of parcel Location
Protection and improvement of wildlife corridors and habitat	Riparian and lake buffers Wetlands Properties adjacent to vegetated areas Heavily vegetated parcels Known wildlife areas

TABLE 15: FORSYTH COUNTY GREENSPACE ACQUISITION GOALS continued

Goal	Property Characteristics
Preservation of cultural resources	Historic registered homes and structures Archeological resources Scenic resources Large specimen trees Agricultural land Unique ecological areas
Preservation of scenic resources	High visibility areas Heavily vegetated areas Water features Unique natural features Presence of cultural resources Large specimen trees
Provision of alternative transportation routes	Location of schools Location to greenways Existing infrastructure easements Floodplains
Economic benefit to the county	Increase value of adjacent properties Create revenue with wetland credits Reduce expenditure for required mitigation projects Create recreation revenue opportunity
Maximize acquisition value	Number of people served per acre Cost per acre Current use Donation vs. acquisition Donation through local ordinance

Figure 10 shows the ranking of all parcels not already owned by local, state or the federal government. The nodes on the map were designated based on a preponderance of high ranking parcels as well as the presence of recreational resource inter-connectivity as identified through the Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan. This map should serve as a basis for future greenspace acquisitions when funds become available.

Table 16 indicates the properties that were purchased with bond funds based on consideration of the goal rankings developed for the acquisition process and the locations are shown in Figure 11.

TABLE 16: FORSYTH COUNTY PARKS AND GREENSPACE BOND ACQUISITIONS

PROPERTY NAME	ACREAGE*
BUICE PROPERTY	39
EAGLE’S BEAK PROPERTY	225
LANIERLAND PROPERTY	109
HARRISON PROPERTY	63
MCCLURE PROPERTY	100
WALLACE TATUM PROPERTY	185
WINDERMERE PROPERTY**	31

\*Acreage is approximate

\*\*Additional acreage purchased for existent park; does not represent park acreage total



FIGURE 10: PROPOSED GREENSPACE ACQUISITION AREAS

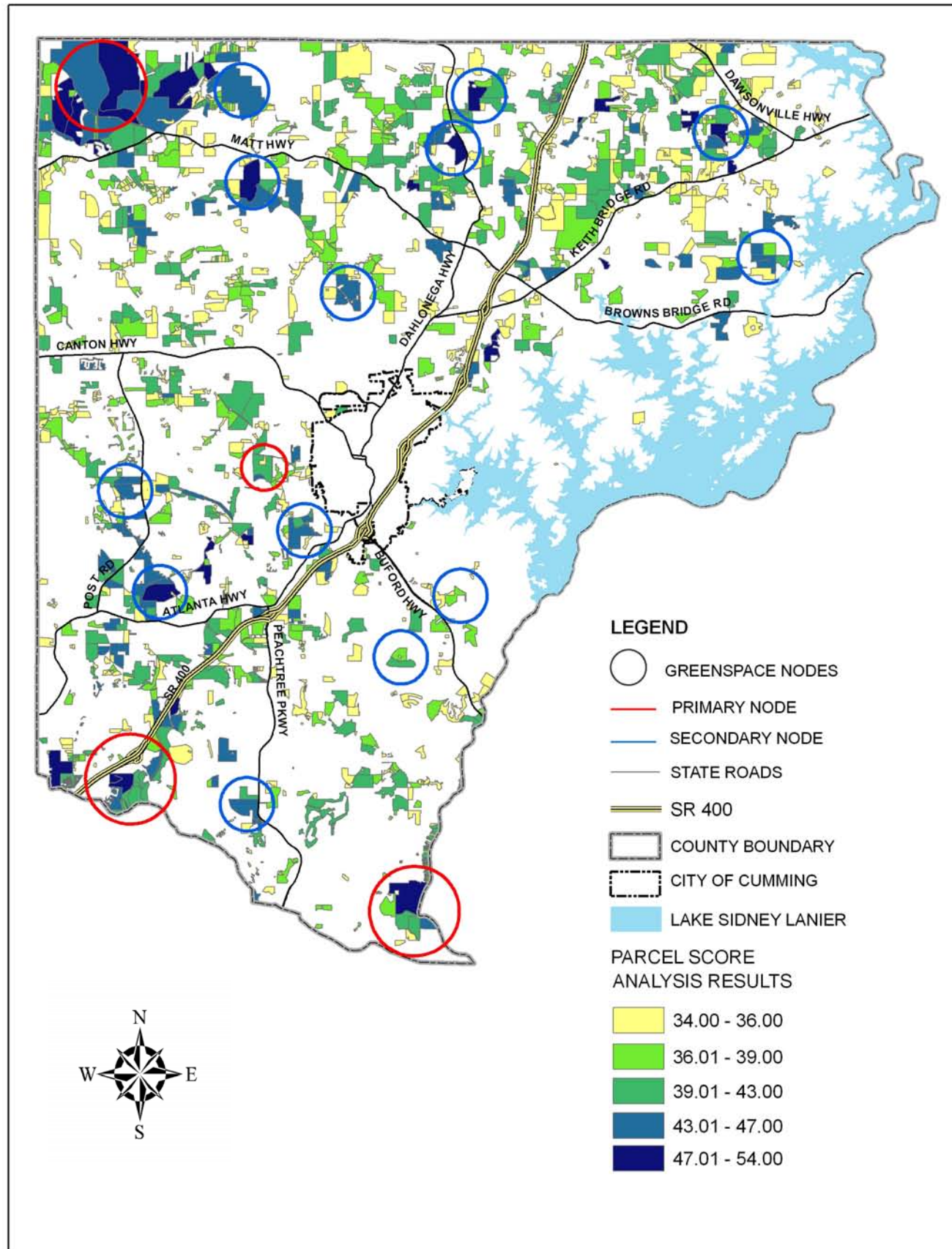
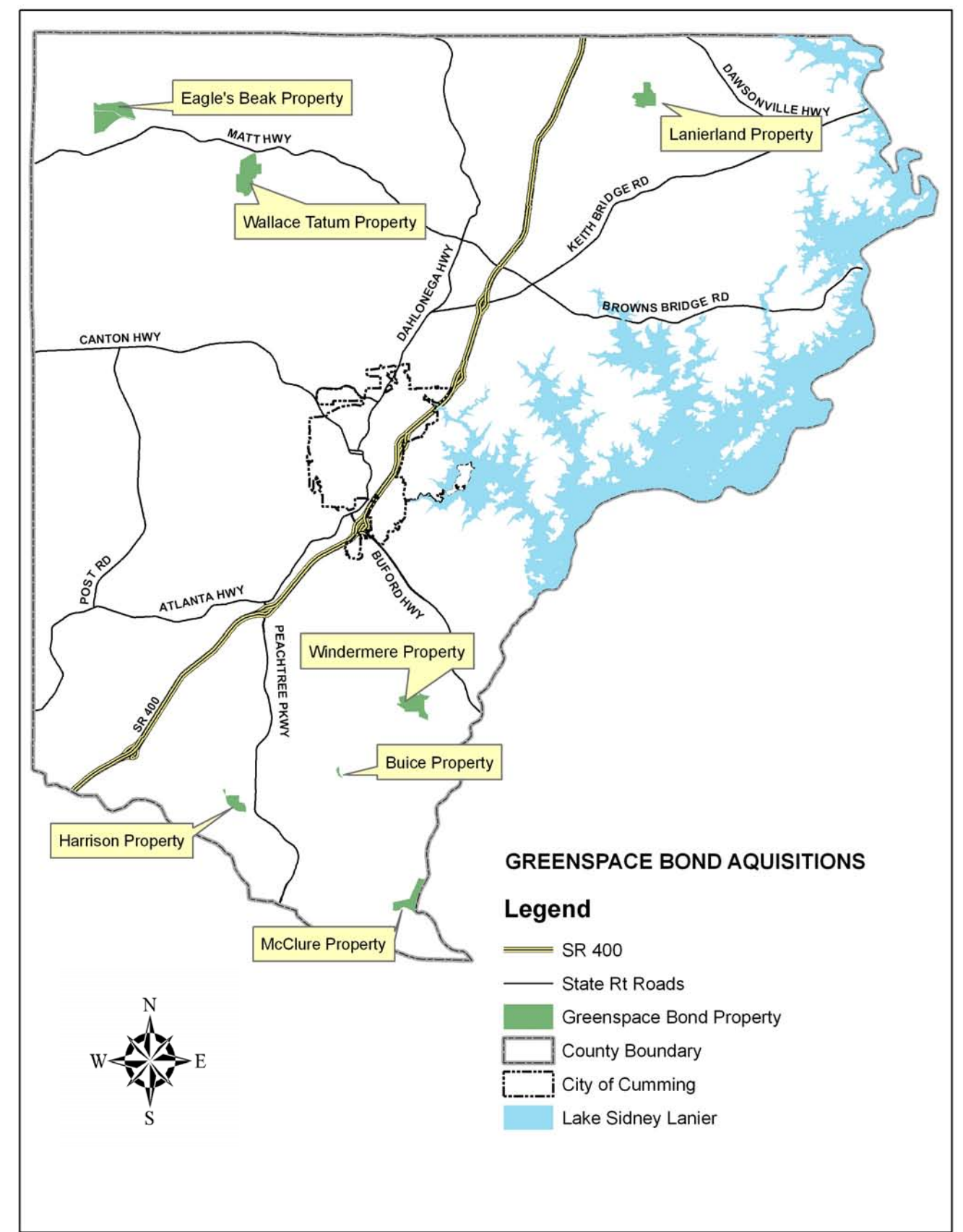


FIGURE 11: GREENSPACE BOND ACQUISITIONS WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY



## Landmarks and Vistas

The rolling topography, Lake Sidney Lanier and the rural character of the northern portion of the county provide many scenic views across the jurisdiction into neighboring municipalities. For instance, the ridgeline of Sawnee Mountain, in the central portion of the county, can be seen from a distance in all directions. The eagle's beak formation of the Etowah River, in the northwest corner of the county, holds cultural significance to the Cherokee Indians. The overlook at Buford Dam offers expansive views of Lake Sidney Lanier and the Chattahoochee River.

Forsyth County has begun to take steps towards protecting these significant landmarks and vistas. The county owns 963 acres of land on Sawnee Mountain, which is the county's largest park and one that focuses on passive recreation and scenic enjoyment. The county has also acquired 225 acres encompassing the eagle's beak formation and 100 acres along the Chattahoochee River towards the southern tip of the county; both of these properties will be designed and managed as passive recreational parks. Other measures in the county that assist with the preservation of scenic resources include a development option for conservation subdivisions that require conservation easements as well as a tree ordinance that seeks to maintain or replace tree canopy as development occurs. In addition, the sign ordinance restricts the size of advertising signage throughout the county, which is particularly important along transportation corridors.

Recognition of scenic resources is possible through the National Scenic Byways Program (NSB). This federal program recognizes designated roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic features. Forsyth County may pursue designation in the future for roads or highways that exemplify the legacy of time's past when agriculture was the predominant way of life. The green infrastructure network is also an integral component of scenic preservation since it offers tracts of open space and pedestrian corridors that allow both land and water access to a multitude of picturesque settings found throughout the county.

## Water Resources

Water resources are important both regionally and locally since water supports jurisdictions economically, is essential to public health, key to the sustainability of ecological processes and boosts quality of life through recreational opportunities. Forsyth County has a variety of water resources available for municipal drinking water, wildlife habitat and recreation. These include surface waters, such as lakes, streams and wetlands as well as below-ground aquifers. All streams in Forsyth County drain into two major river basins, the Chattahoochee River Basin to the southeast and the Coosa River Basin in the northwest. The county is also divided into seven watersheds: Lake Lanier, Big Creek, Etowah, Settingdown, Little River, Chestatee and the Chattahoochee.

The Chattahoochee River Basin is part of the larger Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin, which drains into the Gulf of Mexico. The Chattahoochee River Basin can be subdivided into the three watersheds of Lake Lanier, Big Creek and the Chattahoochee. The man-made Lake Sidney Lanier, which is the largest lake to be entirely contained in the State of Georgia, occupies more than 13,500 acres in Forsyth County. Several tributaries drain into the lake

including Six-Mile Creek, Four-Mile Creek, Two-Mile Creek, Taylor Creek, Bald Ridge Creek and Sawnee Creek. Below the dam, water in the southeast portion of the county drains into the Chattahoochee River. These waters include Haw Creek, Dave's Creek, James Creek, and Dick Creek. The Big Creek watershed, located in the southwestern portion of the county, drains into the Chattahoochee River below the City of Roswell water supply intake in Fulton County.

The Etowah River watershed, which flows through the northwest portion of Forsyth County, joins the Coosa River northwest of the City of Atlanta, to form the Coosa River Basin. The river eventually drains into the Gulf of Mexico as part of the Alabama-Coosa Tallapoosa (ACT) River Basin. The Settingdown Creek watershed flows into the Etowah River just west of Forsyth County.

In March 2000, the Community Watershed Assessment and Watershed Management Plan was produced for the county through an inter-jurisdictional agreement with Hall County and the City of Gainesville as part of a state requirement related to permitting processes for new wastewater discharges and surface water withdrawals. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the environmental health of streams and to develop a management plan to control pollution in selected watersheds. This report includes water quality and biological assessments, modeling development, impacts assessment and recommendations for future management. The goal of the plan is to provide data for sound watershed management decisions as the county grows while continuing to maintain adequate water quality. Since the adoption of the study in 2003, three comprehensive water plans have been approved by the regional water authority, which augments the 2003 information. These three plans include the Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, Watershed Management Plan and the Wastewater Management Plan. The county received confirmation from GA EPD in May 2009 after a state compliance audit indicated that it was "making a good faith effort to comply with the three District plans."

Forsyth County is one of sixteen counties located within the District, which was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 to establish policy and promote intergovernmental coordination of all water issues from a regional perspective. It is through the District, that Forsyth County complies with Georgia's Statewide Water Management Plan prepared by EPD in cooperation with the state's Water Council and enacted on February 2008 by the Georgia General Assembly. The state-wide plan was mandated by the 2004 Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Planning Act so that water resources are managed "to support the state's economy, to protect public health and natural systems and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens (O.C.G.A. 12-5-522(a))."

The District created six model stormwater management ordinances that address a wide variety of stormwater related issues including stormwater runoff, floodplain management, stream buffer protection, prohibited discharge and unlawful connections to stormwater infrastructure, litter control and conservation subdivisions. Jurisdictions within the District are required to adopt these, or similar, model ordinances in order to stay in compliance and maintain their permitting status for increased water withdrawal, new or increased discharge, or for a municipal separate storm sewer or storm drain system permit. To fulfill state regulations, Forsyth County has adopted ordinances for stormwater management and flood control as well as code regulations for stream buffers and conservation subdivisions. In regards to floodplain management, the county

conforms to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) regulations so that it may continue to be a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

**State Waters**

The UDC mirrors the definition from the Georgia state code for state waters as “any and all rivers, streams, creeks, branches, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, drainage systems, springs, wells, and other bodies of surface or subsurface water, natural and artificial, lying within or forming a part of the boundaries of the state which are not entirely confined and retained completely upon the property of a single individual, partnership or corporation.”

Under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, states are required to create a list of impaired waters within their geographic boundary. Impaired waters are defined as “waters that are too polluted or otherwise degraded to meet the water quality standards set by states, territories, or authorized tribes.” The law states that these jurisdictions prioritize their waters via a list and for each one, develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant a waterbody can sustain and still safely meet water quality standards. The National Water Quality Inventory Report to Congress, which is also called the 305(b) report, is one of the main tools used to inform Congress and the general public about water quality conditions in the United States. This report describes our water quality, identifies widespread problems of national significance and explains different programs that have been created to restore and protect our waters. In 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required all states to move to a five-part categorization of their waters. The GA EPD adopted EPA’s five-part categorization method along with the amended 2008 305(b) and 303(d) reports. These five categories and their descriptions are listed below:

Category 1 – Data indicates that waters are meeting their designated use(s).

Category 2 – A water body has more than one designated use and data indicates that at least one designated use is being met, but there is insufficient evidence to determine that all uses are being met.

Category 3 – There was insufficient data or other information to make a determination as to whether or not the designated use(s) is being met.

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

Category 4b – Data indicates that at least one designated use is not being met, but there are actions in place, other than a TMDL, that are predicted to lead to compliance with water quality standards.

Category 4c – Data indicates that at least one designated use is not being met, but a pollutant does not cause impairment.

Category 5 – Data indicates that at least one designated use is not being met and TMDL(s) need to be completed for one or more pollutants.

Tables 17 and 18 list state waters within the county, their location and category classification:

TABLE 17: 2008 INTEGRATED 305 (b) and 303 (d) List

Streams Supporting Designated Uses

STREAM	LOCATION	RIVER BASIN	USE/VIOLATION	EXTENT	CATEGORY & CAUSE
Chattahoochee River	Buford Dam to Dick Creek	Chattahoochee	Recreation/Drinking	8 Miles	1
Dick Creek		Chattahoochee	Fishing	2 Miles	1
Haw Creek	Headwaters to Chattahoochee	Chattahoochee	Fishing	3 Miles	1
Brewton Creek	Etowah River Subwatershed No. 1 Dam to Bannister Creek	Coosa	Fishing	2 Miles	1

TABLE 18: 2008 INTEGRATED 305 (b) and 303 (d) List

Streams Not Supporting Designated Uses

STREAM	LOCATION	RIVER BASIN	USE/VIOLATION*	EXTENT	CATEGORY & CAUSE
Big Creek	Headwaters to Cheatham Creek	Chattahoochee	Fishing	3 Miles	4a,UR
Chattahoochee River	Dick Creek to Johns Creek	Chattahoochee	Recreation/Drinking	12 Miles	5, NP & UR
Four Mile Creek	Lake Lanier Tributary	Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	3 Miles	4a, NP
James Creek		Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	2 Miles	4a, NP & UR
Kelly Mill Branch	Headwaters to Orr Creek	Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	2 Miles	4a,UR
Orr Creek	U/S Castleberry Road (Tyson Foods) to Big Creek	Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	3 Miles	4a, UR
Sawnee Creek	Lake Lanier Tributary	Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	2 Miles	4a, NP
Six Mile Creek	Headwaters to Lake Lanier	Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC & Bio F	2 Miles	4a & 5, NP & UR
Taylor Creek	Dawson/ Forsyth Counties	Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	3 Miles	4a, NP
Two Mile Creek		Chattahoochee	Fishing, FC	5 Miles	4a, NP
Bannister Creek	Reservoir #4 to the Etowah River	Coosa	Fishing, Bio M	2 Miles	4a, NP
Settingdown Creek	Squattingdown Creek to Thalley Creek	Coosa	Fishing, Bio F	3 Miles	5, NP
Settingdown Creek	Thalley Creek to Hurricane Creek	Coosa	Fishing, Bio M	8 Miles	4a, NP

Source for Tables 17 & 18: Water Quality in Georgia Report - Appendix A

NP: Non-Point Source UR: Urban Runoff

Forsyth County implements its municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit requirements to address issues with the 303d and 305b lists. This includes investigating point source pollutants and taking appropriate enforcement action to see those pollutants remediated.

**Water Supply**

*Reservoirs*

**Lake Sidney Lanier**

In 1946, Congress sanctioned the construction of Buford Dam as part of the overall development of the nation’s waterways that targeted river systems for national defense, flood control, power production, navigation and water supplies. The chief purposes of Buford Dam were specifically for flood control, navigation and hydropower. Ground breaking took place in 1950 within Gwinnet County and construction continued until 1957. Lake Sidney Lanier is federally operated by the Corps.

Forsyth County, as part of the District, relies on rivers and storage reservoirs as its main source of water supply. The Chattahoochee River system, which includes Lake Sidney Lanier, is the primary water supply source for the region and accounts for more than sixty percent of the water supply within the District.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Corps contracted with several Georgia communities to draw water from Lake Sidney Lanier without Congressional approval. Although these interim contracts were set to expire in January of 1990, the Corps allowed the withdrawals to continue, which exacerbated serious water disputes between the States of Georgia, Florida and Alabama over reallocation that resulted in several lawsuits involving the Corps since 1990. The county currently purchases water from the City of Cumming whose contracts with the Corps allowed water withdrawals from Lake Sidney Lanier at a rate of two-and-a-half million gallons per day via the 1978 contract and five million gallons a day per the 1985 contract. In the fall of 1988, a contract gave consent for ten million gallons a day to the City of Cumming. These interim contracts expired in 1990 as previously mentioned.

The latest court decision occurred in May 2009, when a federal district court ruling was made granting metropolitan Atlanta three years to obtain Congressional approval for reallocation of Lake Sidney Lanier’s water storage beyond the Congressionally authorized withdrawals from the 1950s for the Cities of Gainesville and Buford. The court ruling states that if a resolution is not found within a three year period, the allocation will revert to the baseline operation of the mid-1970s with only the Cities of Gainesville and Buford permitted to make lake withdrawals. During this three year period, current water supply withdrawals may continue.

In looking to the future, water supply sources within the District do not meet the projected demands for the year 2030. By current law, the District is not allowed to import water from outside basins, and because of constraints involving environmental permits, it is possible that no new reservoirs will be developed in the District beyond those presently in the permitting process, according to the current regional water management plan. This plan’s primary recommendation proposes increased reallocation of Lake Sidney Lanier as a critical water source for the next thirty years and beyond. If Congressional approval is not forthcoming for increased withdrawal from

Lake Sidney Lanier, state, regional and local water plans will have to be readjusted and new water resources strategized to meet projected population increases. In early 2010, Forsyth County indicated interest in partnering with Hall County on the planning of the Glades Reservoir that is identified in the District’s water supply plan. At this time, no financial and allocation agreements have been formalized, but inter-jurisdictional discussions are expected to continue.

**Etowah River and Bannister Creek**

The May 2009 Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, produced by the District, indicated that Forsyth County could utilize the Etowah River and Bannister Creek as potential reservoir water sources. The county has conducted preliminary investigations for the construction of these proposed reservoirs. A reservoir of any size would take an average of ten to fifteen years to complete, from the planning stages to being fully operational.

*Additional Surface Water*

In 2007, the county applied for a surface water withdrawal permit from EPD. The source would be the Chattahoochee River on county-owned property for a maximum daily amount of 24 million gallons per day. This supply would be utilized by county areas not located within the City of Cumming’s water service boundaries. Some interbasin transfer would occur since a portion of the county’s service area lies in the Etowah drainage basin. If EPD approves the permit, additional state as well as federal permits would be required.

*Groundwater Resources*

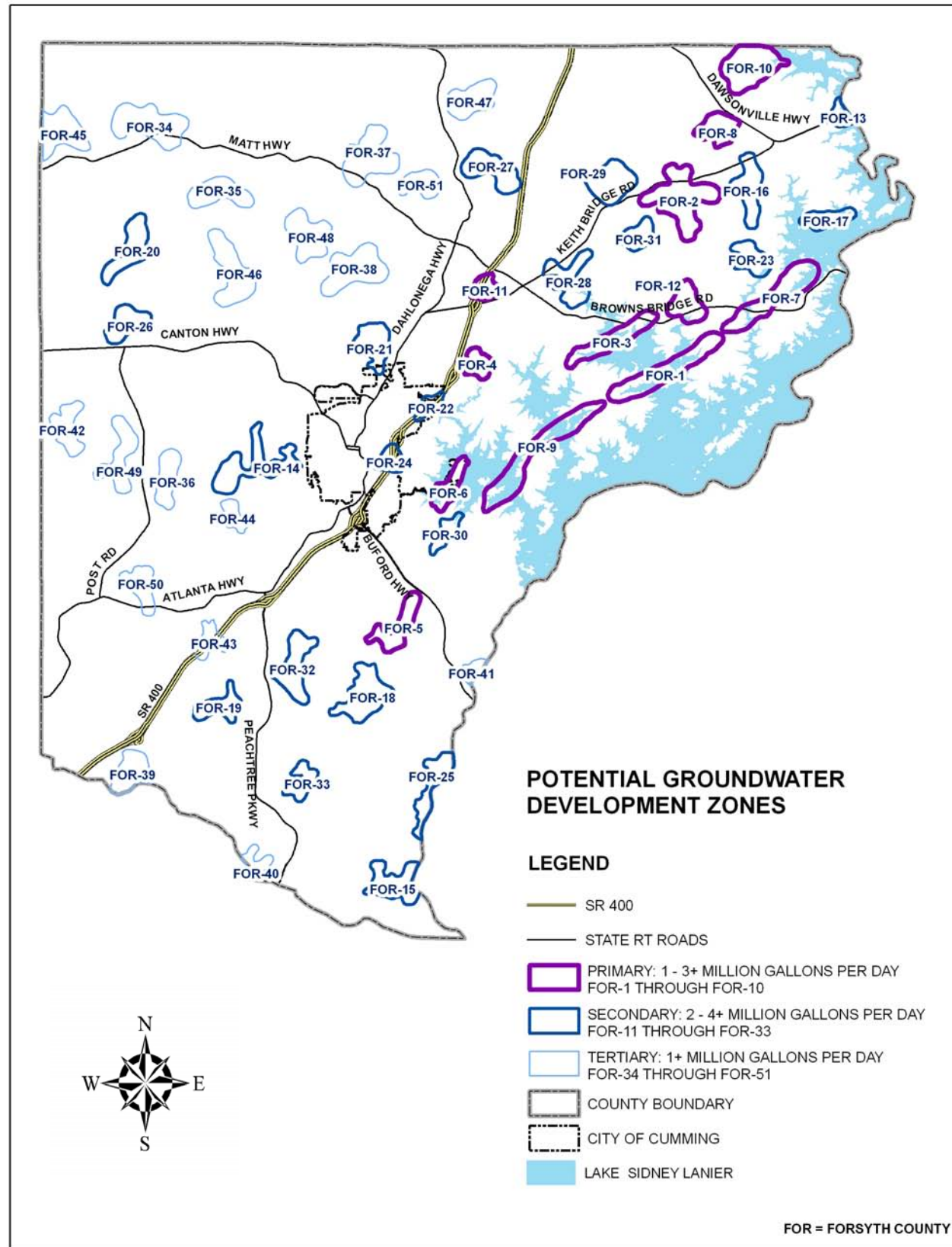
In 2006, Emery & Garrett Groundwater, Inc. (EGGI) completed Phase I of a groundwater investigation for Forsyth County. The county’s intention for this investigation was to use the proposed water data to supplement existing surface water sources. The result of this examination identified fifty-one zones within the county where groundwater development is considered favorable. Phase I of the study indicated that the development of 2.5 to 5+ million gallons of potable water was achievable per day. However, it should be noted that EGGI’s exploration efforts have been restricted to evaluating only “above” surface (aerial platforms) and “ground” surface hydrogeologic information. Further studies such as exploratory test well drilling may modify the ranking of these zones and the estimated groundwater capacity for the county.

EGGI’s groundwater exploration and development program is divided into seven phases as follows:

- Phase I Delineation of zones (subareas)
- Phase II Determination of test well drilling site locations (geophysical surveys)
- Phase III Exploratory test well drilling
- Phase IV Installation of large-diameter production wells
- Phase V Long-term pumping test on highest yielding wells
- Phase VI Preparation of final hydrogeologic report for groundwater supply source
- Phase VII Construction of pump house(s) and installing all pumping equipment and other applicable appurtenances

To date, EGGI has completed Phase I and II of the study as of September 2008. Figure 12 maps the fifty-one groundwater zones. Based on the hydrogeological data that was collected and

FIGURE 12: POTENTIAL GROUNDWATER DEVELOPMENT ZONES IN FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: Emery & Garrett Groundwater, Inc.

compiled for the report, EGGI predicted that the following water supply goals from groundwater sources are achievable and the different zones combined into three categories could yield from one to over four million gallons per day.

*Water Supply Watersheds*

A water supply watershed is the area where rainfall runoff drains into a river, stream or reservoir used as a source of public drinking water supply. Protection of these watersheds is important to ensure public health and reduce the amount of purification needed to provide safe drinking water. All seven major watersheds found in the county are shown in Figure 13 including Big Creek that is a legislatively protected watershed based on the state's Environmental Planning Criteria. The criteria entails a set of standards be created that allows development of a water supply watershed without contaminating the water source to a point where it cannot be treated to meet drinking water standards. The measures are determined by water supply watershed size and proximity to a water intake facility. Watersheds of less than 100 square miles in size are considered small water supply watersheds while ones greater than 100 square miles are considered large. There are additional requirements for the seven mile radius surrounding a water intake facility.

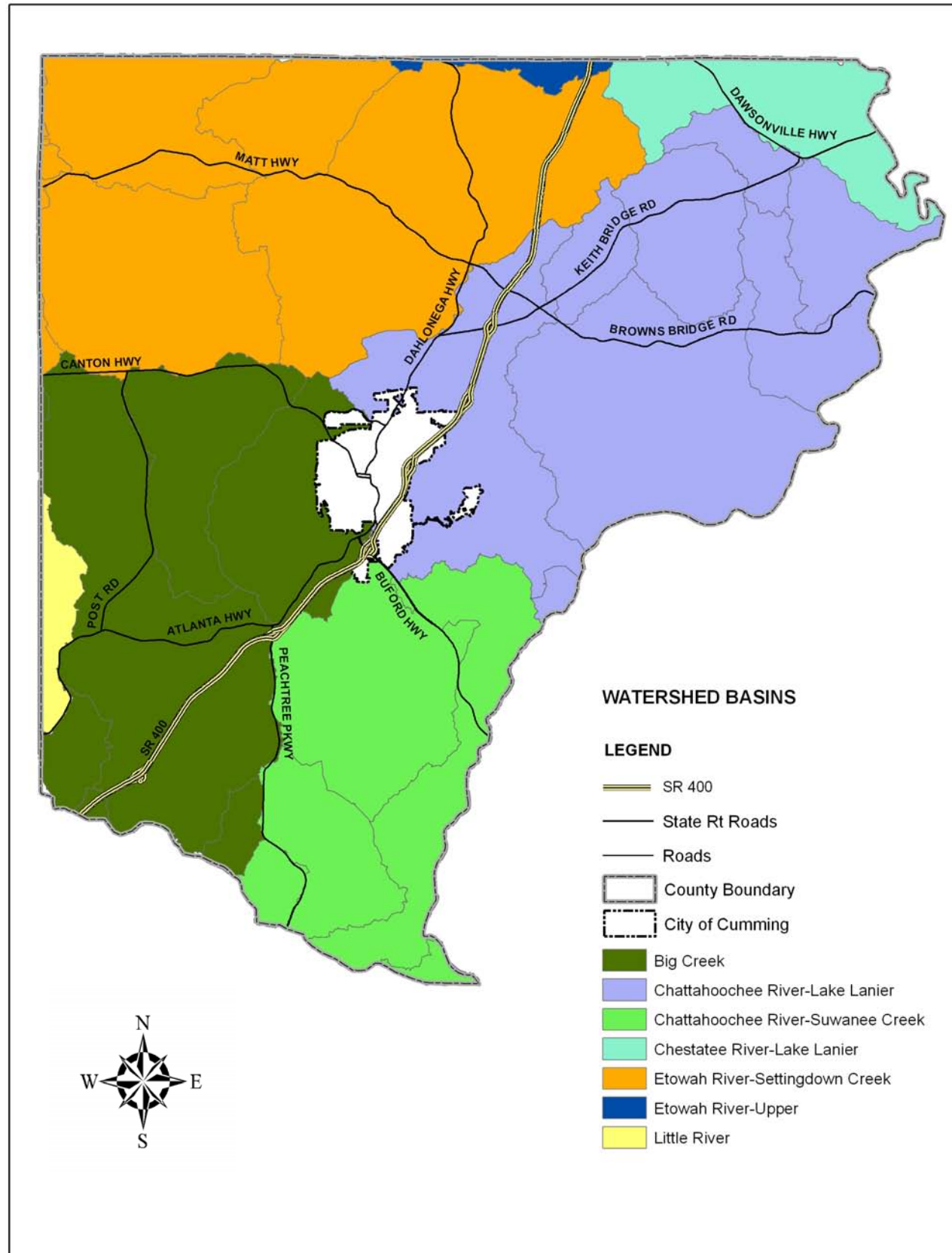
The Big Creek watershed, in the southwest section of the county, is slightly smaller than 100 square miles and is therefore considered a small water supply watershed. Although there is a water intake site for the City of Cumming within the Lake Lanier watershed, the state's criteria do not apply to federal lakes.

*Big Creek*

According to DNR, the entire Big Creek watershed constitutes 96.4 square miles. The City of Roswell withdraws water at an intake that is located less than seven miles south of the Forsyth County boundary. For this reason, the county has adopted a Protected Water Supply Watershed Overlay District for the area to comply with the state's Environmental Planning Criteria. Within the seven-mile radius, DNR requires the following: A 100 foot buffer on both sides of the stream as measured from the stream banks with a 150 foot setback and the prohibition of septic tanks and septic tank drainfields within this setback. In addition, the perennial stream corridors within the Big Creek watershed, upstream and outside the seven mile radius of the City of Roswell water intake point, are protected by the county's code general requirements for all stream corridors. The prohibition of septic tanks and septic tank drainfields within the stream setback also applies to the following streams: Bentley Creek, Cobb Creek, Harris Creek, Chatham Creek, Kelley Mill Branch, Sawmill Branch, Cumming Twin Lakes and Bagley Creek.

Criteria that specifically applies to a small water supply watershed include: New sanitary landfills are allowed only if they have synthetic liners and leachate collection systems; new hazardous waste treatment or disposal facilities are prohibited; the impervious surface area, including all public and private structures, utilities, or facilities, of the entire water supply watershed shall be limited to twenty-five percent or existing use, whichever is greater; new facilities which handle hazardous materials of the types listed in Section 312 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, excluding underground storage tanks, and amounts of 10,000 pounds on any one day or more, shall perform their operations on impermeable surfaces in conformance with any applicable federal spill prevention requirements or the requirements of the Standard Fire Prevention Code.

FIGURE 13: WATERSHED BASINS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: USGS Hydrologic Units (HUC 10)

A limitation of twenty-five percent impervious surface within the Big Creek watershed applies to several jurisdictions. These include: Forsyth County, Cherokee County, Fulton County, the City of Alpharetta, the City of Cumming and the City of Roswell. A detailed analysis of the Big Creek watershed's impervious coverage within Forsyth County was completed in the fall of 2009, which indicated that approximately fourteen percent was composed of impervious surfaces including but not limited to public and private roads, driveways, building footprints, parking lots, sidewalks and a host of miscellaneous structures such as tennis courts and swimming pools. The impervious surface area requirement was calculated based on the portion of the watershed within unincorporated Forsyth County per the Unified Development Code.

*Groundwater Recharge Areas*

Groundwater recharge occurs in areas composed of topography and geology that allow percolation of surface water through the soil into an aquifer. These permeable surfaces raise the groundwater table and slow the flow of water into streams during rain events; they also provide a source of drinking water. If the aquifer becomes polluted, it is virtually impossible to decontaminate it. The groundwater recharge areas were mapped by DNR in Hydrologic Atlas #18, 1989 edition. The mapping was based on outcrop areas, lithology, soil type and thickness, slope, density of lithologic contacts, geologic structure, presence of "karst" topography and potentiometric surfaces. The Hydrologic Atlas # 20, 1992 edition entitled 'Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility Map of Georgia,' indicates areas of high, average and low pollution susceptibility. In the adoption of local ordinances, this map dictates the minimum lot sizes allowable for the construction of new homes and other structures that rely on septic tank systems.

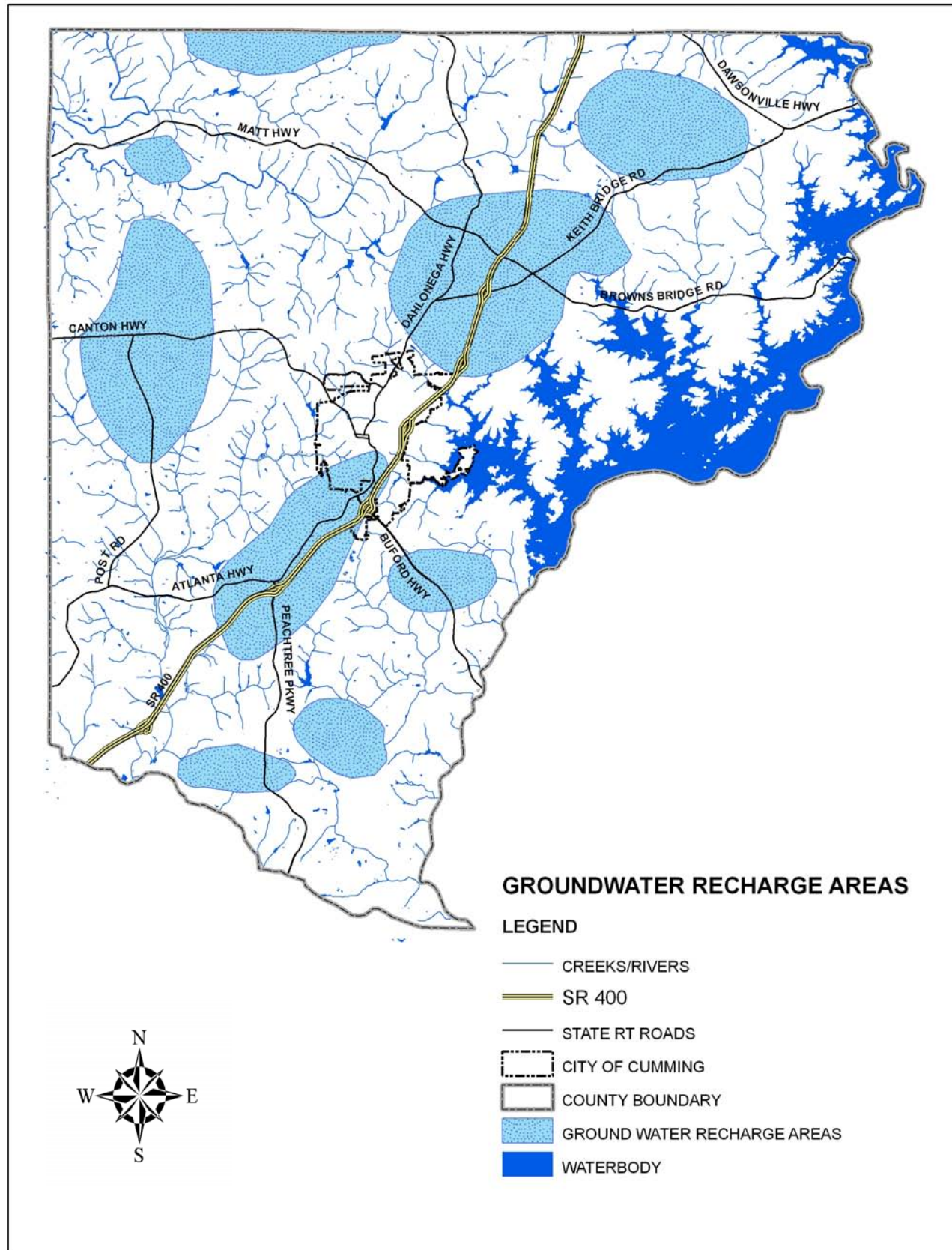
Forsyth County has adopted a list of criteria to be followed within any significant groundwater recharge area:

- DNR will not issue permits for sanitary landfills not having synthetic liners and leachate collection systems
- DNR will not issue permits for the land disposal of hazardous wastes
- DNR shall require all new facilities be permitted to treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste to perform such operations on an impermeable pad having a spill and leak collection system
- New above-ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks, having minimum volume of 660 gallons, shall have secondary containment for 110% of the volume of such tanks or 110% of the volume of the largest tank in a cluster of tanks; such tanks used for agricultural purposes are exempt; provided they comply will all federal requirements

*Protected Rivers*

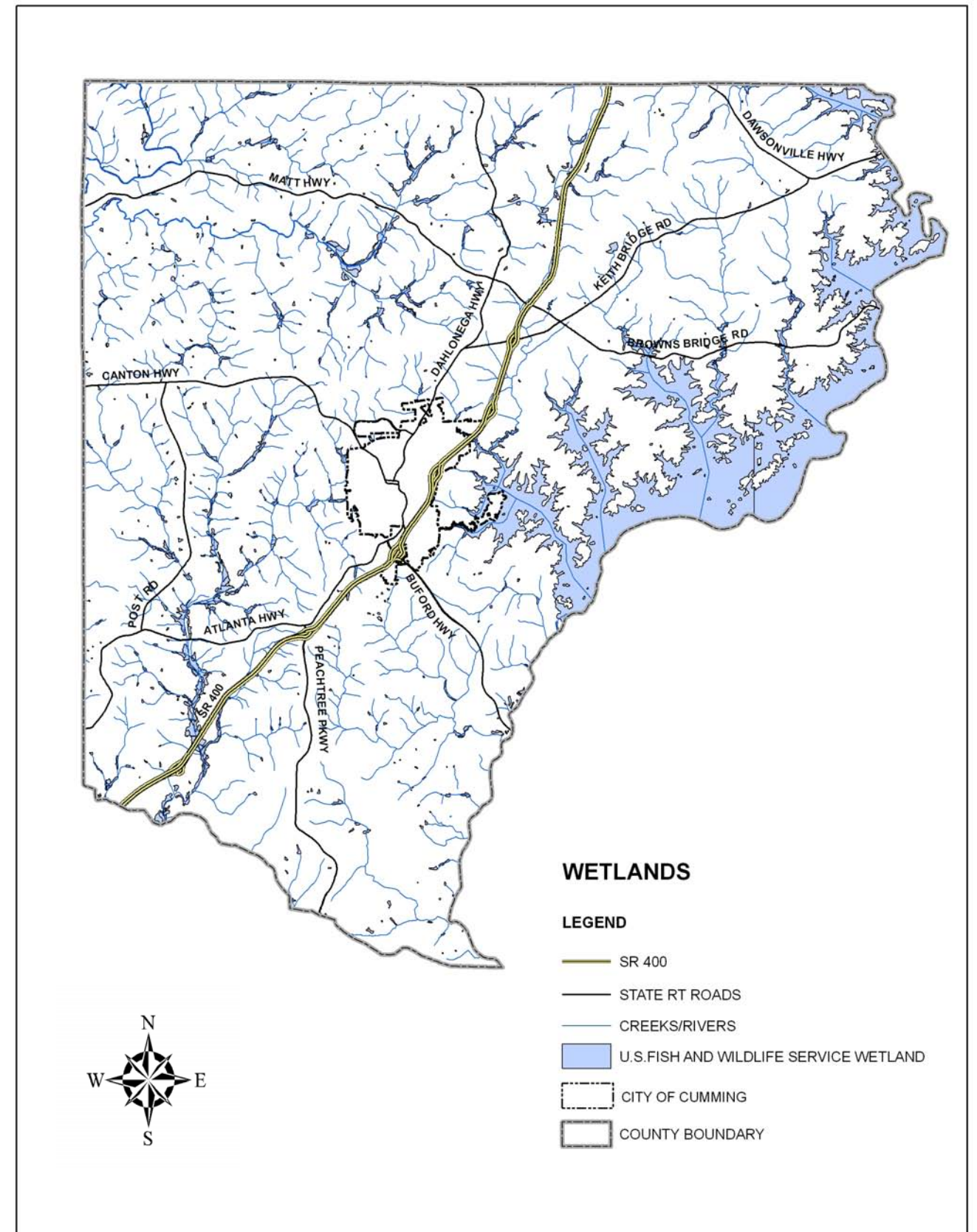
In 1973, the Georgia General Assembly enacted the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA). This act established a 2000-foot corridor along both sides of the Chattahoochee River and its impoundments for the 48 miles between Buford Dam and Peachtree Creek. In 1998, MRPA was amended to extend the corridor an additional 36 miles downstream to the southern limits of Fulton and Douglas Counties. MRPA required that the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) adopt a plan, whose primary goal is the preservation and protection of water quality within the corridor since it is the region's primary source of drinking water, and to review development within the

FIGURE 14: GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources

FIGURE 15: WETLANDS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

corridor for consistency with this plan. A large section of the Chattahoochee River corridor is located along the southeastern boundary of Forsyth County. The county is required to coordinate development activities along the corridor with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC). GMRC forwards any development proposal to the EPD as part of the standard review process.

#### Wetlands

Wetlands are areas with permanently or temporarily saturated soils that influence the unique plant and animal communities living there. They serve valuable ecological functions for the community in terms of flood water retention, soil erosion control, groundwater recharge and pollution filtration. The county has adopted a wetland protection district and coordinates with land disturbance permit applicants regarding Corps review if the project is subject to the Clean Water Act 404 permitting process. The largest areas of wetlands can be found along Big Creek, Settingdown Creek and the Etowah River. Additional wetlands can be found in association with the shoreline of Lake Sidney Lanier and in small, man-made ponds. The WFS National Wetlands Inventory maps are used to identify potential wetland sites as shown in Figure 15.

## Potential Conservation Tools

Forsyth County remains one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Georgia. This growth trend is not without potential costs, including the diminishment of valuable natural resources. Some of these resources possess not only recreational and scenic worth, but are crucial to the expansion of the area since they are tied to key infrastructure needs such as water. For example, the Chattahoochee River, Lake Sidney Lanier, the Etowah River and Big Creek watershed are vital resources on which a multitude of land uses depend. In addition, contributions to the green infrastructure network will continue to gain significance as a community amenity while more residents make the county their home, thereby requiring additional recreational opportunities and intensifying the need to protect natural areas. The preservation of the county's rural heritage, most often glimpsed in pastures that emphasize the gently sloping landscape associated with the Piedmont region, is another consideration since a sizeable portion of the county is located within a pastoral setting, which is an important asset contingent upon resource protection.

In an effort to balance development expansion with natural resource conservation, there are a variety of regulatory tools and outreach opportunities that may be utilized to promote sustainability. The following tools represent conservation options not previously reviewed.

### Regulatory

#### Conservation Subdivisions

The primary design criteria for conservation subdivisions is the provision and conservation of open space with allowance for the same amount of developable square footage found within conventional residential development. The county code regulations intend to minimize the impacts of new construction while contributing to the green infrastructure network. This is accomplished through the supply of contiguous open space that decreases visual and environmental effects through the incorporation of at least forty percent of the total land area as both primary and secondary conservation areas as defined in the code. These areas must be legally protected through

conservation easements to ensure that unauthorized use and further subdivision of land does not occur. Mass clearing or grading is prohibited in the identified conservation areas and no less than five acres of contiguous open space is necessitated based on the minimum acreage size for the total development. The code offers flexibility in the minimum lot sizes per residential zoning district in order to achieve consolidated open space.

#### Tree Protection and Replacment Ordinance

This ordinance sets standards for the preservation and replacement of trees to perform the vital functions related to soil, air and water quality and stabilization that trees impart as an element of the natural environment. Additionally, trees provide wildlife shelter and food as well as granting shade, wind breaks, sound barriers and beautification to the built environment. The tree ordinance requires the maintenance of fifteen to twenty units per acre depending on the type of zoning district and calls for the replacement of specimen or landmark trees in the majority of these districts. These requirements are instituted for commercial, industrial, mixed use and residential land uses.

#### Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance

This ordinance requires Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all stages of land disturbing activities since such actions may lead to excessive soil erosion and resulting sedimentation pollution. This ordinance is pursuant to the Georgia Water Quality Control Act and the Metropolitan River Protection Act; furthermore, it adheres to measures found within the Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia.

#### Transfer of Development Rights Program

The original county greenspace program identified the potential of creating a transfer of development rights (TDR) program through which development rights from one property can be conveyed to another property. Value for development rights must be established and sending and receiving areas would be ascertained on a case-by-case basis. Once development rights for a particular piece are conveyed, a conservation easement is then placed on the sending property to protect natural resources in perpetuity. A program of this type requires codification and represents a prospective conservation tool for the county to consider that has been adopted by other jurisdictions within the state.

### Funding, Technical Assistance and Incentive Programs

#### Federal

##### CONSERVATION AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 1999 (CARA)

The Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999 (CARA), was passed by the House and approved by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in 2000 to allocate revenues from outer continental shelf oil and gas activities for federal and state resource acquisition and protection, urban recreation, wildlife protection and related purposes. CARA was created to provide for the permanent protection of resources and to meet outdoor conservation and recreation needs.

Beginning in fiscal year of 2002, CARA, also known as H.R. 701, has annually provided 450 million dollars to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for federal and state land acquisition.

THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND



The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created by Congress in 1965 to provide matching grants to states and local governments for the purchase and development of public outdoor recreational areas and facilities. The intent of the program is to create and maintain nationwide recreational spaces. The Congressional Act designated that a portion of receipts from offshore oil and gas leases be placed in the fund annually. The LWCF Program is divided into two distinct funding pools: State grants and federal acquisition funds. Locally, projects have included thousands of neighborhood playgrounds, soccer fields and baseball diamonds across the country.

Since its creation, the LWCF has been administered by several different departments beginning with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) who oversaw the program from 1965 to 1978. In 1978, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) was created and took over the program until 1981 when the LWCF was transferred to the NPS, who currently administers it today.

Forsyth County has received several LWCF grants in the past for the development of various projects including Sharon Springs Park, Midway Park and Bennett Park. More recently, the county was awarded a grant for the rehabilitation of Ducktown Park, located on Heardsville Road in the northwestern section of the county. The proposed use of the \$100,000 grant will be for the construction of an ADA restroom facility, soft surface walking trail, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, additional parking and a new sign.

#### RIVERS, TRAILS AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program is also known as Rivers and Trails or RTCA. They provide technical assistance to non-profit organizations, community groups, and local, state and federal agencies to protect open space, conserve rivers and develop trails and greenways.

The RTCA program implements the mission of the NPS by helping communities achieve tangible conservation successes. RTCA is currently partnering with Forsyth County for the creation of the Etowah River canoe trail for conservation education, outdoor recreation and transportation. RTCA will also be developing a concept plan for a county park along the Etowah River that includes the canoe trail.

#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE: CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS

The Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) was established in 2002, with the amendment of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, and is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The CIG is a voluntary program whose intention is to “stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production.”

Funding for the CIG is announced each year via a funding notice and is available in the fifty

states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Under the CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds are used to award competitive grants to non-federal governmental or non-governmental organizations, tribes or individuals. CIG funding is available for single- or multi-year projects.

#### 319(h) NONPOINT SOURCE IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM

In 1987, Congress amended the Clean Water Act to create the 319(h), Nonpoint Source Management Program. This program provides for federal guidance to help direct state and local efforts. Under section 319(h), states, territories and Indian tribes may receive funding to assist with a wide range of water quality activities that seek to prevent, control and abate nonpoint source pollution.

The funding for the grant comes from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but is distributed through EPD. Funds are awarded through a competitive application process to eligible public organizations. Approved applicants are required to match at least forty percent of the total project cost either through local funds or in-kind services. Priority is given to total maximum daily loads (TMDL) implementation plans, watershed management plans or best management practices (BMPs) identifying pollutant load reductions. These plans must specifically assuage the violations identified in Georgia’s section 305(b) and 303(d) list of impaired waters. The eventual goal is to restore these impaired waters for which plans have been developed and then implemented.

#### SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS (SAFETEA-LU)

SAFETEA-LU is a federal program administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation. It addresses many challenges facing the state’s current transportation system such as traffic congestion, intermodal connectivity and environmental protection. In addition, approximately 175 million dollars in grants and technical assistance has been authorized through 2009 to states for the development of scenic byways and to execute projects along highways designated as National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads, America’s Byways and state recognized scenic byways.

Approximately 370 million dollars was authorized through 2009 under this program for the development and maintenance of trails for recreational purposes such as equestrian, bicycling and off-road vehicle leisure activities.

#### State

##### GEORGIA LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Georgia Land Conservation Act (the Act) was endorsed in 2005 and serves as the foundation for the Georgia Land Conservation Program thereby replacing the Georgia Community Greenspace Program. The Act was created to promote partnerships for the conservation of land resources identified by cities or counties as locally valuable or identified by DNR as having state-wide significance.

The goals set forth in the Act include but are not limited to “water quality protection for rivers, stream, and lakes; wetlands protection; protection of riparian buffers and other areas that serve as

natural habitat and corridors for native plants and animal species; and connection of existing or planned areas contributing to the goals of the statute.” Initial priorities include the conservation of land for the protection of fragile natural habitats.

**GEORGIA CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM**

In 2006, the Georgia legislature passed the Georgia Conservation Tax Credit Program (GCTCP), House Bill 1107. The stated purpose of GCTCP was to “provide for income tax credits with respect to qualified donation of real property for conservation purposes.” The conservation tax credit is to increase the financial incentive for willing landowners to donate land or place a conservation easement on their property.

This program provides a state income tax credit for fee simple donations of property or conservation easements to a qualified organization. Taxpayers can claim a credit against their state income tax of 25% of the fair market value of the donated property, up to a maximum credit of \$250,000 per individual and \$500,000 per corporation.

GCTCP is administered jointly by DNR and the Georgia Department of Revenue. DNR is responsible for determining whether or not donated properties are suitable for conservation purposes described in the program and for providing certification of suitability to the landowner.

**GEORGIA RECREATION ASSISTANCE FUND**

Defined under state law, the general purpose of the Recreation Assistance Fund (RAF) “is to provide grant assistance to eligible applicants for acquisition of real property and/or development of recreation facilities for general purpose public recreation.” Funding is appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly in the annual or supplemental budget process and awarded as grants to applicants with proposed projects to increase the local supply of public recreation lands and facilities through the purchase of real property, facility development or the rehabilitation of existing facilities.

All grants are subject to various state and federal laws, rules and regulations. These include but are not limited to environmental compliance as specified in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) and non-discrimination laws.

**DNR’S SUSTAINABILITY DIVISION**

Since 1993, DNR’s Sustainability Division, formally known as the Pollution Prevention Association Division, has been providing free technical assistance related to pollution prevention, resource conservation, waste reduction, by-product reuse and recycling. In 2004, the Sustainability Division created the Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia (the Partnership). The Partnership promotes environmental leadership and acknowledges superior achievement. The goals of the Partnership are “to foster environmental leadership and exemplify organizational excellence.”

The Sustainability Division developed a tiered incentive program to raise participation in the Partnership. Partnership benefits include technical support, networking opportunities and community recognition with specific perks associated with each level as criteria are attained.

**DCA’S WATERFIRST COMMUNITY PROGRAM**

DCA’s WaterFirst Community Program (WaterFirst) is a voluntary partnership between local governments, state agencies and other organizations focused on water resource management. This program requires jurisdictions to consider the relationships between land use development and water quality across political and geographic boundaries.

WaterFirst is a three-step program. The first step is to decide to pursue becoming a WaterFirst Community through tailored project goals based on the environmental and economic conditions of the area. The second step is to exceed minimum state requirements with the goals set forth in step one; community recognition occurs once these goals are reached. The third step is to maintain baseline achievements while setting additional goals through program updates.

In order to be eligible for the WaterFirst Program, a community must be a qualified local government and is required to submit an application to DCA for approval. To be designated as a WaterFirst Community, the applicant is obligated to meet criteria in seven areas: Watershed assessment; stormwater master planning; wastewater treatment and management; water supply planning; water supply protection; water conservation; and water reclamation and reuse. Technical assistance and special workshops are provided by DCA’s Office of Environmental Management for all participants in the WaterFirst Program. Forsyth County achieved recognition as the state’s eighteenth WaterFirst Community in March 2010.

**Local**

**AGRICULTURAL USE TAX ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS**

Bona fide agricultural property can be assessed for ad valorem property tax through one of two special assessment programs: Conservation use valuation or preferential agricultural assessment. Both programs require land, up to 2,000 acres, be dedicated for valid agricultural purposes under a ten year covenant agreement. Conservation use valuation allows an assessment based on current use rather than fair market value. Preferential agricultural property can be assessed at seventy-five percent of the value which other tangible real property is levied. Agricultural preferential assessment applies to all land and up to \$100,00 in agricultural production or storage building value while conservation use valuation applies only to land values. Property owners may apply to the Forsyth County Board of Tax Assessors for preferential assessment under O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-7.1 to obtain a reclassification of their agricultural property. In 2010, Forsyth County in had more than 790 parcels comprising over 24,000 acres of property utilizing a tax preferential status based on agricultural uses.

**THE ETOWAH INITIATIVE, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

The Etowah Initiative (the Initiative) is a service learning course which allows students to apply their classroom experiences of policy, design and ecological principles to real world situations. The Initiative brings together students from the University of Georgia with community stakeholders facing specific environmental challenges.

The mission of the Initiative program is “to help protect the ecological integrity of the Etowah River basin by working with stakeholders to reduce the impact of human activities on water quality and biodiversity.” Some of the key goals for this hands-on program include water quality and the protection and restoration of aquatic species through the best available science, design and policy concepts.

In the fall of 2003, Initiative students completed a study on “Conserving Natural Resources and Expanding Recreational Opportunities in the Upper Etowah Watershed” as a follow-up project to a prior 2001 Regional Greenspace Plan. A component to the overall plan was a proposed canoe trail that identified a paddling route, which would help to expand an individual’s general ecological awareness of the Etowah River corridor.

## Non-Governmental Organizations

### LAND TRUSTS

The Land Trust Alliance, which was created in 1982 as a collaborative effort of approximately 450 state and local land trusts, for the sharing of policy, information and training, defines a land trust as a “non-profit organization that, as all or part of the mission, actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting direct land transactions – primarily the purchase or acceptance of donations of land or easements.” Land trusts work with both landowners as well as the community to preserve land for future generations. Most land trusts are community-based organizations that are well acquainted with local needs and are able to identify lands that contain natural habitats as well as lands that offer recreational, agricultural and conservation uses. The Georgia Environmental Policy Institute indicates that there are over forty active land trusts within the State of Georgia.

## Community Outreach

### KEEP FORSYTH COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

Keep Forsyth County Beautiful (KFCB) was formed in 1993 to preserve the county’s resources such as parks, wildlife habitat and waterways from the anticipated rapid growth of the community. The mission of KFCB is “to cooperate with government, businesses, schools, civic organizations and citizens in a joint effort to improve beautification, litter reduction and recycling.”

KFCB hosts several annual events to incorporate volunteer participation and public awareness of environmental issues. The organization focuses on education and voluntary, hands-on involvement for recycling, litter prevention and water conservation. KFCB also sponsors an annual awards banquet to recognize residents, schools, clubs and businesses for a commitment to “keeping the county green.” Other KFCB events include: Bring One for the Chipper Christmas Tree Recycling, The Great American Cleanup, Liberty Gardens Ceremony, Phone Book Recycling Contest, America Recycles Day and Electronics Recycling Events.

### GEORGIA ADOPT-A-STREAM

The Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) Program is a unique effort to involve the public and local communities in water quality assessment and protection. The program is housed as part of the Nonpoint Source Program in the Water Protection Branch of the Georgia EPD. The AAS Program has four main objectives including public awareness of the state’s nonpoint source pollution and water quality issues; provision of citizen focused tools and training to evaluate and protect local waterways; encouragement of partnerships between citizens and local government; and the collection of quality baseline water quality data. To accomplish these goals, the AAS program, which has more than 7,000 state-wide volunteers and 225 active groups, encourages individuals and communities to monitor and improve sections of streams, wetlands, lakes or estuaries.

### SAWNEE MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

The Sawnee Mountain Preserve offers a variety of activities to many different groups, including schools and the general public. The Preserve’s new visitor center offers free admission and interactive exhibits on the natural and cultural histories of Sawnee Mountain. In addition, the center also provides a resource library for environmental and natural history education. School classes are available year round as well as public programs. Class topics range from plant identification, art or gardening to wildlife studies, geology or local history. The different programs have both indoor and outdoor components and take advantage of the Preserve’s resources.

### RIVERS ALIVE

Rivers Alive was conceived in the early 1990s by Curtis Farrar, a past DNR board member, with the idea of cleaning up state rivers. The first state-wide cleanup focus was organized by the DNR Wildlife Division in 1992. In 1993, the different organizations for river cleanup were divided among the various DNR divisions: Wildlife Resources, Environmental Protection, Coastal and Water Resources. In 1999, the various cleanup organizations throughout the state unified together to form Rivers Alive.

Rivers Alive is the State of Georgia’s annual volunteer waterway cleanup event. Its mission is to “create awareness of and involvement in the preservation of Georgia’s water resources.” The event targets all waterways in the state including streams, rivers, lakes, beaches and wetlands. Rivers Alive is sponsored by EPD’s Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Program and DCA’s Keep Georgia Beautiful Program, in cooperation with Help the Hooch.

### UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

The Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) was created in 1994 by a group of environmentalists, scientists and community activists to protect the Chattahoochee River Basin. The mission of the UCR is to “advocate and secure protection and stewardship of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries and watershed in order to restore and conserve their ecological health for the people, fish and wildlife that depend on the river system.” The primary focus area includes more than 200 miles of the Chattahoochee River and 3,600 square miles of watershed. The protected area begins at the river’s headwater in the Chattahoochee National Forest and continues downstream, through the City of Atlanta, to West Point Lake in Heard County.

The Chattahoochee River, which is the primary drinking source for approximately four million Georgians, Alabamians and Floridians, has been named one of the most endangered rivers in the United States due to poor water quality. The UCR, which has more than 5,000 members, uses advocacy, education, research, communication, cooperation, monitoring and legal actions to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River and its watershed.

### 1071 COALITION

The 1071 Coalition, formed in November of 2008, is a non-profit organization comprised of citizens, civic groups, businesses and other entities dedicated to maintaining the water level of Lake Sidney Lanier. The Coalition’s mission is to work towards sustaining Lake Sidney Lanier at 1071 feet above sea level, which is the full capacity of the lake.

The Coalition has several main objectives including the commission of an economic impact

study of Lake Sidney Lanier, the urging of government officials to assign the lake political priority and to take action in the best interest of Georgians as well as serving as a voice in the public relations struggle between the states over water allocation.

#### LAKE LANIER ASSOCIATION

The Lake Lanier Association (the Association) is the oldest volunteer group working to protect the lake's quality and water level and to preserve its legacy for future generations. Founded in 1966, the Association's mission is "dedicated to a clean and full lake Lanier to enhance its economic value to Georgia."

The original group was founded by homeowners living on the lake. Today, the group is comprised of approximately 4,500 members including lake residents, individuals, families, businesses, boaters and fishermen. The Association sponsors many programs such as "Shore Sweep" and "Adopt a Lake," geared towards keeping the waters and shorelines clean and beautiful. It also serves as a voice for citizens around the lake and across the region who represent all aspects and users of the lake.

# *Cultural Resources*



## Introduction

Cultural resources incorporate a variety of structures and sites that help define a particular community by contributing to its heritage, economy, neighborhoods and sense of community identity. These resources are typically historical and archaeological resources that characterize a way of life both current and past. Buildings, agricultural structures, cemeteries and designed landscapes comprise the most common resources. They may also include features that are unique to a particular area such as a landmark or vista.

Cultural resources are important because they provide educational and informational services to the general public related to local history. These resources ultimately provide a living connection to the past for people who reside or work in the county, as well as for less frequent visitors, who nonetheless form an image based upon what are often unique cultural attributes connected with the built environment. Such cultural characteristics are important definers of the community. These resources reflect Forsyth County's rich history dating back to the Creek and Cherokee Nations. Several books have been written on Forsyth County's past, which outline and discuss the events, places and personalities that took part in shaping and directing the development of the area.

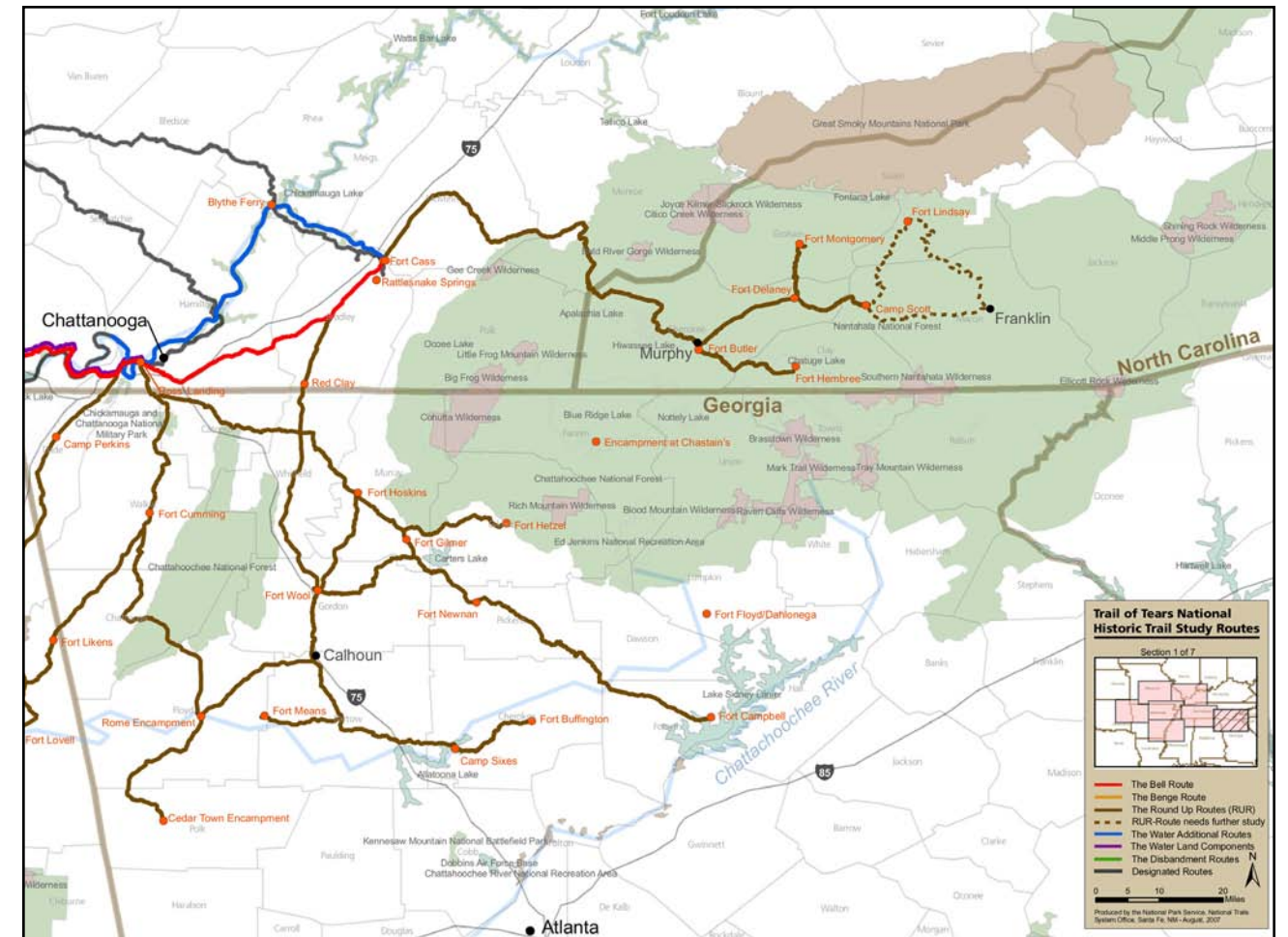
## Inventory

### Archeological Resources

Forsyth County was part of territory historically controlled by the Cherokee Nation until their removal in the 1830s. There have been several archeological sites identified within the county that encompass both historic and prehistoric habitation. Listed below is an inventory of known archeological sites.

1. Four miles west of Silver City, a petroglyph on a granite rock was found, which is now on display at the University of Georgia.
2. Indian mound and village in the bottomlands of Settingdown Creek, along the north bank enclosed in a deep southward loop, about one mile upstream from the mouth of the Etowah River.
3. Indian village at Sawnee Field on Big Creek approximately 1.5 miles north of the City of Cumming, near Sawnee Mountain and Kelly's Mill.
4. Indian village out SR 20 going from Buford, just across the bridge over the Chattahoochee River on the south side.
5. Indian village on the west bank of the Chattahoochee River at Strickland Ferry Bridge between Buford and the City of Cumming, just north of Dave's Creek on the left of the road.
6. Indian Seats on the Sawnee Mountain ridge.
7. Prehistoric Indian occupation along the Chattahoochee River near Bowman's Island, Settles Bridge and McGinnis Ferry Road.
8. One of several round up routes of the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" occurred along SR 369 heading westward to the Old Federal Road. Tribal members were transported from Fort Campbell, a detainment fort within the county, to Ross's Landing, a main emigration depot in the State of Tennessee as recognized by the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. See Figure 1 for the location of multiple collection forts and routes that were incorporated as part of the existing trail in 2009 under the Trail of Tears Documentation Act.

FIGURE 1: TRAIL OF TEARS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL ROUTES



Source: National Park Service

### Historic Resources Survey

The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners sponsored a survey of the county's historic resources in cooperation with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission through partial funding provided by the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Historic Resources Survey Report involved field work that was performed in the winter and spring of 1993 and was later published in February 1996. This report served as an initial step in identifying and documenting the county's rich architectural heritage. The survey lists four hundred and ninety historic properties found in the unincorporated portion of the county that were fifty years or older at the time the fieldwork was executed. The location and address for each resource was recorded and the structures were analyzed for period of construction, original use, building type, physical condition and architectural style. Most of the sites were single-family residences, but other structures were used for general stores, churches, schools and commercial uses. An update by means of aerial photography was performed in 1997 to identify any resource that had been demolished or structurally compromised since the report's publication, which is shown in Figure 2A.

FIGURE 2A: HISTORIC RESOURCES OF FORSYTH COUNTY

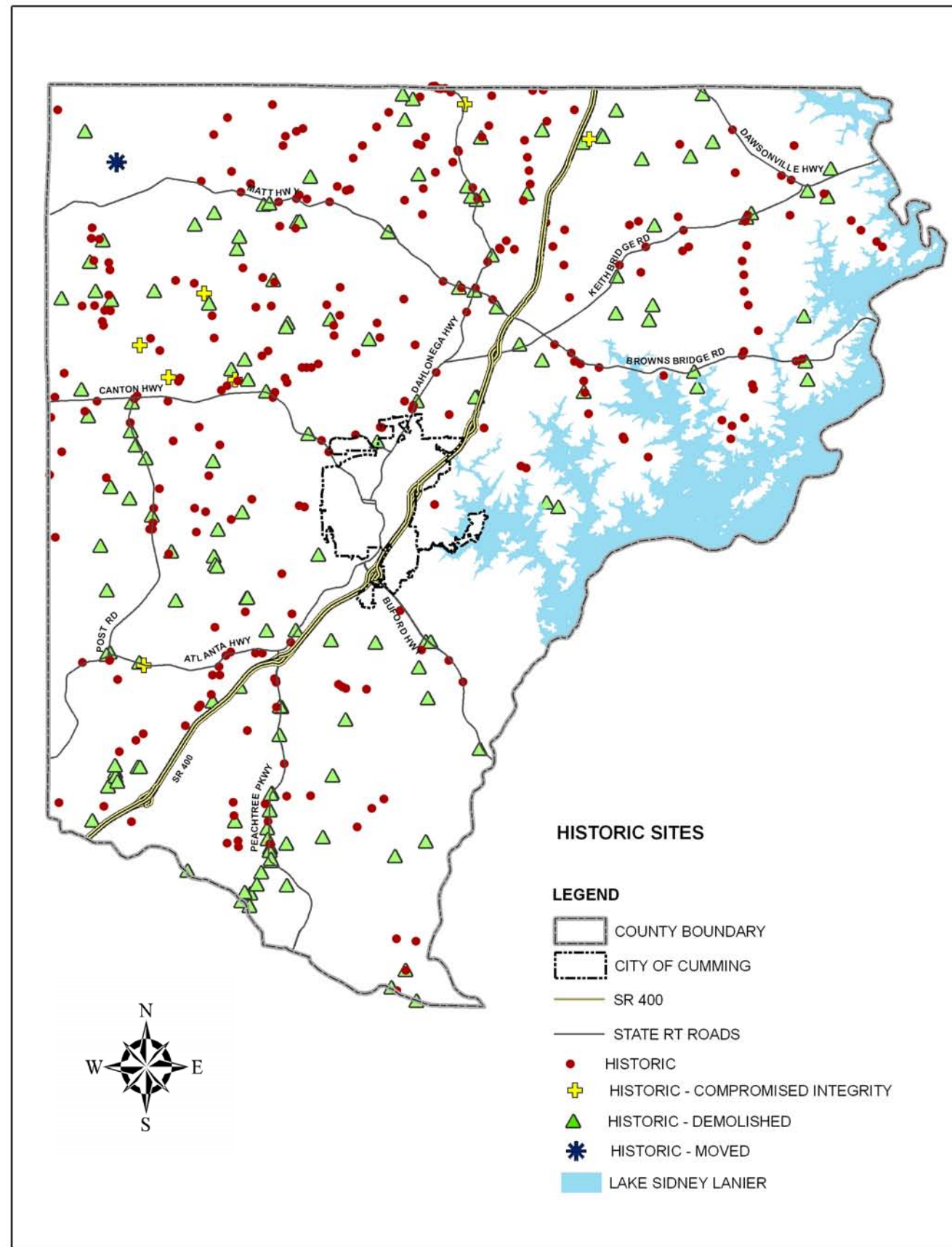
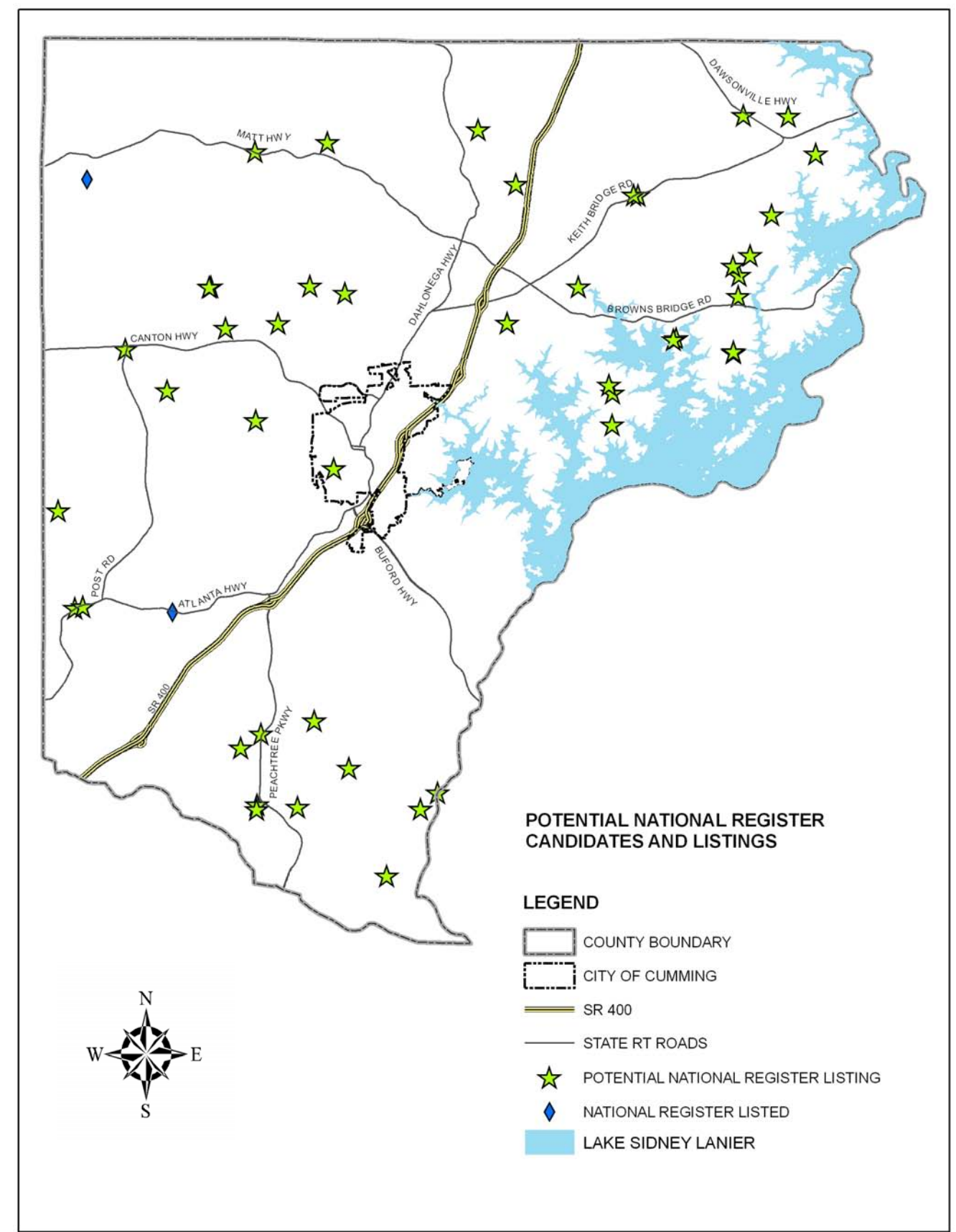


FIGURE 2B: HISTORIC RESOURCES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



### Potential National Register Listings

Forty-four of the resources are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is an official list of historic places administered by the National Park Service in an effort to identify, evaluate and protect historic and archeological resources. Placement on the National Register is honorary and does not put restrictions on private property nor does it invoke local historic designation. The benefits of a property being nationally recognized do include potential incentives such as tax credits and grant opportunities. Currently, only two sites within the unincorporated portion of the county are on the National Register: Poole's Mill Bridge



Figure 3: Poole's Mill Bridge over Settingdown Creek



Figure 4: Poole's Mill Bridge prior to Restoration



Figure 5: Poole's Mill Bridge after Restoration

on Settingdown Creek was listed in 1975 and the Fowler family farm, off Atlanta Highway, was added in 2003 as illustrated in Figures 3, 4 and 5.

Poole's Mill Bridge is known by several different names, such as Poole's Bridge, Welch's Bridge and Scudder's Bridge. In 1820, Cherokee Chief George Welch constructed a grist mill and later a covered bridge. In 1838, with the relocation of the Cherokees, the land was sold to Jacob Scudder. In 1880, Dr. M. L. Poole purchased the land which was later abandoned in 1947. The original bridge was washed away in 1899 and the present design was constructed in 1901 by Bud Gentry in a town lattice pattern composed of planks crisscrossing at forty-five to sixty degree angles and fastened with wooden pegs.

Dedicated as a county recreational area in 1997, this 9.6 acre passive park offers the opportunity to picnic, walk and enjoy the scenic beauty of Settingdown Creek. The Fowler family farm was built in 1922 by Alonzo Fowler. The house was a one-and-a-half story, nine-room, temple-front cottage. When Alonzo Fowler died in 1932, the land was passed to his youngest son, Glenn, and his wife. In the late 1930s, Glenn Fowler made the decision to transform the use of the farm from growing cotton to raising chicken and cattle. The Fowler house received many upgrades during the following years due to the success of the poultry industry. In 1940, the house was wired for electricity and by 1946, telephone service was available. In 1950, the tin roof was replaced with an asphalt shingle roof, coal heaters replaced fireplaces, chimneys were added and a bathroom installed. When Glenn Fowler passed away in 1999, the 227-acre tract of land was sold to Forsyth County for the construction of a wastewater treatment plant and the preservation of the dwelling house and outbuildings, which included tenant houses, chicken houses, a smoke house, garage, barn and corn crib.





Figure 6: Fowler Family Farmhouse



Figure 7: Fowler Family Agricultural Outbuildings

Recognizing the need to preserve this property, the Historical Society of Forsyth County nominated ten acres of the farmstead containing the house and the outbuildings for the National Register of Historic Places. The Fowler farm was placed on the National Register on April 11, 2003, under the categories of agriculture and architecture.

#### Historic Residences

A majority of the historic structures in the 1993 survey were residential. Examples of sites that could be eligible include:

- FO-OO-2 (Route 5, Box 2720, SW corner Brookwood & Caney Roads) – New South Cottage, Craftsman elements, circa 1905, good condition.
- FO-OO-22 Old Clements House – (Located on the northwest corner of Peachtree Parkway) – Plantation Plain, circa 1840, excellent condition.
- FO-OO-28 (Located on the northwest side of Old Alpharetta Road, north of Caney Road) – New South Cottage, circa 1912, excellent condition.
- FO-OO-32 (Located on Bagley Drive at Mathis Airport Road) – Central Hallway, circa 1890, Folk Victorian style in excellent condition.
- FO-OO-82 (NE corner Friendship Circle & Hurt Bridge Road) – Georgian Cottage, Folk Victorian elements, circa 1905, good type and style example, fair condition.
- FO-OO-109 (1707, SW corner Chamblee Gap Road & Johnson Road) – Gabled Ell Cottage, circa 1885, good condition.
- FO-OO-135 Tribble House – (Located on the northwest corner of Evans Road and Post Road) – possibly an original Hall Parlor, circa 1905, good condition.
- FO-OO-155 (W side Aaron Sosbee Road, approx. 1 mi. S Canton Highway) – Temple Front Cottage, circa 1915, good condition.
- FO-OO-168 (W side McCoy Circle, 1st house N intersection with Spot Road) – Hall Parlor, circa 1885, unusual façade, fair condition.
- FO-OO-170 (Located on the west side of Karr Road) – Georgian house, circa 1910 to 1925, excellent condition.
- FO-OO-176 (3290 Hurt Bridge Road) – Central Hallway, Craftsman elements, significant cross-roads community, Tallant family built house and store, good condition.
- FO-OO-277 (5165, N side Burruss Road, .6 mi. E Dahlonega Highway) – Plantation Plain, circa 1885, good type example, good condition.
- FO-OO-314 (8085, W side Knight Road, approx. ½ mil. N SR 53) – Central Hallway, circa 1870, fair condition.
- FO-OO-332 (4520, E side Settingdown Circle, approx. .4 mi. SW SR 400) – Dogtrot, circa 1840, rare, possibly log construction, fair condition.
- FO-OO-343 (7605 Westbrook Road, opposite Porter Lane) – Gabled Ell Cottage, Folk Victorian elements, circa 1900, excellent type example, good condition.
- FO-OO-355 (5305, N side Keith Bridge Road, 1 mi. W Millwood Road) – Queen Anne Cottage, high style Folk Victorian, circa 1900, outstanding architectural style, good condition.
- FO-OO-356 (SE corner Keith Bridge Road & Millwood Road) – Gabled Ell, Neoclassical Revival elements, circa 1880, rare.
- FO-OO-381 (E side Old Atlanta Road, 3rd house N Bertha Road) – Georgian Cottage, rare architectural type, poor condition.
- FO-OO-383 (2640, W side Old Atlanta Road, ½ mi. N Sharon Road) – Queen Anne/Pyra-

mid Cottage, circa 1885, excellent condition.

- FO-OO-386 (3419, NE corner Old Atlanta & Nichols Roads) – Central Hallway, circa 1880, unusual, fair condition.
- FO-OO-391 Terry-Settle House – (Located on Southers Circle) – Single Pen/Dogtrot, then Central Hallway, circa 1830 – 1840. The house was quit-claimed to the Georgia Trust’s Revolving Fund for Historic Preservation.
- FO-OO-396 (W side Waldrip Road, .4 mi. S Bryant Road) – Central Hallway, circa 1840, good type example, store across road-bed, poor condition.
- FO-OO-401 (SW side Old Keith Bridge Road, .4mi. S Truman Mountain Road) – Georgian Cottage, Craftsman elements, circa 1910, rare type, unusual example, fair condition.
- FO-OO-413 (SW corner Bethel Road & Lake Hollow Road) – Gabled Ell Cottage, circa 1890, store across road, fair condition.
- FO-OO-419 (6360, SE corner Little Mill & Bryant Roads) – Gabled Ell Cottage, circa 1840, good condition.
- FO-OO-435 (6445, NE corner Shady Grove Road & Driskell Roads) – Gabled Ell Cottage, good example type, good condition.
- FO-OO-438 (6620, SW corner Shady Grove & Heard Lane) – Gabled Ell Cottage, appears to have been Double Pen, circa 1850, good condition.
- FO-OO-439 (7230, W side Shady Grove Road, 1st house N Shadburn Ferry Road) – Single Pen/Dogtrot, circa 1840, rare type of construction, fair condition.
- FO-OO-447 (9519, W side Jot-Em-Down Road, .2 mi. N Browns Bridge Road) – Saddlebag, circa 1990, good example type, fair condition.
- FO-OO-448 (W side Jot-Em-Down Road, approx. ½ mi. N Mathis Drive, SW corner Meadowbrook Drive) – Dogtrot/Central Hallway, circa 1840, fair condition.
- FO-OO-450 A.D. Kellogg House – (Located on the west side of Jot’em Down Road, north of Meadowbrook Road) – Pyramid Cottage, circa 1900 – 1909, fair condition.
- FO-OO-451 Mitchell Martin House – (Located on the north side of Claude Martin Road) – New South Cottage, circa 1921, fair condition.
- FO-OO-458 Roy Holtzclaw House – (West side of Holtzclaw Road) – Central Hallway, circa 1889-1899, high style Folk Victorian, excellent condition.
- FO-OO-477 William David Puckett House – (Located on the west side of Campground Road) Gabled Ell Cottage, circa 1890, high style Folk Victorian, fair condition.
- FO-OO-479 (NW side Atlanta Highway, 2nd house W Campground Road) – New South Cottage, circa 1990, unusual, good example type, fair condition.

#### Historic Commercial Uses

- FO-OO-73 Chadwick’s Store – (Located on the northeast corner of Dr. Bramblett Road and Spot Road) circa 1860-1866.
- FO-OO-177 General Store – (On the southwest corner of Watson Road and Hurt Bridge Road) circa 1910, poor condition.
- FO-OO-234 Buffington’s Tavern – Originally located on Old Federal Road, the tavern was moved to the Cumming Fairgrounds to become part of a Cherokee village display. The date of the building’s construction is unknown, but the tavern was an important part of the county’s history. It was where President James Monroe spent the night while traveling in the area and the infamous Cherokee, James Vann, was shot and killed in 1809.
- FO-OO-252 Grogan’s Grocery – (Located on Bannister and Namon Wallace Roads) circa

1910 - 1919 general store served as a gathering place for long-time residents until it was converted into an office in the 1990s. Grogan’s Grocery is an example of successful adaptive reuse.

- FO-OO-414 General Store – (On the northwest corner of Bethel Road and Lake Hollow Drive) circa 1900-1909, fair condition.
- FO-OO-420 General Store – (Located on the west side of Little Mill Road) circa 1900-1909, fair condition.
- FO-OO-487 Mill/Processing/Manufacturing Facility (Located on Burruss Mill Road north of Brown’s Bridge Road) the structure is now a single-family dwelling in excellent condition.

#### Historic Institutions

- FO-OO-3 Brookwood Baptist Church – (Located on the east side of Brookwood Road) circa 1913, High Victorian Gothic style still in use as a church.

#### Historic Landscapes

- FO-OO-390 Settles Bridge – Crosses the Chattahoochee River. Built circa 1930-1939, the bridge replaced the ferry operation run by the Settles family. It was constructed with hand-made steel; the decking has been removed so it can no longer be crossed.

#### Georgia Register of Historic Places

The Georgia Register of Historic Places, which is administered by HPD, is the state’s official list of historic buildings, structures, sites and areas deserving of preservation. Georgia Register listings are not synonymous with local historic districts or local landmark designations. Requests for listing are reviewed by HPD staff and the Georgia Register Review Board. The Georgia Register mirrors the National Register of Historic Places processes. In addition, properties that are listed on the National Register are automatically listed on the Georgia Register. Recognition through the Georgia Register does not place restrictions on properties or structures. The Georgia Register pertains to state designation in regards to preservation oriented state grants, property tax abatements, the Georgia Environmental Policy Act, the state owned Historic Properties Act and other state programs.

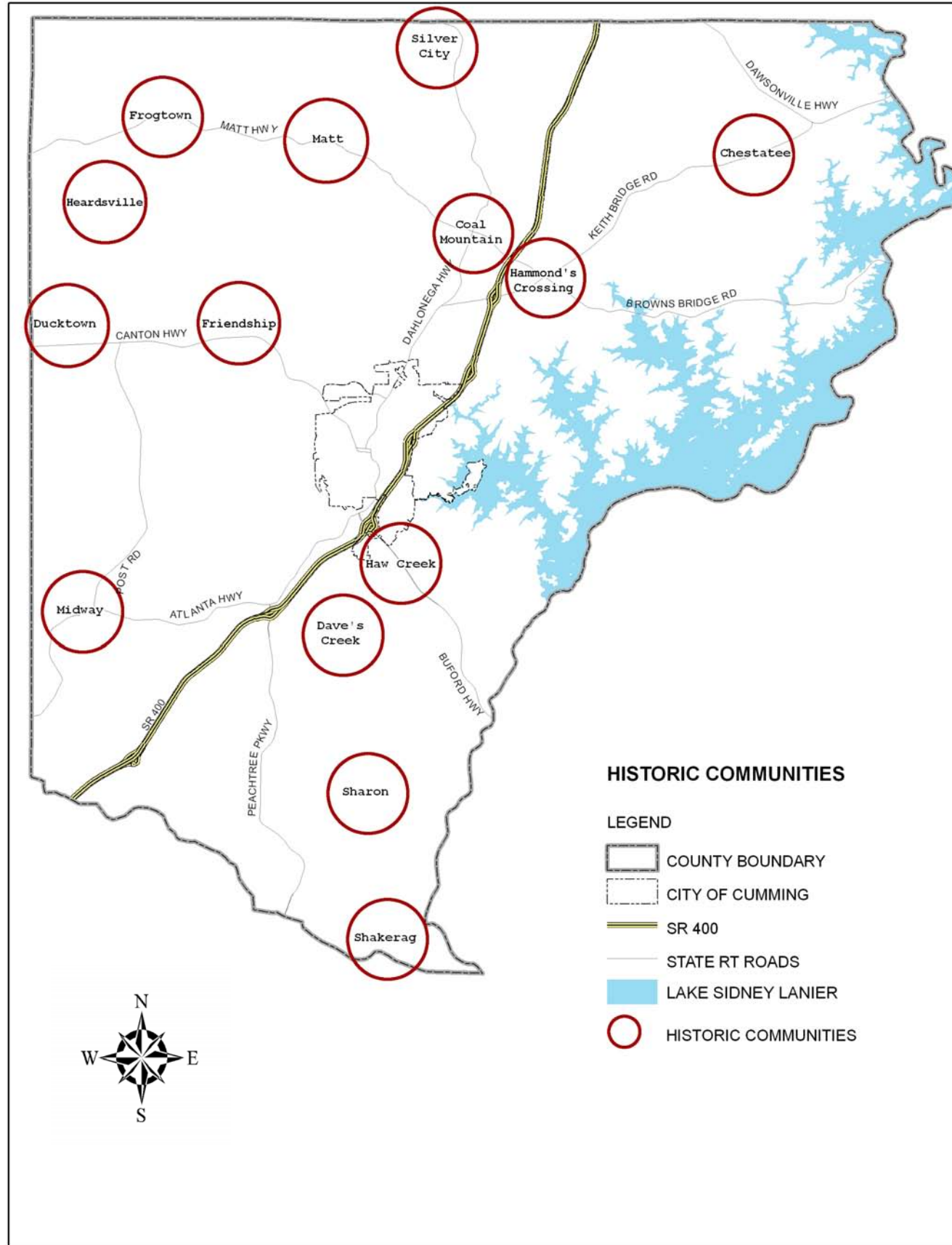
#### Historic Communities

During the analysis of the Historic Resources Survey Report, an attempt was made to identify districts which may be eligible for National Register listing. Due to the dispersal of historic resources, no locales within unincorporated Forsyth County have yet been identified as potential historic districts. Looking at historic communities within the county may be a mechanism through which local historic districts could be designated. See Figure 8 for locations of these communities.

#### Historic Roads

To honor Georgia’s Old Federal Road’s 200th anniversary, in 2005, a study was commissioned by the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, Georgia Division, to “research, record, and recount the history of Georgia’s oldest road.” The research was documented in two volumes: Phase I and Phase II, which was conducted by the Centers for Archaeological Research and the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi.

FIGURE 8: HISTORIC COMMUNITIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Phase I addresses the important places and events that took place along the Old Federal Road from 1805 through the 1860s. Phase II records the physical remains of the road and its application to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the study, a driving tour was developed to highlight the significant individuals and sites along this historical roadway with the tourism signage shown in Figure 9.

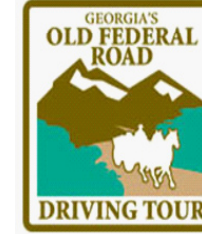


Figure 9: Old Federal Road Driving Tour Highway Sign

### Assessment

Forsyth County recognizes that the preservation and maintenance of archeological sites and historic structures contribute to the county's cultural legacy and are therefore in the long-term interest of the county. The historic resources survey conducted in the mid-1990s involved the identification and documentation of all buildings, districts, structures and sites which lend historic character and significance to the area. The survey also examined how those resources identified in the inventory benefit the community and any potential threats to their survival. Since the report, further analysis has suggested that dispersed resources could be protected through a county-wide initiative to safeguard them through additional code regulations.

Since 2000, when the first Unified Development Code was initially adopted, there has been a directive regarding demolition stays for historic structures identified in the Historic Resources Survey Report. These regulations apply to those seeking to receive a land disturbance permit on sites containing historic structures; the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity for preservation rather than prohibiting demolition. The code regulations call for an automatic sixty day delay of demolition when an application for land disturbance is submitted for sites that contain a historic structure. During this sixty day period, an analysis is to be performed by the Department of Planning and Development or appointed agency regarding the historical or cultural value of the site with consideration to "the desirability, economic feasibility, historical value, current condition, cost of repair or restoration, possibility for relocation to another site or the incorporation of the structure into the proposed development. . ." The planning director shall offer the completed investigation results to the property owner within forty-five days and then the owner shall have the remainder of the sixty day delay to determine the best use for the historic building or structure, which may include rehabilitation, relocation, incorporation into the proposed development or demolition. Please refer to Figures 10 and 11 for an example of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

The identification of historic districts or sectors throughout the county is one potential implementation measure that would provide local protection for identified historic resources. Specific code measures would need to be adopted to ensure the integrity of resources are maintained whether uses remain unchanged or adaptive re-uses are realized.



Figure 10: Grogan's Grocery circa early 1970s



Figure 11: Grogan's Grocery circa 2007

In addition, many of the county's archeological sites have not been formally documented. The county should take action to survey and then protect these prehistoric and historic sites before they are compromised.

#### Abandoned Graveyard Ordinance

The Cemetery Preservation Ordinance, Ordinance 113, was adopted in June of 2009. The intent is to provide for the preservation, protection and maintenance of all family and community cemeteries, graveyards and burial grounds that have been abandoned, desecrated, neglected and unmarked.

The ordinance includes regulations regarding burial ground disturbance. Under this ordinance, prohibited acts include "willfully disturbing, destroying, defacing, mutilating, removing, excavating or exposing burial grounds." An applicant may obtain a permit to excavate and remove remains by submitting the appropriate documentation, which must include an archaeological report stating the number of graves believed to be on the site, a survey prepared by a registered surveyor and an identification plan prepared by a genealogist.

Any person who violates the provisions of this ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. Archaeologists, the county coroner and the planning director are exempt from these requirements in order to perform their job duties.

#### Community Organizations

Forsyth County currently has several historical community resources listed within the State of Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board's directory. This directory provides links and information for over 600 cultural and historical institutions state-wide, including archives, historical societies, historical sites, libraries and museums.

- Forsyth County Public Library  
The library, which opened in 1996, promotes historical and genealogical research and has a small collection of books that pertains to the history of the county as well as Web links to

local historical and genealogical Web sites.

- Forsyth County Heritage Association  
Founded in 1971, the Association acquires and preserves historical and genealogical records. The Association is also involved with the publication of materials on the Cherokee Indians and pioneers of Northwest Georgia. Their research information includes documents, records and photographs.
- Historical Society of Forsyth County  
The Historical Society is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1994 to focus on the restoration and preservation of historic buildings, genealogy, publications and cemetery preservation. The Society works with city and county government, schools and private enterprises to promote the importance of history which is emphasized through its' slogan, "Making Local History Matter."
- Bell Research Center  
The Center is named after Hiram Parks Bell who is a resident of the City of Cumming and the last surviving member of the Confederate Secession Congress. The Center is a 501c3 non-profit organization that serves the State of Georgia and the southeastern states. The majority of the Center's 5,000 book collection includes Confederate history and genealogy. The Center provides Internet access to *Ancestry* and *Footnote* as well as a CD database composed of items that are privately owned.
- Georgia Historical Society  
The Georgia Historical Society (GHS), created in 1839, is a private, non-profit historical society for the State of Georgia. It is also the oldest cultural institution in the state and one of the oldest historical societies in the country. Their mission is to "collect, preserve, and share Georgia's history by operating a library and archives at its headquarters in Savannah, by presenting a variety of educational programs across the state, and by authoring publications on Georgia and southern history for use by scholars and students of all ages around the nation."

#### HISTORIC MARKER PROGRAM

GHS manages the Historical Marker Program for the state. The markers serve as an educational tool to inform individuals about the people and events that helped to shape the State of Georgia communities, past and present. All markers are black with silver lettering and display the GHS seal. To qualify for a marker, buildings, structures and sites pertaining to historical events must be at least fifty years old. Individuals, who have been deceased for twenty-five years or greater, may also be nominated for designation. All nominations must be sponsored by at least one of the following organizations in order to qualify: A historical organization, church, school, government agency or a corporation. Since 1998, the program has been funded by the state in addition to various sponsors. The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the marker once it has been erected.

Prior to 1998, the Georgia Historical Marker Program was managed by DNR. GHS does not maintain records on the older markers, which are considered the property of DNR. To date,

more than 130 markers have been erected state-wide.

### Forsyth County Historical Celebration

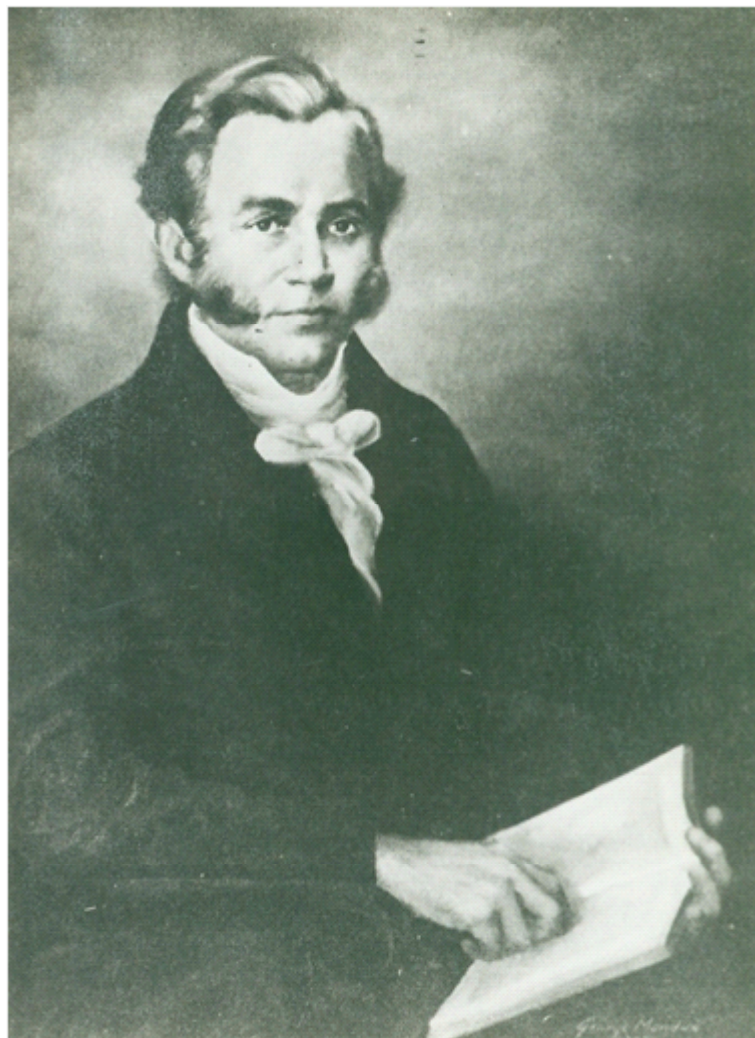


Figure 12: John Forsyth  
(1780 – 1841)

Forsyth County was created on December 3, 1832, and named for John Forsyth, shown in Figure 12, who held many titles in his political career. In 1813, John Forsyth was elected as a Jeffersonian Republican to the Thirteenth U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, where he chaired the Committee on Expenditures. He was then elected to the U.S. Senate, but only served for two months before being appointed minister of Spain in 1819 where he was credited with negotiating the treaty that annexed the State of Florida from Spain. In 1823, he was once again elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and chaired the Committee on Foreign Affairs. In 1827, he returned to the State of Georgia and served a two-year term as governor. In 1829, after the resignation of U.S. Senator John Berrien, Forsyth was reelected to the Senate as a Jacksonian where he voted for the Force Bill in 1833 giving U.S. President Andrew Jackson the authority to use the army and navy to enforce acts of Congress. In 1834, Forsyth was appointed as Secretary of State by President Andrew Jackson and later reappointed under President Martin Van Buren.



Figure 13: County Celebration Logo

Forsyth County celebrated its 175th anniversary in December of 2007 with a public display of historical photographs in the foyer of the administration building highlighting the county's evolution. A presentation was delivered by Forsyth County resident George Pirkle who portrayed John Forsyth and a video documentary entitled "In Their Own Words" was aired showcasing the history of the county through the eyes of lifelong residents. Keeping past traditions alive through oral history is vital as cultural resource protection is pursued through various community efforts.

### Funding and Technical Assistance

#### GEORGIA HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

The Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board (GHRAB) was created in 1993 and is a twelve member board of individuals appointed by the Governor. The members of the board include citizens, educators, local governments, historical repositories and professional organizations.

The mission of the GHRAB is to "promote the educational uses of Georgia's documentary heritage by all its citizens, evaluates and improves the condition of records, encourages statewide planning for preservation and access to Georgia's historical records, and advises the Secretary of State and the Georgia Archives of issues concerning records."

Funding for the GHRAB is provided through annual appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

#### THE GEORGIA TRUST

The Georgia Trust of Historic Preservation (the Trust) was founded in 1973 and is one of the nation's largest state-wide non-profit preservation organizations, consisting of more than 8,000 members. The Trust's mission is to "promote an appreciation of Georgia's diverse historic resources and provide for their protection and use to preserve, enhance and revitalize Georgia's communities." In addition to its mission, the Trust has the following goals: To inform citizens about state cultural resources; to increase the number of protected resources; to widen understanding of the economic impact from preservation efforts within communities; to provide technical assistance; to manage historic properties; and to prepare for the state's future through comprehending its past.

The mission and goals of the Trust are realized through multiple programs including the Revolving Fund for Endangered Properties, established in 1990, that connects owners with buyers willing to rehabilitate historic structures; design expertise is offered through the Main Street Design Assistance Program; the Heritage Education Program trains teachers so that educational strategies related to local history can be incorporated in the classroom; the Places in Peril Program works to identify significant historic, archaeological and cultural properties that are threatened and encourages the community to preserve and utilize these historic resources; and Georgians for Preservation Action is an advocacy council for the promotion of funding, tax incentives and other policies directed towards preservation efforts.

#### NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS

The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) was created in 1983 to provide technical support and an information network for preservation design review commissions as well as serving as an advocate for historic preservation across all levels of government. The NAPC's mission is "to build strong local preservation programs through education, advocacy, and training."

The NAPC is the only organization that is exclusively dedicated to representing the nation's preservation commissions. The NAPC maintains a resource library; sponsors and organizes the National Commission Forum, a biennial conference; publishes *The Alliance Review*; and provides training for its members through the Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) in addition to providing keynote speakers and trainers for preservation and planning related conferences.

#### GEORGIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION GRANTS

The Historic Preservation Division, which is housed within DNR, serves as the state historic preservation office and works with federal, state and local governments, Native American tribes, non-profit organizations and educational institutions.

Each state's historic preservation office receives funding to provide matching state grants for the nation's preservation partnership. This financial assistance is provided through the Historic Preservation Fund of the National Park Service (NPS). In the State of Georgia, the General Assembly mandates several specific preservation programs such as a state property tax freeze, archaeology protection and stewardship of state owned buildings and state rehabilitation grants. Other preservation incentives, which were established under the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, include programs such as the National Register of Historic Places, tax credits and various grants. These incentives also assist to encourage preservation activities throughout the community.

The Historic Preservation Division offers two primary grant programs listed below.

The Historic Preservation Fund Program is federally funded and was created by Congress in 1976. These funds are awarded once a year on a competitive basis to certified local governments and non-profit organizations in the form of a 60/40 matching grant through the NPS. Grant amounts range from \$1,000 to \$15,000 with approximately ten grants awarded annually, depending on the fund allocations.

The Georgia Heritage Grant Program was created in 1994 and offers matching funds to local governments and non-profit organizations on a state-wide competitive basis for eligible Georgia Register properties. Through this program, approximately twenty grants are funded annually for development and predevelopment projects. Development projects include archaeological, stabilization, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration activities. Predevelopment projects include building-specific or site-specific preservation plans, feasibility studies and historic structure reports.

The Historic Preservation Division also offers three tax incentive programs for historic preservation rehabilitation projects. These incentives include one federal and two state programs as noted below.

Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program (RITC) was created in 1976 and allows property owners of certified historic structures to receive a federal income tax credit equal to twenty percent of qualified rehabilitation expenses. Only properties utilized for income-producing purposes may qualify for the credit and the structure must be used for that purpose within five years after rehabilitation. In addition, the rehabilitation work must be completed according to the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Georgia State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property was created in 2002 and amended in 2009 to allow property owners who began a substantial rehabilitation project on or after January 1, 2004, and completed it to the DNR's Standards for Rehabilitation, the ability to qualify for tax credits up to twenty-five percent of the rehabilitation cost as a state income tax credit, capped at \$100,000. For income-producing, certified structures, the credit is twenty-five percent of the rehabilitation expenditure, capped at \$300,000. The amended programs became effective for projects completed after January 1, 2009.

State Preferential Property Tax Assessment Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property was passed into law in 1989. This incentive program encourages the rehabilitation of both residential and commercial historic buildings by freezing property tax assessments for eight-and-a-half years. In order for the property to be eligible for the program, it must either be listed or eligible to be listed on the Georgia Register of Historic Places as either an individual building or as a contributing building within a historic district.

#### NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Trust of Historic Preservation (National Trust) was founded in 1949, and is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to saving and preserving historic places. The National Trust offers several types of grants to non-profit organizations and public agencies. These grants include the National Trust Preservation Funds, the Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors that both target National Historic Landmarks, the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns and the Richard and Julia Moe Fund for Statewide and Local Partners.

National Trust Preservation Funds provide assistance through matching grants ranging from \$500 to \$5000 for preservation planning expertise as well as outreach through the Preservation Services Fund (PSF). In addition, funds are available for "preservation emergencies." Education

and outreach efforts supported under PSF include activities that educate the public regarding the importance of historical preservation such as sponsoring workshops, underwriting travel cost, preparing manuals and developing school curriculums for children.

#### PRESERVE AMERICA GRANTS

The Preserve America Grant Program is one of eight major components of the Preserve America Initiative, which was founded in 2003. The program provides matching grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$250,000 to support preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education and preservation planning. Eligible applicants include State Historic Preservation Offices and Certified Local Governments that have applied for Preserve America Community designation.

#### CHALLENGE COST SHARE

The Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP) is a federally funded program, administered by the NPS. The CCSP provides a 50/50 match for a wide range of projects that investigate, document, protect or promote public education and appreciation of National Historic Trails. Through the CCSP, an applicant can receive as much as half of its project's cost, up to a total of \$30,000. The successful project must match CCSP funds or donate comparable labor, services and materials. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, educational entities and non-federal agencies. All CCSP funded projects must partner with the NPS to share responsibility for project management.

#### RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANTS

The Recreation Trails Program (RTP) provides funding for trail construction, maintenance and education. It is managed by the Federal Highway Administration, but administered at the state level. In the State of Georgia, DNR, Division of Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites administers the grant program.

The primary purpose of the RTP is to create and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities that are identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), including National Historic Trails such as the Trail of Tears. Grants are awarded annually and under state legislation, the State of Georgia is permitted to use five percent of its RTP funds for educational efforts.

#### SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS (SAFETEA-LU)

SAFETEA-LU is a federal program administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Funding for the rehabilitation, repair or preservation of National Register eligible, covered bridges is available through the program. The rehabilitation of Poole's Mill covered bridge was financed with ISTEA funds in 1996; this funding mechanism was superseded by SAFETEA-LU in 2005.

# Community Facilities





## Introduction

Facilities and services shape a community's foundation. Essential services include fire and police protection, water supply and distribution, wastewater treatment as well as solid waste management. In addition, parks and recreational services fulfill a necessary role in improving the quality of life within the county. These facilities affect growth since development must have access to a network of supporting infrastructure such as potable water and waste disposal. The availability of infrastructure and community services can alter a community's surroundings by adding to the developable land supply or postponing, perhaps even precluding, development of certain land.

The purpose of this update element is to examine the impacts such infrastructure has on the county's land use and to provide an overview of available county facilities and services within the community. Following each inventory is an assessment of the adequacy of these facilities to meet the current and future needs of the county.

## Inventory and Assessment

### Water and Sewer Facilities

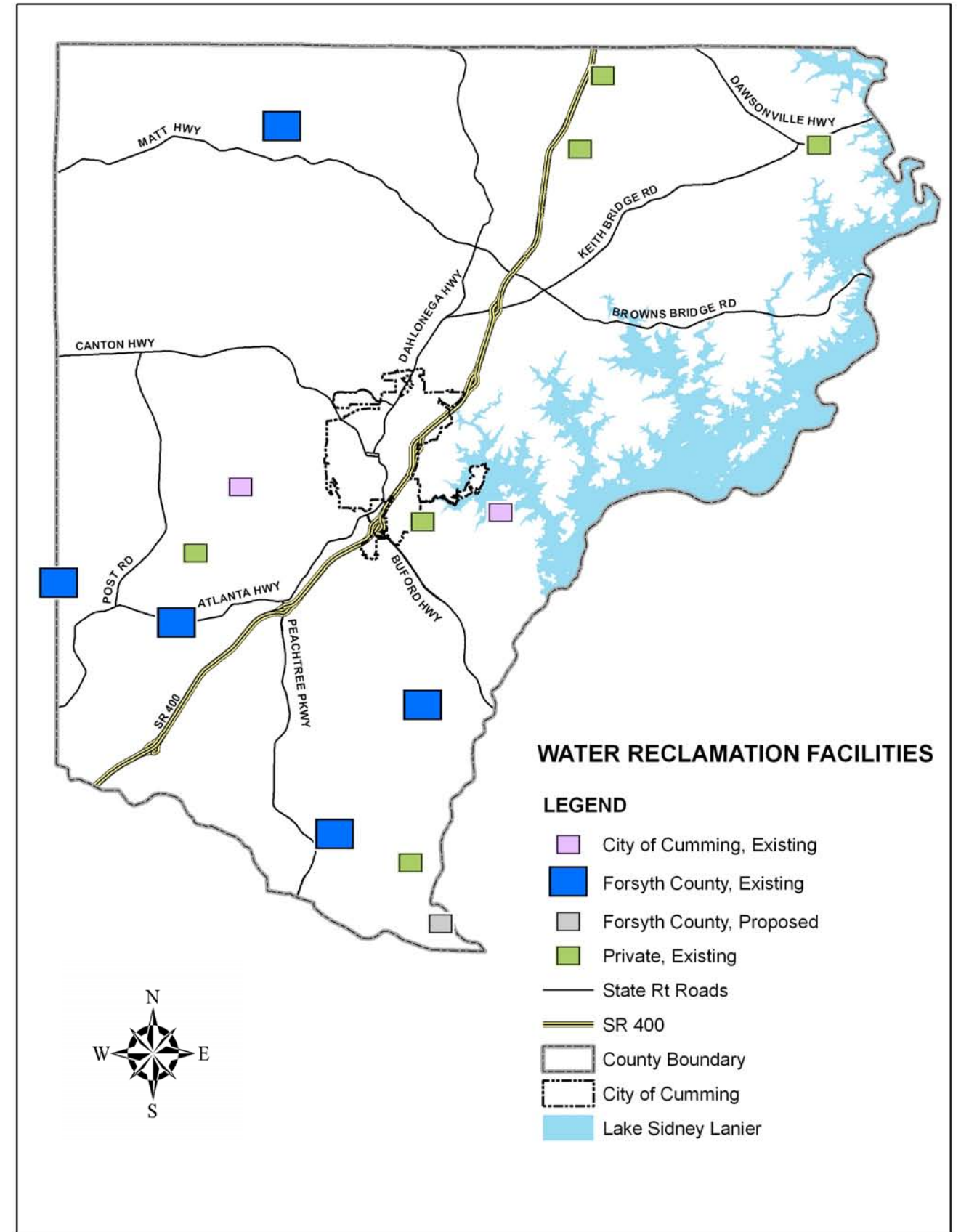
The Forsyth County Water and Sewer Department is in charge of the county's water supply and sewer treatment. The department operates from multiple facilities. The county administration building houses the director and the administrative and engineering staff, along with the commercial services group that includes customer service, billing and meter services. The field operations center on County Way accommodates the field and maintenance staff and is used as the workshop, meter assembly area, warehouse and work area for the field operations personnel. The Forsyth County water treatment plant on Antioch Road houses its management and operations staff. There are six water reclamation facilities owned by Forsyth County: Fowler, Dick's Creek, Windermere, James Creek, The Manor and Parkstone as illustrated in Figure 1. Please note that Windermere and James Creek are designated by the same icon on the map due to their proximity. The water treatment plant and the six reclamation facilities are operated on a contractual basis through private corporations.

### Water Supply and Treatment

In 1987, the City of Cumming and Forsyth County entered into a formal agreement that defined the service areas of each water system as indicated in Figure 2. The contract also established guidelines for a wholesale water user's agreement for the city to supply water to Forsyth County on a wholesale basis. This agreement was modified in 1997 and will expire in 2012. Presently, the county is required under this agreement to annually buy the amount of water that the county purchased in 1997, or 1.628 billion gallons per year of treated water.

In April 2000, the county brought online the Antioch water treatment plant (WTP), which is currently permitted to treat 16 million gallons per day (MGD) in a 24-hour period, not to exceed a monthly average of 14 MGD. In 2009, the WTP produced an average of 5.89 MGD with a daily maximum of 13.54 MGD. The raw water treated at this plant is supplied through the Lake Sidney Lanier intake owned and operated by the City of Cumming. The county has approximately 44,000 water customers and operates roughly 870 miles of water lines throughout the county.

FIGURE 1: WATER RECLAMATION FACILITIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



There are three elevated tanks and five ground tanks that provide 19 MG of storage as illustrated in Figure 2.

The raw water pump station delivers water to a 20 MG raw water tank at the WTP. The WTP is operated to meet the demands of consumers and to fill the storage tanks in the distribution system.

**Water Supply Assessment**

Currently the county is taking measures to ensure water supply for the future through a treatment plant expansion, conservation efforts and researching potential new raw water supply sources. A 12 MGD expansion to the WTP commenced in May 2010 and has a twenty-four month construction schedule.

**Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

By the end of 2009, Forsyth County served 14,516 sewer customers. Sewer customer growth is continuing at a slow but steady pace, with around fifty new accounts per month.

**Existing Sewer Service Area**

The Forsyth County sewer service area encompasses approximately 80% of the county, as shown in Figure 2. The major drainage basins within the service area include the following:

- Big Creek Basin, which is located west of the Cumming service area and west of SR 141 to the county line.
- Chattahoochee River Basin, which is located south of the Cumming service area to the border of Fulton County and east of SR 141 to the border of Gwinnett County.
- Etowah River Basin, which is located in the northwestern corner of the county with most of the area north of SR 369.
- Lake Lanier Basin, which is located in the northeastern quadrant of the county with SR 306 splitting the majority of the area.
- Settingdown Creek Basin, which is split by the Cumming service area. A portion of this basin is located north of the Cumming service area and includes SR 400 and SR 9. The remaining portion is located west of the Cumming service area to the boundary of Cherokee County and is roughly south of SR 369 and north of SR 20.

Forsyth County provides sewer service to most of its service area with the exception of the Lake Lanier basin. Through a series of lift stations, force mains and gravity lines, most sewer flow, regardless of basin, is brought back to the Chattahoochee River Basin for eventual discharge. See Figure 3 for current and planned lift station and sprayfield locations.

**Existing Wastewater Treatment**

Forsyth County owns six wastewater treatment facilities. The county also has contractual agreements for wastewater treatment with Fulton County and the City of Cumming as well as ownership of capacity in one private treatment facility. As part of these arrangements, Forsyth County collects the wastewater from its customers and discharges it into designated sewers which convey the wastewater to the appropriate treatment facility. Table 1 summarizes these agreements with Figure 2 indicating facility locations throughout the county.

FIGURE 2: WATER FACILITIES AND SERVICE AREAS OF FORSYTH COUNTY

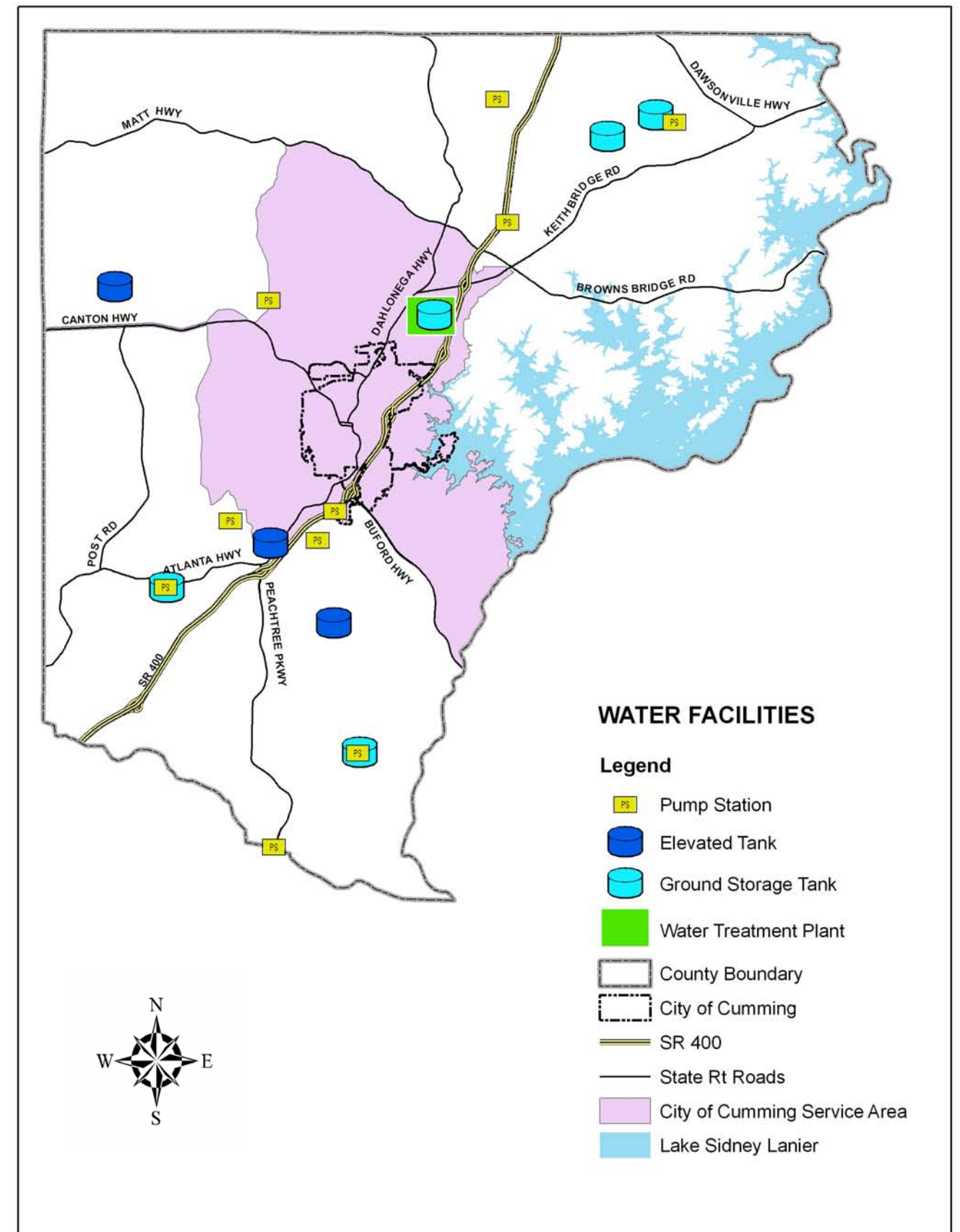


TABLE 1: EXISTING WASTEWATER TREATMENT AGREEMENTS

System or Facility	Contract Limit or Capacity Owned (MGD)	Current Monthly Average-Day Flow in Forsyth County (MGD)
Fulton County		
Johns Creek	1.2	0.58
Big Creek	1.25	1.04
Total Fulton County	2.45	1.62
City of Cumming		
	0.5	0.172
The Hamptons*		
	0.5	0.168

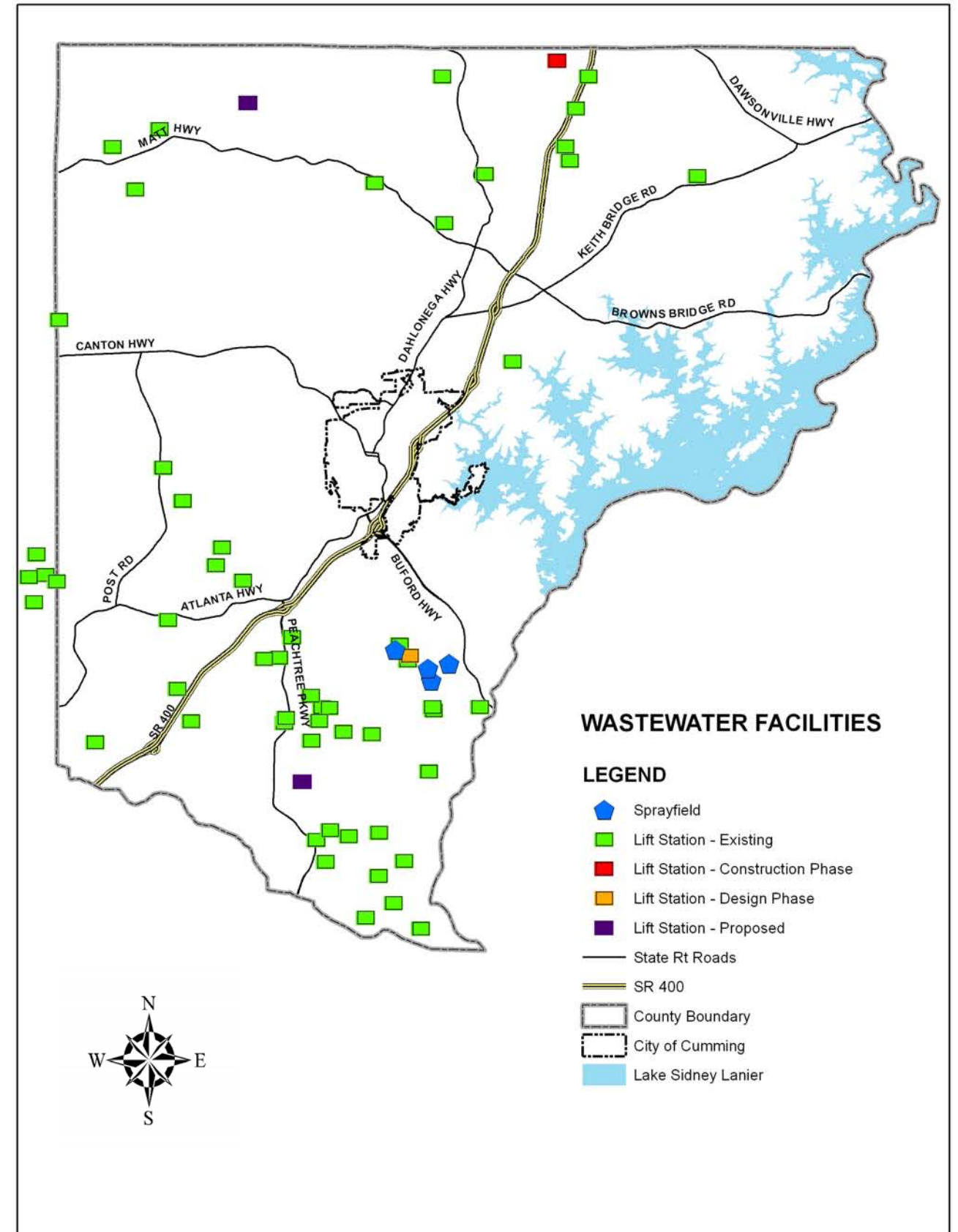
In addition to the contractual agreements shown in Table 1, privately owned treatment facilities also treat wastewater in several residential developments. These facilities comprise a small amount of the existing capacity in the county. There are eight privately or city owned systems including Bethelview, Habersham on Lanier, The Hamptons, Lanier Beach South, McKinley Manor, Mountain Ridge, Old Atlanta Club and Polo Golf and Country Club; their permitted capacities are identified in Figure 1 and Table 2. These facilities manage their treated effluent through reuse on golf courses and landscaped areas or through land application on dedicated sites.

TABLE 2: PRIVATELY OWNED OR CITY OF CUMMING WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES SERVING RESIDENTS OF FORSYTH COUNTY

Facility	Permitted Maximum Monthly Average- Day Flow Capacity (MGD)
Bethelview*	8.0
Habersham on Lanier	0.11
The Hamptons	0.275
Lanier Beach South*	0.038
McKinley Manor	0.01566
Mountain Ridge	0.0576
Olde Atlanta Club	0.2625
Polo Golf and Country Club	0.338

The county opened its first water reclamation facility (WRF), the Fowler WRF, in 2004. This facility is constructed to treat up to 2.5 MGD. The effluent from this facility is reclaimed for irrigation uses on school campuses, a golf course, county parks and other landscaped areas. Water that is not reused is land applied on the county-owned Threatt site, located in the southeastern corner of Forsyth County along the Chattahoochee River. Forsyth County has applied for a permit to discharge treated effluent into the Chattahoochee River and is currently working through the lengthy permitting process. At this time, the Fowler WRF is permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to treat 1.25 MGD of wastewater on a monthly average basis. See Table 3 for a list of county owned wastewater treatment facilities with their permitted

FIGURE 3: WASTEWATER FACILITIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



capacities.

TABLE 3: COUNTY OWNED WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

System or Facility	Contract Limit or Capacity Owned (MGD)	Monthly Average-Day Flow Capacity (MGD)
Dick's Creek	0.76	0.53
Fowler	1.25	0.883
James Creek	0.25	0.238
The Manor	0.5	0.065
Parkstone	0.1	0.05
Windermere	0.69	0.314

**Sewer System Assessment**

In an area containing predominantly residential and commercial facilities, as is the case in the county's sewer service area, the wastewater flows can be directly related to the population. Flows from industrial facilities are not easily related to the population. However, industrial facilities that could generate large wastewater flows are not included in the Forsyth County land use plan. Also, with the concern for a potential water supply shortage in the region, adding any large volume water users is not expected and would require thorough evaluation. If any industrial facilities chose to locate in the sewer service area, the availability of sewer and treatment capacity would need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Future Wastewater Flows to Sewer Systems**

The 2009 Sewer System Master Plan estimates a county service area population of 116,508, comprised of 41,169 residential households. There were 14,442 county residential sewer customers, or 35% of the total number of households. Private sewer plants served approximately 2,832 households, bringing the total percentage of households to 42% receiving service. The remainder of the population is treated by on-site treatment systems, primarily septic tanks at individual homes.

Future wastewater flows are estimated under the assumption that 85% of new population growth within the service area will be connected to public sewer. For planning purposes, 270 gallons per day (GPD), inclusive of inflow and infiltration, is used as estimated daily flow for residential units.

The total annual average daily sewer flow in the county sewer service area is expected to increase from 3.85 MGD to 20.67 MGD over the 2030 planning period. However, private systems are expected to continue to play a role in Forsyth County. Over time, these facilities will exceed their useful lives and will likely be connected to the county system.

In August 2009, a sewer system master plan update for the Forsyth County sewer service area was completed. This plan outlines a recommended strategy for the extension and development of the Forsyth County wastewater collection and treatment system to meet future demand.

**Solid Waste Management Facilities**

**Inventory of Waste Disposal**

The Forsyth County Hightower Landfill located on Old Federal Road was closed in July of 2002. Since that time, a privately owned landfill opened its doors to county residents and private haulers for the disposal of household waste, construction and demolition debris and appliances. Forsyth County is host to this private Subtitle D landfill site owned by Advanced Disposal/Federal Road, LLC d/b/a Eagle Point Landfill (EPLF). The site is located on Old Federal Road, adjacent to the closed county landfill site. The total site comprises 700 acres with a 163-acre landfill footprint. The Georgia Environmental Protection (EPD), Land Protection Branch monitors this site. EPLF has the most current federal and state regulatory controls in place to protect the environment. EPLF has two agreements with Forsyth County; one agreement provides a preferential disposal rate for ten years for county directed facilities; the other agreement, as required by state law, provides a host fee to Forsyth County. The host fee paid to Forsyth County is calculated at the rate of \$1 per ton deposited in the landfill site. EPLF also provides the tonnage amount that is deposited in the landfill site to EPD.

In February of 2003, Greenleaf Recycling, LLC established themselves as a privately owned construction and demolition landfill. The landfill will accept appropriate materials from private waste haulers and individual county residents. Greenleaf Landfill has one disposal area for construction and demolition materials and another for "earth-like" products such as plant debris, tree limbs and leaf litter.

This landfill is located on SR 306, adjacent to American Proteins. Greenleaf Recycling, LLC is required by state law to provide a host fee to Forsyth County. The host fee paid to Forsyth County is calculated at the rate of \$1 per ton deposited in the landfill site. Greenleaf Recycling, LLC also provides the tonnage amount that is deposited in the landfill site to EPD.

**Recycling Collection**

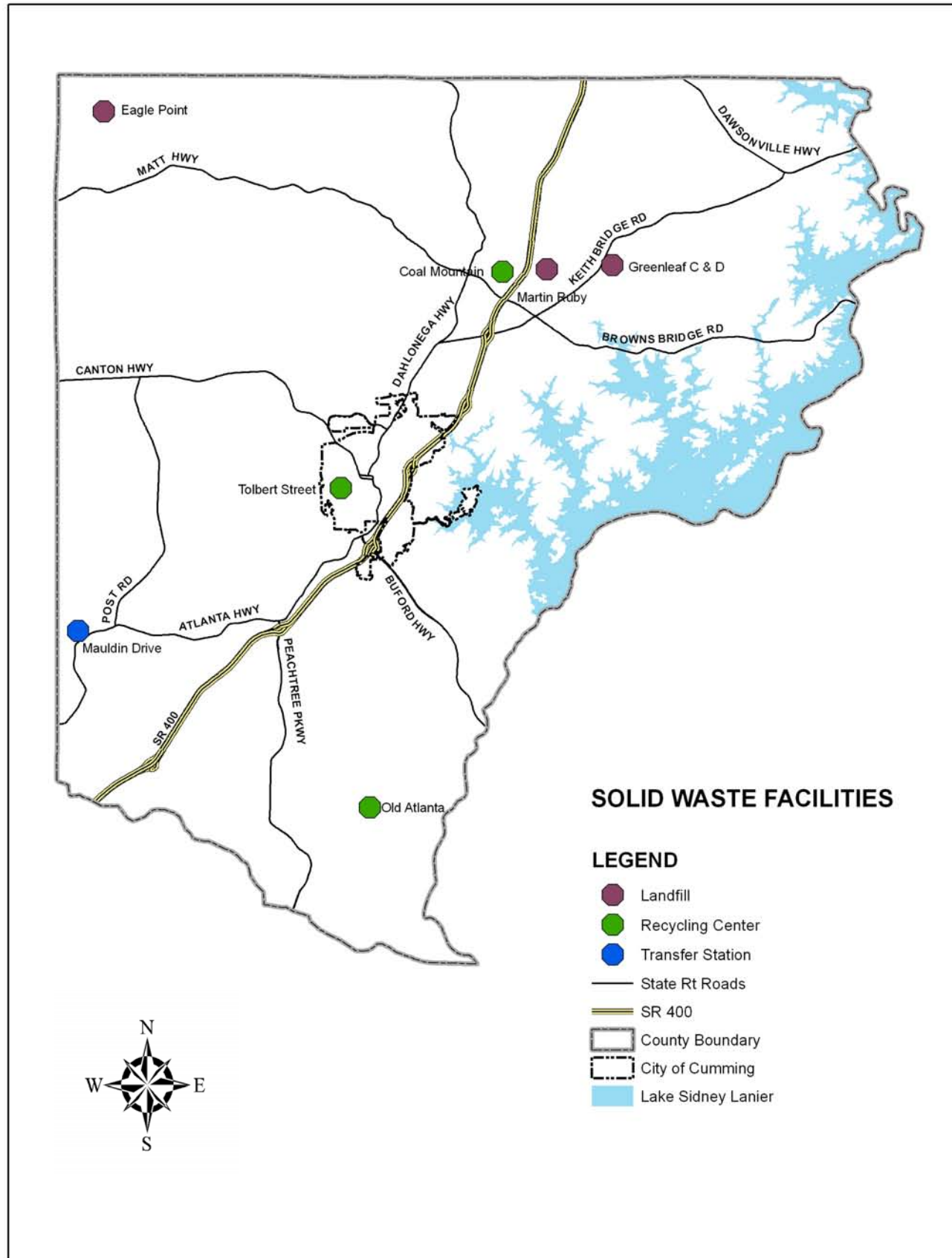
The county has three manned recycling centers where residents can bring their recyclable material and residential household waste. The Tolbert Street Recycling Center is located at 351 Tolbert Street in downtown Cumming. The Old Atlanta Road Recycling Center is located at 3678 Old Atlanta Road in the south end of the county and the Coal Mountain Recycling Center is located at 3560 Settingdown Road. Forsyth County hauls the solid waste from the centers to EPLF and the recyclable items are transported to private material recovery and processing facilities.

In the first quarter 2010, Forsyth County recycling centers collectively received an average of the following per month: 181 tons of household waste; 2,360 pounds (lb) of aluminum; 88,460 lb of mixed paper including newspapers, magazines and office paper; 36,647 lb of plastic; 46,500 lb of glass; 8,320 lb of phonebooks; 86,100 lb of cardboard; 3,780 lb of tin and steel cans; 431 gallons of oil; 801 lb of batteries; 17,547 lb of scrap metal; 5,104 lb of electronics; and 32 tires. Used books, shoes, clothing and cooking oil are also collected for recycling, but weights are not obtainable.

**Inventory of Waste Collection**

At present, there are thirteen private collection companies. These companies collect household waste and industrial waste throughout the county. The City of Cumming has one waste hauler and does not

FIGURE 4: SOLID WASTE FACILITIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



offer recycling. These collection companies are required to obtain a county business license and a permit to transport waste to a landfill. The locations of the landfills and recycling centers within the county are shown in Figure 4.

**Inventory of Waste Reduction**

At present, Forsyth County’s waste reduction efforts at three county recycling centers include the recycling of newspapers, office paper, phonebooks, magazines, cardboard, paperboard, aluminum cans, steel and tin cans, #1 and #2 plastic, plastic bags, glass, motor vehicle oil, used cooking oil, alkaline and rechargeable batteries under two pounds, printer cartridges, scrap metal, used cooking oil, books, clothing and shoes. Additionally, recycling is offered in all Forsyth County Schools, four county buildings and three county parks. To successfully reduce our solid waste, the residents of the county have the opportunity to be educated on the importance of natural resources, conservation and the benefits of recycling. The education programs can be provided to businesses, schools, civic organizations and county citizens. Information and guidelines regarding source reduction and recycling is available from Keep Forsyth County Beautiful.

Data for municipal solid waste and recycling collected in Forsyth County are received from EPLF and the Forsyth County recycling centers. This data can be helpful for assessing the waste reduction needs of the county. Currently, waste haulers who work in the county are not required to report the amount of waste or recycled materials they collect from county residents. The county has a Solid Waste Management Plan that was prepared in accordance with the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act outlined in the state’s minimum standards and procedures. The current plan was adopted in 2004 and updated in 2010.

**General Government**

**Inventory**

Forsyth County Administration Building, located at 110 East Main Street:

- Administration
- Board of Commissioners
- Commercial Services Department
- Communications Department
- Engineering Department
- Finance Department
- Geographic Information Services Department
- Information Technology Department
- Personnel Services Department
- Planning and Development Department
- Public Facilities Department
- Risk Management Department
- Tax Assessors Office
- Water and Sewer Department
- Voter Registrations and Elections Department

Forsyth County Courthouse, located at 100 Courthouse Square:

- Clerk of Court
- District Attorney

- Sheriff Court Services
- State Court
- State Court Solicitor
- Superior Court

*Forsyth County Courthouse Annex*, located at 112 West Maple Street:

- Juvenile Court
- Probate Court
- Victim Witness Assistance

*Forsyth County Public Safety Building*, located at 3520 Settingdown Road:

- Fire Department
- Emergency Management Agency
- 911 Center
- Risk Management Department

The following departments are housed at 118 Castleberry Road:

- Forsyth County Pre-Trial Services
- Forsyth County Purchasing Department

The following departments are housed at 875 Lanier 400 Parkway:

- Juvenile Justice Center
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Offices
- Code Enforcement Department
- Forsyth County Extension Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Keep Forsyth County Beautiful

The following departments are housed at 1090 Tribble Gap Road:

- Magistrate Court
- Tax Commissioners Main Office

*Forsyth County Building Shop* is located at 351 Tolbert Street.

*Forsyth County Coroner's Office* is located at 202 Old Buford Highway.

*Forsyth County Department of Family and Children* is located at 426 Canton Highway.

*Forsyth County Fleet Services* is located at 4140 County Way.

*Forsyth County Indigent Defense Office* is located at 101 Old Buford Road.

*Forsyth County Mental Health* is located at 125 North Corner Parkway.

*Forsyth County Parking Deck* has 246 parking spaces and is located in downtown Cumming.

*Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department* is located at 6300 Keith Bridge Road.

*Forsyth County Public Health* is located at 428 Canton Highway.

*Forsyth County Public Relations Officers* is located at 475 Tribble Gap Road.

*Forsyth County Coal Mountain Recycling Center* is located at 3560 Settingdown Road.

*Forsyth County Old Atlanta Recycling Center* is located at 3678 Old Atlanta Road.

*Forsyth County Tolbert Street Recycling Center* is located at 351 Tolbert Street.

*Forsyth County Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center* is located at 4075 Spot Road.

*Forsyth County Senior Citizens Center* is located at 595 Dahlonega Street.

*Forsyth County Sheriff's Office* has facilities at the following locations:

- Sheriff's Office Special Operations Division – 101 East Main Street.
- Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division – 475 Tribble Gap Road.
- Sheriff's Office Jail Detention Center – 202 Veterans Memorial Boulevard.

*Forsyth County Tax Commissioner Sharon Springs Office* is located at 1950 Sharon Road.

#### **Assessment**

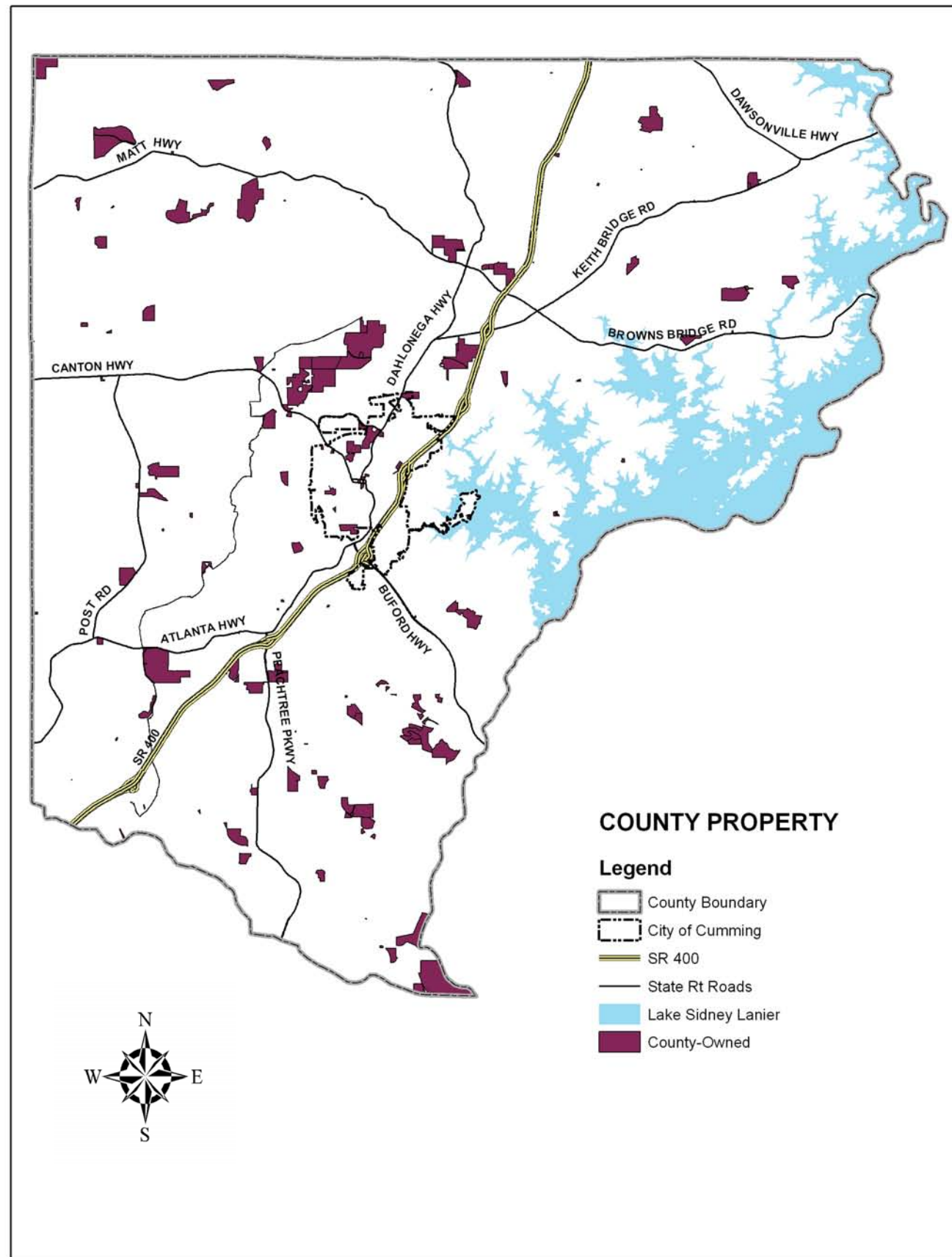
As the county's population continues to grow, there will be a demand for additional government services. This will lead to an increase in government employees and building space. The county is currently conducting an audit to project facility needs to 2018. See Figure 5 for a map of all county-owned properties as of summer 2010.

#### **Sheriff's Office**

The primary law enforcement agency serving Forsyth County is the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff is a constitutional officer elected to serve four-year terms. The majority of the Sheriff's Office funding comes through the county's general fund, although the office does receive some revenue through fees and fines. The Sheriff's Office operates under two bureaus, Enforcement and Headquarters. The Enforcement Bureau consists of the Uniform Patrol, Special Operations and Criminal Investigations Divisions. The Headquarters Bureau consists of the Detention, Support Services and Court Services Divisions.

The Sheriff's Office has 387 authorized positions, which are made up of civilian and uniformed personnel. Currently, the office operates out of nine separate facilities. In 2003, a study was undertaken to review operations and determine future capital needs. To date, the only portion of the 2003 study recommendations that has been implemented is the building of two separate precincts to maintain better response times and to provide improved county-wide services. One of the two constructed precincts serves the northern portion of the county and is located off of Keith Bridge Road with the other precinct serving the southern section of the county, situated near Peachtree Parkway. These precincts were opened in 2008 and house the Uniform Patrol Division and the property crimes investigators for the Criminal Investigations Division. In addition, a building to house the Sheriff's Office Supply Unit and Evidence Unit was opened in 2008. A new facility

FIGURE 5: FORSYTH COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY



was completed in 2010 for use by the agency’s crime scene technicians.

The primary headquarters for the Sheriff’s Office and the main headquarters for the Criminal Investigations Division are located in a rented office building located at 475 Tribble Gap Road. The Special Operations Division is located in a rented office building at 101 East Main Street. See Figure 6 for a map of public safety locations. A bond referendum was placed before the voters in 2008 to build a new headquarters that would house the majority of the administrative functions of the agency as was recommended by the 2003 study. However, that bond vote failed to pass. The Support Services Division, which includes the Records and Civil Units, is currently placed in a renovated motel that was purchased by the county approximately 10 years ago on Bald Ridge Marina Road at SR 400. This facility now houses a number of county offices in addition to the Sheriff’s Office, including Juvenile Court and Code Enforcement.

The Forsyth County Detention Center remains over capacity since the study was completed in 2003. A bond referendum to construct a new detention center has been placed before the voters on three different occasions, but all three have been rejected. The original detention center was built in the 1970s with one addition made in 1991 to expand the bed capacity. The maximum capacity of the detention center is 227 inmates. On any given day, there will be between 210 and 220 inmates incarcerated at the center. In addition, approximately 120 inmates have to be housed at other detention facilities outside of Forsyth County, which cost Forsyth County taxpayers roughly \$1.3 million in 2010.

**Fire Department**

**Fire Protection and Emergency Management System**

Fire protection for the county is provided by the Forsyth County Fire Department. The department’s total staffing is 153 with 126 of those being career firefighters in the field and the remaining being administrative, training, fire marshal and support staff. Additionally, six part-time ‘shift worker’ positions are utilized daily to supplement staffing.

The Forsyth County Fire Department operates thirteen fire stations throughout the county. Twelve of these stations are staffed by career firefighters and one station is staffed with an EMS crew only. The county also provides fire protection for the City of Cumming. Building inspection, plan review and fire investigations are handled by the Fire Marshal’s Office while all department training is conducted by the Training Division. Each division consists of a division chief and various subordinate staff. Training facilities are located at the public safety complex and include a classroom, auditorium, library, two-story live fire training facility, five-story training tower, a vehicle fire simulator, confined space facilities and a roof and ventilation simulator.

The Forsyth County Fire Public Safety Education Division is responsible for all fire education programs. The division’s main emphasis is on school age children. Along with the basic fire safety programs, the county has a fire safety house that teaches children what to do in case of a home fire. The division also provides free smoke detectors and installation to senior citizens and lower income families. The staff assists any member of the community by checking their smoke detectors and addressing any fire related concerns.

Other programs include:

- Church fire prevention and arson awareness
- Pre-school fire safety
- Juvenile fire setters program
- Fire station tours
- Fire safety for senior citizens
- Courtesy home fire inspections
- Fire extinguisher training

The Forsyth County Fire Motor Maintenance Division, located at the public safety complex, is solely responsible for the maintenance of all department vehicles, apparatus and small engines. It consists of three EVT (emergency vehicle technician) qualified personnel and operates out of a four-bay facility with full automotive and heavy-duty truck repair capabilities. The division performs all preventative maintenance and overhauling of fire department equipment and has the ability to perform in-house metal fabrication.

Emergency medical transport is provided by a contract-based third party provider. Advanced Ambulance Service, Inc. supplies six 24-hour ambulances under the title of Forsyth County EMS and staffs the units out of fire stations 1, 2, 9, 10, 12 and 13. The fire station and EMS locations are shown in Figure 6 with descriptions and coverage's listed below.

*Forsyth County Fire Headquarters and Administration*  
3520 Settingdown Road

This facility houses the Office of the Fire Chief, Office of the Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Marshal's Office, training facilities, motor maintenance facilities and administrative personnel.

*Station 1*  
234 Castleberry Industrial Drive

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 4 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the Office of the First Battalion as well as the following apparatus: Engine 1, Truck 1, Tanker 1 and Med 1.

*Station 2*  
4055 Carolene Way

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 3 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the Forsyth County Fire Department Hazardous Materials Unit and the following apparatus: Engine 2, Haz-Mat 2 and Med 2.

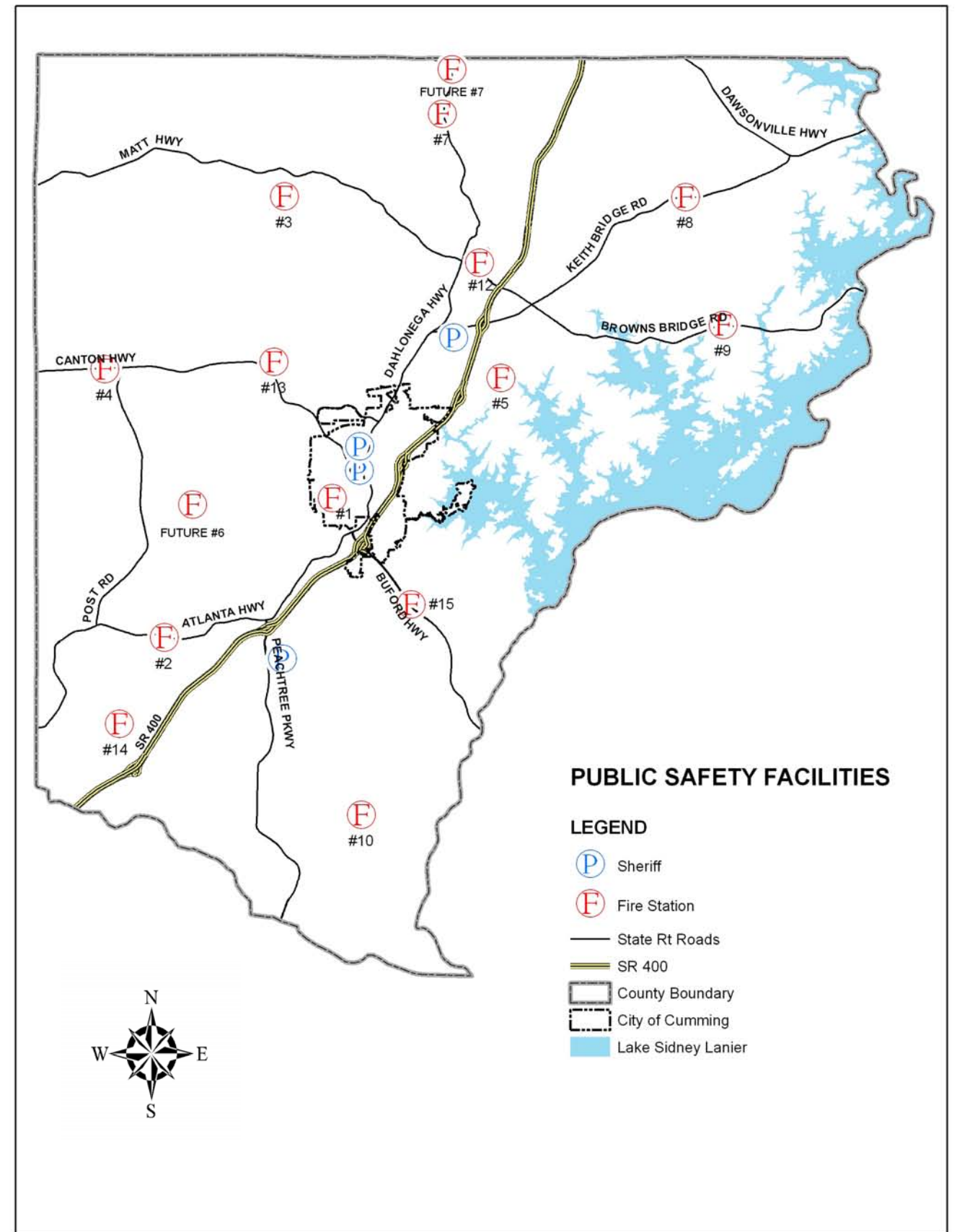
*Station 3*  
4125 Dr. Bramblett Road

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the following apparatus: Engine 3 and Brush Truck 3.

*Station 4*  
3805 Canton Highway

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location is home to an ALS (Advanced Life Support) engine company and houses the following apparatus: Engine 4 and Light/Air 4.

FIGURE 6: PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY





*Station 5*

2720 Holtzclaw Road

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the Forsyth County Fire Department Wildland Unit and the following apparatus: Engine 5, Tanker 5 and Brush Truck 5.

*Station 7*

5775 Dahlenega Highway

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the following apparatus: Engine 7.

*Station 8*

6015 Keith Bridge Road

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location is home to an ALS (Advanced Life Support) engine company and houses the following apparatus: Engine 8 and Brush Truck 8.

*Station 9*

7385 Browns Bridge Road

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the following apparatus: Engine 9, Tanker 9 and Med 9.

*Station 10*

3680 Old Atlanta Road

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location is home to an ALS (Advanced Life Support) engine company and houses the following apparatus: Engine 10 and Med 10.

*Station 12*

3530 Settingdown Road

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 3 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the Forsyth County Technical Rescue Unit and the following apparatus: Engine 12, Rescue 12 and Med 12.

*Station 13*

1525 Dr. Bramblett Road

The location is staffed with only one EMS crew and houses Med 13. It is also used as a storage facility for reserve apparatus.

*Station 14*

800 McFarland Parkway

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the following apparatus: Engine 14 and Truck 14.

*Station 15*

1525 Buford Highway

This station has 24-hour coverage with a minimum of 2 firefighters per 24-hour shift. This location houses the Forsyth County Fire Department Water Rescue Unit and the following apparatus: Engine 15 and Rescue 15.

**Assessment**

The Fire Department is independently funded through a 1.841 mill fire tax assigned exclusively to fire safety services. The Fire Department provides fire protection services as a means to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. Currently, there are thirteen fire stations with twelve of them being staffed 24 hours-a-day by full-time, career firefighters. Typical of other local fire departments, the Forsyth County Fire Department uses the criterion of five road miles from each station to define the territory for service and protection. This criterion is customary with the Insurance Services Office (ISO), which rates fire departments for insurance purposes that ultimately determines individual citizen premiums. The citizens of Forsyth County benefit from an average response time of five minutes and 13 seconds for the first arriving fire apparatus according to 2009 data. In 2009, following an exhaustive 2008 ISO analysis of the fire, water and E-911 capabilities of the county, a reduction in score was levied improving the ISO rating from a '6/9' to a county-wide '5'. In establishing the county's level of service, it was determined that the existing service of one fully equipped station plus a ladder truck for every 16,734 persons would be necessary to continue to meet the future needs of the county. The Fire Department's mission statement is: To protect life, property, and the environment from the ravages of fire and all other emergencies, both natural and man-made, and provide citizens and visitors with emergency medical pre-hospital care in a highly effective manner with the best trained personnel possible.

**Recreation Facilities**

The Parks and Recreation Department oversees all recreational facilities in the county and is composed of five divisions: Administrative, Parks and Facilities, Athletic, Recreation Programs and Outdoor Recreation. The department completed a system-wide recreation master plan update for the years 2007 through 2011, which includes guidelines for upgrading existing resources and developing new facilities and programs. The master plan addresses both the active and passive recreational needs of the county through the inclusion of recommendations for land acquisition; improvements to existing recreation sites; development of new parks, facilities and greenways and includes an implementation program with a five-year capital improvements schedule.

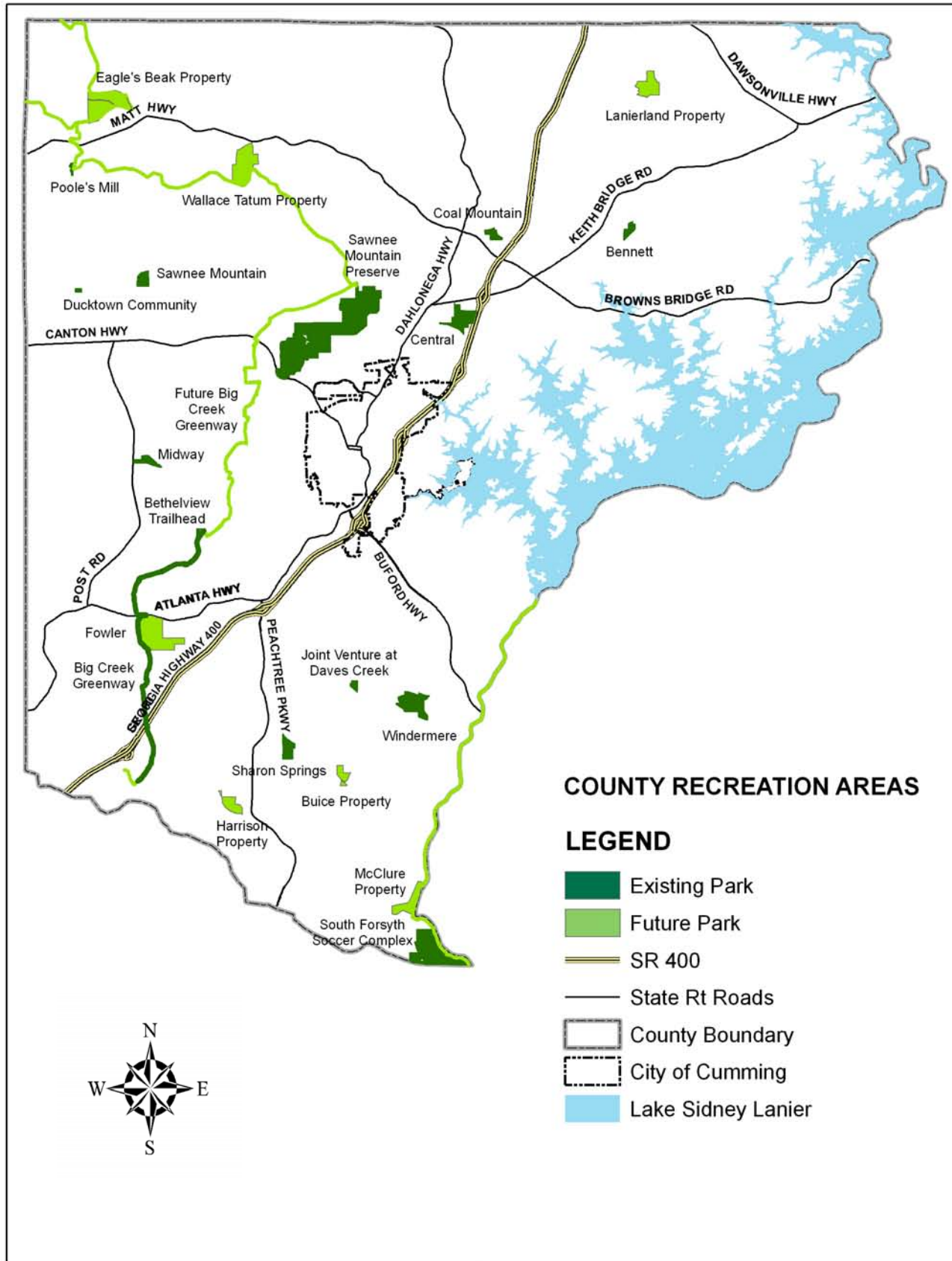
**County Recreation Areas**

Within Forsyth County, there are fourteen developed recreation sites and six undeveloped properties owned by Forsyth County and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Additionally, there are three federally owned parks along Lake Sidney Lanier that are operated by the county and the site of Lanierland, a former music venue, was purchased by the county and will be programmed in the future as another county recreation area. The following paragraphs give a description of each park and their locations are illustrated in Figure 7.

*Bennett Park*

Bennett Park, located on Burruss Mill Road, is the county's oldest recreation site that was constructed in 1978. The site encompasses 30 acres and is devoted to active use as a community park. Facilities within the park include baseball and softball fields, a multi-purpose field, basketball courts, tennis courts, multi-purpose courts, a playground and picnic areas as well as support facilities. The park receives heavy utilization and erosion problems associated with steep slopes need to be addressed.

FIGURE 7: COUNTY RECREATION AREAS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



*Central Park*

Central Park, built in 2001 with SPLOST funding, is an 85-acre community park located on SR 306 proximate to SR 400. The initial development phase included baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, disc golf, a playground, walking trail and support facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department offices were relocated from Sharon Springs Park to a new administration building at Central Park as part of the phase one development.

The Central Park Recreation Center was opened in 2003. This facility contains gymnasiums, indoor walking and jogging track, fitness room, rooms for dance, aerobics, arts and crafts and meeting space.

*Chestatee Community Building*

The Chestatee Community Building is located on a 3.6-acre site on Keith Bridge Road and is used approximately 12 to 14 times per year. The building contains one meeting room, a kitchen and restrooms.

*Coal Mountain Park*

This is a 26-acre site that is located adjacent to Settingdown Road close to SR 400. Facilities include baseball and softball fields, a soccer field, half-court basketball, playgrounds, a walking and jogging trail, a picnic area and support facilities. The park receives relatively high utilization during baseball and softball seasons.

*Ducktown Community Park*

Ducktown Park opened in 2007 and is located on Heardsville Road in northwest Forsyth County. It is a small neighborhood park comprised of 5 acres devoted to active use. The site is tiered and includes free play ballfields and an old community building.

*Fowler Park*

This is an 85-acre park that will be completed in 2011. It is located off of SR 9, across from the intersection with Castleberry Road. It will contain fields for football, soccer, lacrosse, baseball and softball, tennis courts, basketball courts, walking trails, a track, pavilions, a large playground, 10-acre passive area, skate park and trailhead for the Big Creek Greenway. A recreation center is also planned as a future facility.

*Joint Venture Park at Dave's Creek*

Dave's Creek Park is located on Melody Mizer Lane in the south portion of the county. This park was developed jointly with the Forsyth County Board of Education. Covering 16 acres, the park includes a multi-use field, three ballfields, pavilions and batting cages.

*Midway Park*

Located on Post Road in the western section of the county, Midway Park is a 40-acre site constructed in 1985. Except for two acres, this park is devoted to active use. Midway Park contains baseball and softball fields, a football field, batting cages, a multi-purpose field, basketball and tennis courts, a large covered pavilion, community building, a playground and picnic area, a small nature trail and support facilities. There are 20 acres of additional undeveloped land adjoining the park.

*Poole's Mill Park*

Poole's Mill Park is a passive-use, historic neighborhood park located on Poole's Mill Road close to SR 369 in the northwest portion of the county. Constructed in 1995, Poole's Mill Park occupies a land area of 9.6 acres. The park is devoted entirely to passive recreation and utilization is low to moderate.

The park is situated on a creek and includes a restored covered bridge, a nature trail, creek access, a garden area with benches and a monument, playground, a covered pavilion with picnic tables and cooking grills, a horseshoe pit and restrooms. A portion of the site remains undeveloped.

*Sawnee Mountain Park*

Located in western Forsyth County on Watson Road close to SR 20, Sawnee Mountain Park was opened in 1998. The park contains 44 acres, virtually all of which is devoted to active use. Utilization of athletic facilities is moderate to heavy, but is currently programmed to accommodate the lowest number of teams within the recreation system.

Included at Sawnee Mountain Park are baseball and softball fields, football and soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, a small community building, pavilion and playground, a walking and jogging trail and support facilities.

*Sawnee Mountain Preserve*

The Sawnee Mountain Preserve is a 963-acre passive-use park established in the central portion of the county. Forsyth County used Georgia Greenspace funds to acquire just over 100 acres of this site, which is permanently protected greenspace per state requirements. A master plan was prepared for the Preserve in the spring of 2003. Currently, the Preserve has 3.5 miles of hiking trails, a learning library and sustainably constructed visitor center, 120-seat outdoor amphitheater, picnic pavilions, playground, tree house, canopy walk learning platform and a native plant garden. The master plan indicates the addition of another 4 miles of hiking trails, additional restroom facilities, a wilderness training area and the potential renovation of an existing building for recreational programming for the final phase of park development.

*Sharon Springs Park*

Sharon Springs Park, located on Sharon Road in the south portion of the county was constructed in 1994 and is used for active recreation. Utilization of this park is heavy for youth baseball and softball, adult softball, football and soccer programs. Facilities include baseball and softball fields, soccer and football fields, batting cages, basketball courts, tennis courts, pavilions, a playground, a walking and jogging trail, community building, administrative office and support facilities.

*South Forsyth Soccer Complex*

The South Forsyth Soccer Complex was constructed in 2002 and opened in late summer of 2003. This 31-acre park is located on McGinnis Ferry Road close to the Chattahoochee River and contains game and practice soccer fields and support facilities. A trail is planned that will eventually link to the Chattahoochee River.

*Windermere Park*

This passive-use park is located within the planned community of Windermere. The park occupies approximately 87.8 acres. Facilities include a nature trail, walking and jogging trail, practice soccer fields and support facilities.

**Lake Parks**

Forsyth County operates three passive-use lake parks owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Charleston Park, Shady Grove Campground and Young Deer Creek Park. These are located in the eastern portion of the county, between Browns Bridge Road and Pilgrim Mill Road, along the shoreline of Lake Sidney Lanier.

*Charleston Park*

Charleston Park is the northernmost of the three lake parks and also the largest with 154 acres. A significant portion of the park is unused as it is presently inaccessible for vehicular traffic. The developed portion receives heavy utilization and includes boat ramps, a swimming beach, picnic facilities, a trail and restroom building. There are future plans for 6.5 miles of mountain bicycle trails and an additional parking lot once funding is available.

*Shady Grove Park*

Located southeast of Charleston Park, Shady Grove Park is primarily a camping facility and occupies a land area of 107 acres. The site is rolling and well forested. Facilities include RV campsites, group campgrounds, restrooms with shower facilities, swimming beaches, a boat ramp, horseshoe pits and playground equipment.

*Young Deer Creek Park*

The smallest of the three lake parks is Young Deer Creek with a size of just over 13 acres. It receives seasonally heavy usage and facilities include boat ramps, a swimming beach, pavilion, play equipment, picnic facilities and a restroom building.

**Undeveloped Parks**

There are eight properties of undeveloped parkland that are owned by the county and dedicated for future park use.

The Buice property is 39 acres located on Old Atlanta Road near Lambert High School. There will be a future recreation center constructed on this site.

The Eagle's Beak property was purchased with greenspace bond funds and is located on Old Federal Road along the Etowah River. It is approximately 225 acres and will be a passive-use park with a canoe launch, parking area, restroom facilities, natural surface trails and primitive camping. One million dollars from the bond money will go towards the design and construction of this future facility. The National Park Service assisted with the concept plan in 2009 through the Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA).

The Harrison property is 63 acres and is located along the north and east sides of Caney Road, just west of the intersection with Brookwood Road.

The Lanierland property is 109 acres and is north of Jot-Em-Down Road. This park will be an active recreation park for the northeastern section of the county.

The McClure property is 100 acres located off of Old Atlanta Road that borders the Chattahoochee River. This park is planned to have a walking trail, pavilions, parking and restroom facilities.

The Threatt property occupies 180 acres at the intersection of McGinnis Ferry Road and Kemp Road. This parcel is located adjacent to the South Forsyth Soccer Complex and will be developed to afford residents a wide range of both active and passive recreational opportunities.

The Wallace Tatum property is 185 acres and is located on the south side of Wallace Tatum Road, just south of the intersection with SR 369 and will include a combination of active and passive recreational facilities as well as a library and senior service facility.

The Windermere property is 31 acres and will adjoin the existent passive-use park.

In addition to these sites, there are two other parcels of land adjacent to schools that could be donated to the county for development as parks. The first is a 30-acre site adjacent to Liberty Middle School and the second 10-acre site is proximate to Chestatee Elementary School.

#### **School Recreation Areas**

Joint-use agreements are negotiated with individual school principals for community use of school recreation areas. At present, the Parks and Recreation Department utilizes facilities at eight school sites throughout the county.

- Chestatee Elementary School – Gymnasium for “Girls on the Run”
- Sawnee Mountain Elementary School – Gymnasium and classrooms for Safety Town
- Matt Elementary School – Gymnasium for gymnastics program
- Midway Elementary School -- Gymnasium used for gymnastics program and “Girls on the Run”
- Settles Bridge Elementary School – Gymnasium for gymnastics program, baton and “Girls on the Run”
- Silver City Elementary School – Gymnasium for “Girls on the Run”
- Sharon Elementary School – Gymnasium and classrooms for gymnastics and Safety Town
- Vickery Elementary School – Gymnasium for gymnastics program
- North Forsyth High School – Field used for youth football and cheerleading competitions

- Forsyth Central High School – Football field, track and stadium for Special Olympics Spring Games and County-Wide Track Meet
- South Forsyth High School – Football field, track and stadium for County-Wide Field Day

Under present joint-use agreements, the Parks and Recreation Department programs and scheduled games can be “bumped” should a school-related activity be scheduled at a concurrent time period.

#### **State and Federal Recreation Areas**

Within Forsyth County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) maintains over 600 acres of recreation sites. Approximately half of this acreage is devoted to campsites and day use facilities.

The camping areas include walk-in campsites, showers, boat ramps, playgrounds, group camping areas, picnic tables, swimming areas, restrooms and support facilities. All facilities are accessible to the handicapped.

Day use areas consist of boat ramps, playgrounds, picnic tables, restrooms and support facilities. Some of the day use areas include beaches and permit swimming, but overnight camping is not permitted.

Forsyth County is considering leasing up to nine Corps lake parks. All of these sites are located south of SR 369 and when combined occupy an area of 322 acres. See Figure 8 for a map denoting state and federal recreation areas. A summary of each Corps site is presented below:

#### *Athens Park*

The Athens site occupies an area of 53.5 acres and does not presently contain any facilities; it is still under development.

#### *Bethel Park*

Bethel is an 85.4-acre site that is relatively flat and contains several attractive coves. Twenty-five acres are presently developed. Facilities include three boat ramps, a dock and restroom building.

#### *Bald Ridge Creek Campground*

Bald Ridge occupies a land area of 55.6 acres. The predominant use is for RV camping and there are a total of 82 campsites; this campground receives heavy utilization. Additional facilities include picnic areas and grills, a beach, an open play area and three restroom buildings.

#### *Keith's Bridge Park*

The Keith's Bridge site consists of 25.4 acres with three boat ramps, a beach, two docks, picnic areas and grills, trails and a restroom building.

#### *Long Hollow Park*

Long Hollow is a 28.8-acre site that includes picnic areas along the waterfront, a playground, trails, two boat ramps, a dock and restroom building.

*Six Mile Park*

Occupying an area of 13.8 acres, of which only two acres are developed, Six Mile contains two boat ramps.

*Tidwell Park*

Tidwell is a 7.4-acre site that is elevated above the lake, offering superb views of the surrounding locale. The site receives moderate utilization and contains a boat ramp, picnic areas and restroom building.

*Two Mile Park*

Occupying 35.6 acres, utilization is presently low and all roads are unpaved. Facilities include a boat ramp, picnic areas and restroom building.

*Vann's Tavern Park*

Vann's Tavern is a relatively level site of 16.5 acres. Utilization is heavy and facilities include a pavilion, three boat ramps, a trail and restroom building.

Along with Corps recreational property, there is a portion of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) within Forsyth County, comprising 215.76 acres that include sections of the Bowman's Island and Settles Bridge units. CRNRA provides opportunities to hike, picnic, raft, canoe, kayak, horseback ride and fish. As part of the transportation improvements related to the McGinnis Ferry Road bridge, the county is donating land for a parking lot, boat ramp and picnic area that will be maintained by the U.S. National Park Service as part of the CRNRA. This facility is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010. Adjacent to the CRNRA along the Chattahoochee River is the Buford Trout Hatchery, the county's only state heritage preserve, which serves as a public fishing area and fish production facility. The hatchery also has walking trails that allow for bird and other wildlife viewing. See Figure 7 for the locations of the federal and state recreation areas.

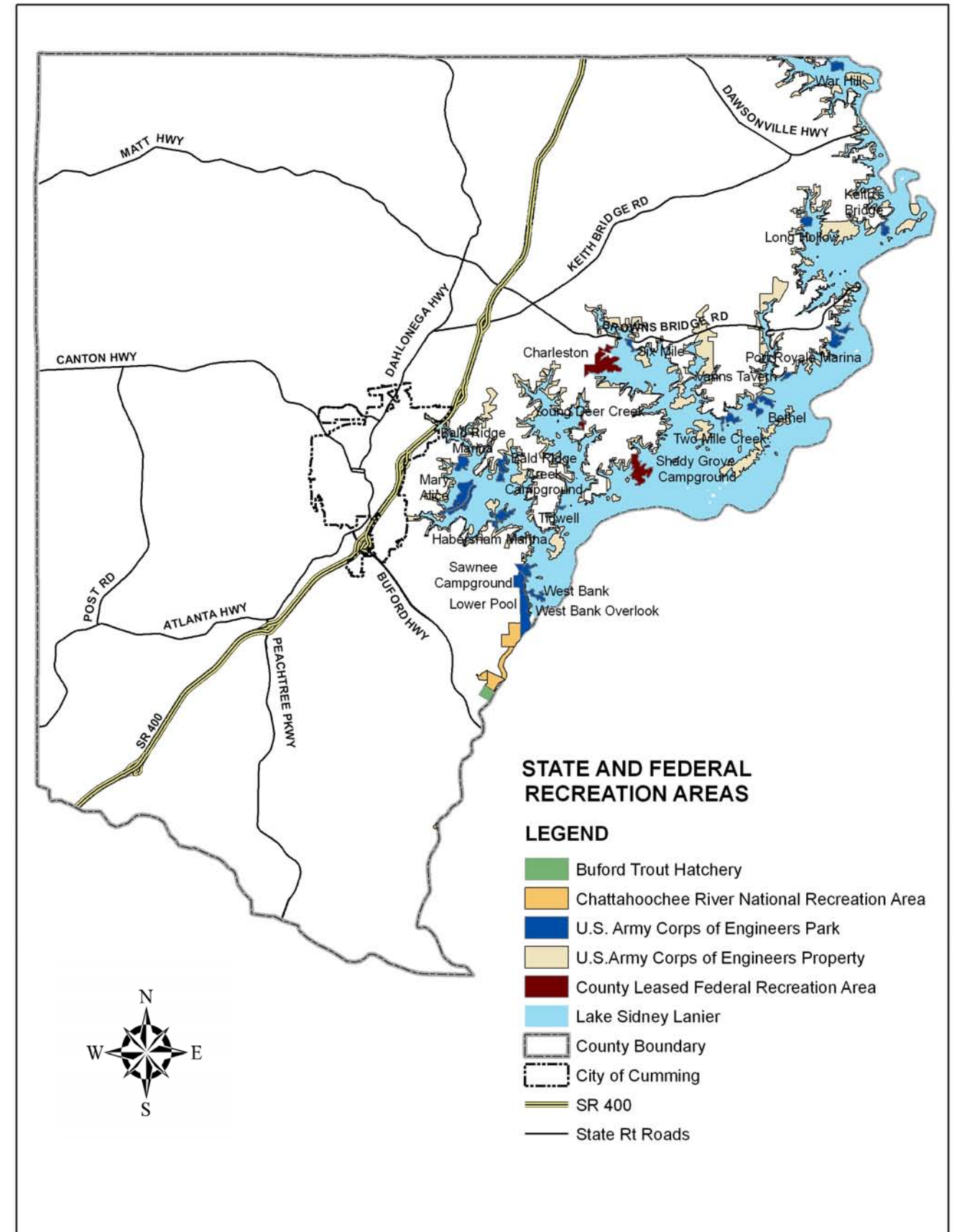
**Recreation Programs**

The Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department provides a broad range of athletic and non-athletic programs for youth and adults. Youth athletic programs are offered throughout the year at county parks and school athletic facilities. All programs are coordinated through the Parks and Recreation Department and utilize volunteers to serve as coaches and team assistants. The county's adult sports program includes organized activities and leagues for men's, women's and coed teams. These programs utilize both indoor and outdoor facilities. In addition, athletic camps are offered through most of the year and the department also has tournament events ranging from the district level to state to World Series level. Non-athletic programming consists of offerings such as art instruction and dance, kid's night out, CPR training, etiquette classes and the Girls on the Run program. The Outdoor Recreation Division focuses on adventure recreation and environmental education instruction through courses, camps and trips ranging from mountain biking, rock climbing, kayaking, canoeing and nature programs.

**Senior Citizens**

The Park and Recreation Department's goal is to work in conjunction with the county's Senior Center to provide a variety of programs for the senior population. The program has both active

FIGURE 8: STATE AND FEDERAL RECREATION AREAS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



and passive opportunities including fitness programs, social dance and tennis leagues as well as bingo, board and card games, arts and crafts instruction, book swaps, movie days and covered dish luncheons. The county offers seniors the opportunity to take bus trips for sightseeing and shopping purposes.

**Special Interest Programs**

The Parks and Recreation Department has a variety of cultural and special interest programs on a seasonal basis. Some of the popular special events include the Special Olympics, County-Wide Field Day, the County-Wide Track Meet, Seasoned Adult Fitness Event (S.A.F.E.), Senior Expo, Father and Daughter Dance, Art Expo, Easter Egg Hunt, the “Bark-In-The-Park” dog show event, Play In The Park Festival, Santa’s Calling and Christmas in Central Park.

**Assessment of Recreational Facilities**

*Level of Service*

Table 4 outlines facilities planning standards within the recreation master plan from which a needs assessment was produced. Facilities not presently available, but identified through the master plan public participation process include an aquatic center that the City of Cumming is now in the process of constructing, a multi-purpose building, visual arts center, outdoor adventure park and programs and facilities for special needs groups in addition to more fields, tracks, courts, trails, pavilions, playgrounds, dog parks, disc golf courses and buildings.

TABLE 4: FORSYTH COUNTY FACILITIES PLANNING STANDARDS

<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Forsyth County Standard</b>
Ballfields	1 Per 2,600
Football Fields	1 Per 20,000
Soccer Fields	1 Per 7,000
Lacrosse Fields	1 Per 40,000
Open Play Fields	1 Per 20,000
Tennis Courts	1 Per 4,700
Running Tracks	1 Per 50,000
Dog Parks	1 Per 60,000
Multi-Purpose Trail System	1 Per county
Park Trails	1 Per Community Park
Nature Trails	1 Per Passive Park
Swimming Pool Complex	1 Per 100,000
Multi-Purpose Courts	1 Per 15,000
Outdoor Volleyball Courts	1 Per 20,000
Skate Parks	1 Per 100,000
Disc Golf Courses	1 Per 75,000
Recreation Centers/Multi-purpose Buildings	1 Per 50,000
Community Buildings	1 Per 30,000
Playgrounds	1 Per 10,000
Pavilions	1 Per 10,000

TABLE 4: FORSYTH COUNTY FACILITIES PLANNING STANDARDS continued

<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Forsyth County Standard</b>
Concessions/Restrooms	1 Per 4 Athletic Fields
Maintenance Facilities	1 Per Community Park

The existing level of service is 13.93 acres of parkland, active and passive facilities, per 1,000 population, based on the 2009 population estimate of 174,520 per the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**Public Health Facilities**

Forsyth County residents have a number of health facilities available to them. Northside Hospital-Forsyth, formerly Baptist Medical Center, resides within the City of Cumming limits at 1200 Baptist Medical Center Drive. Northside Hospital - Forsyth is a 132-bed, not-for-profit community hospital, which has three adjacent medical office buildings on the 150-acre campus. Northside Hospital - Forsyth has a staff of more than 1,300 employees and 400 physicians and serves Forsyth, Dawson, North Fulton, west Gwinnett, east Cherokee and parts of Hall Counties. The facility has an ICU, certified state-of-the-art trauma emergency room, inpatient and outpatient surgery, radiology, life flight unit and a new woman’s center which opened in 2008.

Other hospitals in the area include:

*Northwoods Medical Specialists*

1230 Bald Ridge Marina Road, Cumming. This healthcare facility offers a wide range of diagnostic services, affiliated physician specialists and community health education classes.

*Emory Johns Creek Hospital*

6325 Hospital Parkway, Johns Creek. Emory Johns Creek Hospital is a 110-bed hospital featuring some of the most advanced medical technologies available. Serving the City of Johns Creek and the surrounding communities, Emory Johns Creek Hospital offers a full range of services, including emergency services staffed with board certified, emergency physicians, surgery, cardiology, oncology, advanced imaging capabilities and intensive care.

*Lanier Park Hospital*

675 White Sulphur Road, Gainesville. Lanier Park Hospital is an acute care facility offering a variety of outpatient procedures, 24-hour emergency room, MRI, neurosurgery, pulmonary medicine, pain management and women’s health.

*North Fulton Hospital*

3000 Hospital Boulevard, Roswell. This is a full-service, 202-bed, acute care hospital located on SR 9, Alpharetta Highway, in Roswell. Opened in 1983, NFH serves North Fulton and surrounding counties through its team of over 1,000 employees, 400 staff physicians and 200 volunteers. NFH is a state designated Level II trauma center and provides a continuum of services through its centers and programs, including neurosciences, orthopedics, rehabilitation, surgical services, bariatric surgical weight loss, gastroenterology and oncology. The hospital is fully accredited and is also certified as a Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the nation’s oldest and largest hospital accreditation agency.

*Northeast Georgia Medical Center*

743 Spring Street, Gainesville. Northeast Georgia Medical Center offers a full range of health-care services, from a full-service imaging center, two long-term care centers and a mental health and substance abuse treatment center. Led by volunteer boards made up of community leaders, the 557-inpatient, 261-skilled nursing bed serves almost 700,000 people in more than 13 counties across Northeast Georgia.

Three other hospital centers that may serve county residents include two other Northside Hospital locations, one in Cherokee County and the other in Sandy Springs and Chestatee Regional Hospital in Dahlonega.

The Forsyth County Health Department handles both physical and environmental health issues. The physical health component of the department is a referral and basic screening facility. They offer a variety of services including child and adolescent health and dental services, adult health services including a woman's clinic, disease screening and immunizations. The environmental health section is responsible for permitting and inspecting food facilities, on-site sewage disposal systems and the enforcement of the state pool regulations as well as handling rabies prevention in the community.

**Educational Facilities**

**Public School System**

The Forsyth County Board of Education is the governing body of the Forsyth County School System that consists of five members who are elected at-large to staggered, four-year terms representing individual districts. Currently, county campuses include nineteen elementary schools, nine middle schools, five high schools, one non-traditional high school, Forsyth Academy, and one alternative school, Academies for Creative Education. In addition, there are five future schools planned at specified locations across the county. The locations of the existing and proposed school sites whose locations have been identified are presented in Figure 9. It is projected that by the 2012-13 school year, ten elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools will be over capacity.

The Forsyth County School System maintains a high standard of excellence. All existing schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and have exceeded the standards as defined and measured by the Georgia Department of Education. Seven schools are Georgia Schools of Excellence including: Big Creek, Chattahoochee, Mashburn and Midway Elementary Schools; Otwell Middle School; and Forsyth Central and North Forsyth High Schools. The Schools of Excellence Program began in 1984, which honors two educational institutions from each of the state's thirteen congressional districts that have finished in the top ten percent for student achievement in reading and language arts and math or those institutions that demonstrated the greatest gains for student achievement in reading and language arts and math over a three year period. In 2001, Big Creek Elementary School was named a National Blue Ribbon School, which honors schools as national role models for academic superiority or dramatic increases in student achievement.

**Private Schools**

In addition to the public school system, Forsyth County residents have access to a number of

private schools including the ones listed below:

- Covenant Christian Academy, 6905 Post Road, Cumming.
- Cornerstone Schools, 4888 Browns Bridge Road, Cumming.
- Fideles Christian School, 1390 Weber Industrial Drive, Cumming.
- Friendship Christian School, 3160 Old Atlanta Road, Suwanee.
- Forsyth Christian School, 1250 Alpha Drive, Alpharetta.
- Greater Atlanta Christian, 1575 Indian Trail, Norcross.
- Horizon Christian Academy, 2160 Freedom Parkway, Cumming.
- Ivy League Montessori School, 1791 Kelly Mill Road, Cumming.
- Lakeview Academy, 796 Lakeview Academy Drive NE, Gainesville.
- McGinnis Woods Country Day School, 5368 McGinnis Ferry Road, Alpharetta.
- Montessori Academy at Sharon Springs, 2830 Old Atlanta Road, Cumming.
- Pinecrest Academy, 955 Peachtree Parkway, Cumming.

**Colleges and Universities**

Lanier Technical College is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia that provides workforce training development for Banks, Barrow, Dawson, Forsyth, Hall, Jackson, Lumpkin and north Fulton Counties.

The Forsyth campus, one of five campuses with a combined total of over 4,000 students, is located on Majors Road. The campus offers a variety of certificate, degree and diploma programs.

North Georgia College and State University offers nursing undergraduate programs, graduate studies in business and education as well as continuing education courses within Forsyth County. Other educational institutions in the vicinity include:

- Brenau University, Gainesville.
- DeVry University, Alpharetta.
- Gainesville State College, Gainesville.
- Reinhardt University, Waleska.

**Other Public Educational Facilities**

*Forsyth County Library System*

In March 2010, the Forsyth County Public Library gained a third location with the Hampton Park Library opening, bringing the entire collection to greater than 250,000 materials including books, audio, video and multimedia items. There were over 1.5 million total checkouts for the 2009 fiscal year and more than 73,000 active patrons. Forsyth County Public Library earned the "Best Library in Georgia" distinction five times in the past seven years and is currently among the top twelve Southeast libraries due to its index ratings by the Hennen American Public Library (HAPLR) report. See Figure 10 for a map of the public libraries and other county educational facilities.

FIGURE 9: PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF FORSYTH COUNTY

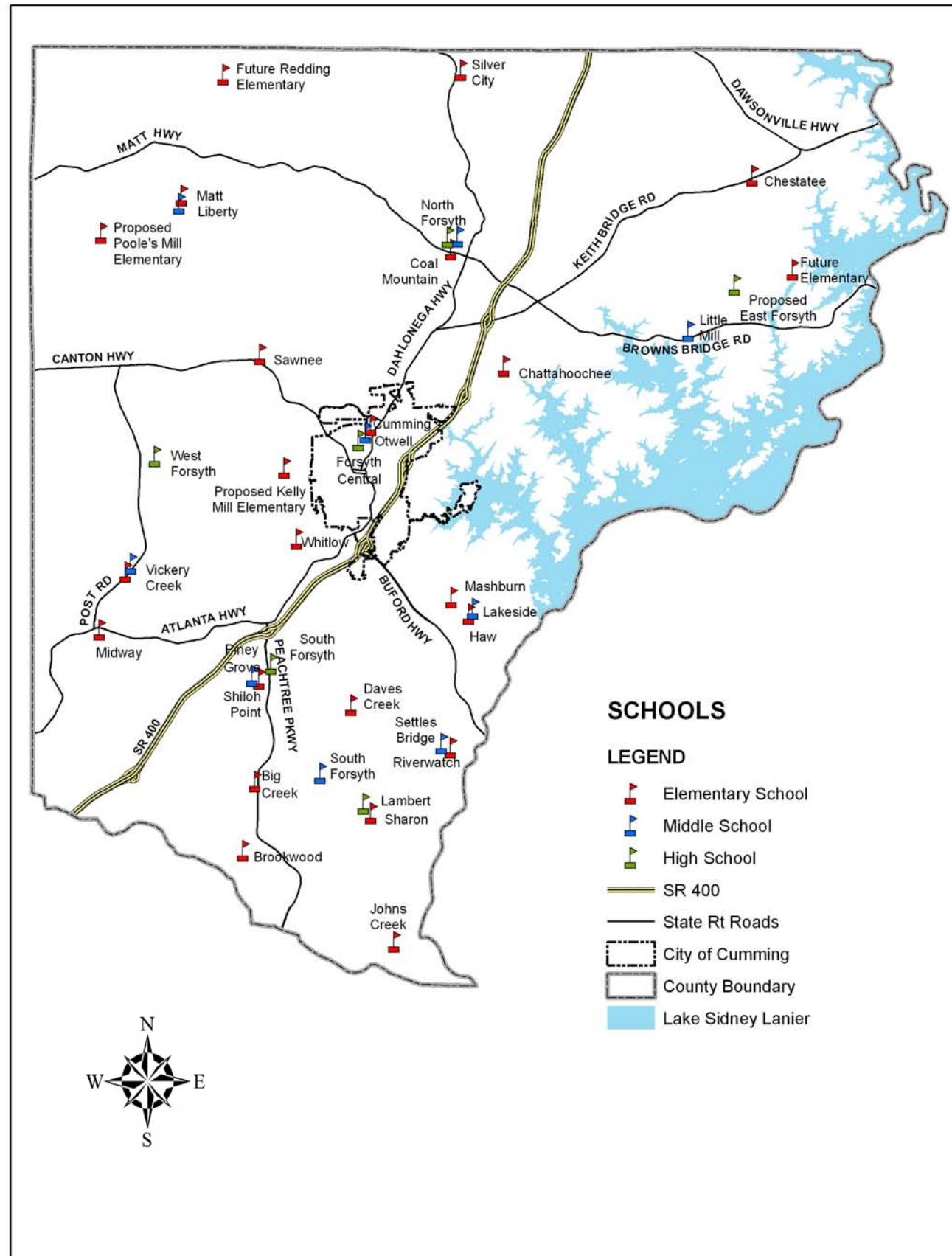
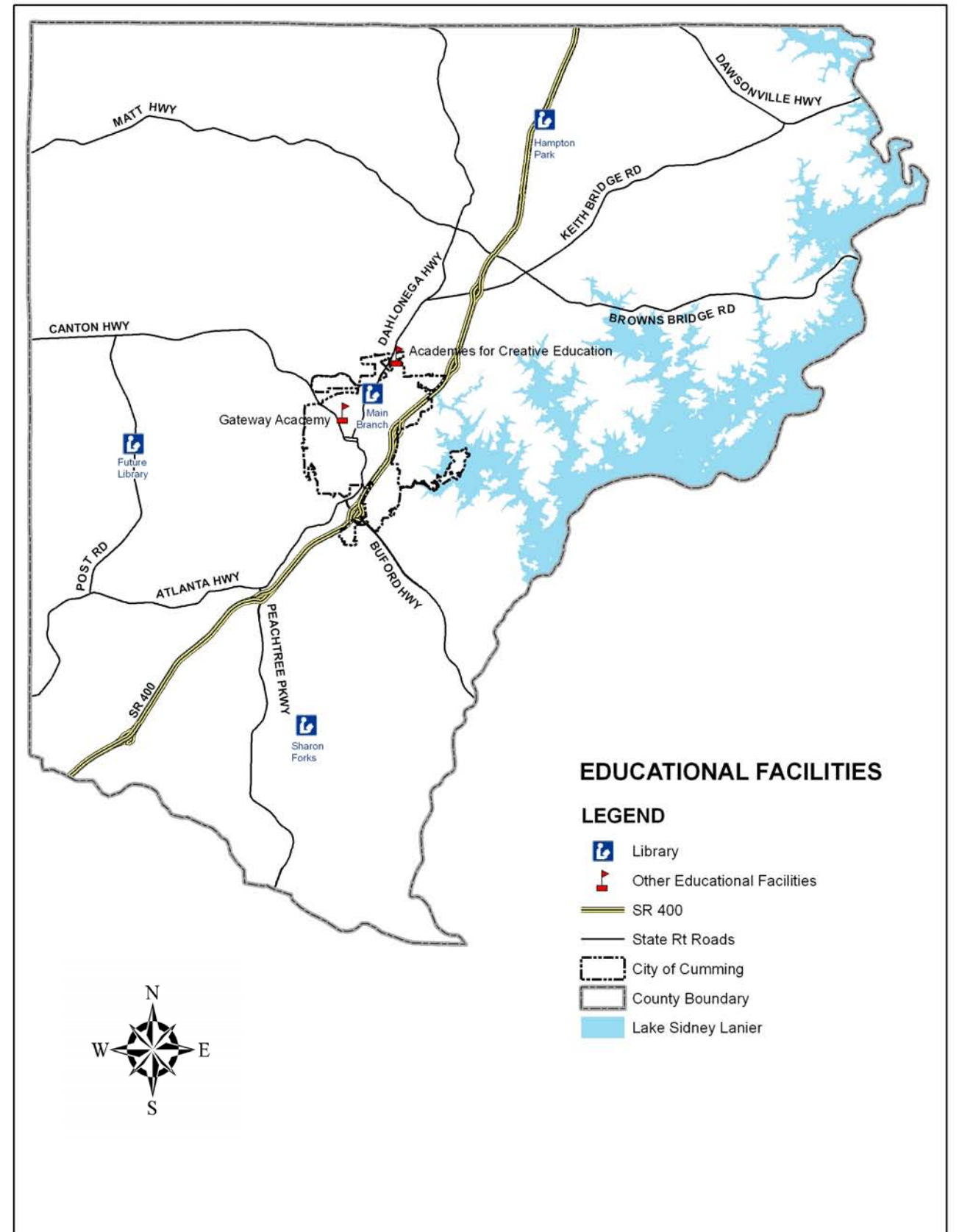


FIGURE 10: LIBRARIES AND OTHER PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES OF FORSYTH COUNTY





# Economic Development



## Introduction

This element of the assessment provides the opportunity to review the importance of economic development; to inventory and assess Forsyth County’s economic base, labor force characteristics and local economic development opportunities and resources; to determine financial needs and goals; and to merge this information with potential economic development tools to develop a strategy for the fiscal well-being of the community.

### The Need for Economic Development

Economic development planning and implementation is a crucial component of comprehensive community planning. In order to strategically guide growth in ways that both enhance the community economy and assure its sustainability, elements such as land use, infrastructure and resource planning must proactively incorporate anticipated economic impacts.

The Georgia Economic Development Association defines economic development as “a sustainable process of creating economic opportunity for all citizens, stimulating business investment, diversifying the public revenue base, and enhancing quality of life.”

According to the U.S. Economic Development Administration, a comprehensive economic development framework is “fundamentally about enhancing the factors of productive capacity – land, labor, capital, and technology – of a national, state, or local economy.”

### The Public Sector Role in Economic Development

Economic development increases a regional economy’s capacity to create wealth for local residents and is therefore inseparably linked to community planning issues such as sustainability and quality of life. Successful economic development is based on the utilization of a region’s labor, capital, infrastructure, physical resources such as land and water as well as professional expertise. Organizational development is necessary to facilitate and coordinate such efforts in order to plan and work proactively toward goals while responding to current economic conditions. Because economic development organizations take many forms, the role of local government in economic development is a variable relationship depending on the structure and approach desired by the community. The organizational model sets the framework for a community’s economic development strategies and may take the form of a public, private or public-private partnership organization. This structure has implications on organizational composition and function such as funding sources, governing body, legal form, operational advantages or disadvantages and extent of representation. Many local government decisions however, directly impact the community economy and therefore are a part of the economic planning process regardless of organizational structure.

### General Goals and Strategies

Components of proactive economic development planning usually include activities such as organizational development to establish stakeholders and decision makers; infrastructure planning to ensure the community’s ability to meet the tangible needs of a growing community economy; social infrastructure to sustain the desired quality of life; business development to encourage entrepreneurial endeavors as well as recruitment and retention of established businesses; work-

force development to ensure the skills and ability of the community workforce to compete in the local labor market and meet the needs of continuously changing industries and technologies; and ultimately community cash flow development to guarantee a balance of economic activity.

Although economic development can involve a myriad of strategies and approaches, the broadest goals are to achieve a growing and balanced economy consistent with the prudent management of state and local resources that equitably benefits all segments of the population; to encourage self-sufficiency; to facilitate and reward entrepreneurship; to decrease barriers for small business; to create an environment that promotes new and expanding business concerns; and to provide readily available training opportunities in the community that permit residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

## Inventory and Assessment

### Organizational Structure

Successful economic development plans involve a variety of stakeholders who represent a diversity of interests that contribute to the area economy. As with any broad effort, a shared vision and common goals among these stakeholders provide much-needed guidance for collaborative action. Forsyth County economic development activities take place under the county manager and may involve decisions made by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners or the county’s primary economic development arm, the nine appointed members of the Development Authority of Forsyth County. The Development Authority works closely with the Cumming - Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce; Chamber staff serves as the principle economic development representative for the Authority with both agencies mutually working to improve the local economy. The Chamber, founded in 1952 as a private member-based advocate organization for local commerce, is comprised of business organizations, allied professionals, local leaders and other interested individuals. Their mission is to enhance economic growth and development of Forsyth County and to engage in business recruitment, business expansion and retention. The Development Authority, the City of Cumming, the Chamber of Commerce and the Forsyth County Board of Education work in partnership whenever possible to facilitate mutual interests including customer service support, ensuring quality of life for citizens and growth management strategies to foster long-term success for residents and businesses within the City of Cumming and Forsyth County. Other community stakeholders consist of the county’s major private utilities providers Georgia Power Co. and Sawnee EMC, Northside Hospital - Forsyth and Lanier Technical College who are often involved with coordinated efforts with the primary economic development partners. These relationships span both the private and public sector and seek to balance the overall needs of the community with particular requirements of area businesses. Through the comprehensive planning and zoning process, Forsyth County seeks to manage growth, provide for necessary infrastructure, balance land uses and maintain local culture, identity and a sense of place. Businesses and residents need proximity to career opportunities and other resources associated with a metropolitan region yet also desire the quality of life afforded by a thriving community with a discernable character. Through the permitting and inspections processes, Forsyth County implements and enforces codes that seek to protect property values and facilitate a desirable and marketable development community that benefits the resident economy. Other day-to-day county services such as the provision of public safety as well as water and sewer services are

resources necessary to grow and sustain business development.

### Regional Economic Development Efforts

Economic development on the regional level furthers efforts to collectively enhance the community economy, opens the door to further resources and often strengthens local participant's influence over regional issues or concerns. Forsyth County joins Cherokee and Hall Counties in the Joint Lanier Development Authority.

Forsyth County participates with Banks, Dawson, Franklin, Habersham, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens and Towns Counties through the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission. The Regional Commission serves as a designated Economic Development District and administers the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document as required by the U. S. Department of Commerce. The Commission's Economic and Community Development Department works with a variety of state and federal agencies to secure economic and community development based grants and loans for northeast Georgia communities.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the metropolitan Atlanta area, defined as a ten-county area including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale Counties, including the City of Atlanta. It also serves as the metropolitan planning organization for ten additional counties consisting of Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Coweta, Forsyth, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Spalding and Walton Counties.

Across the State of Georgia, other economic development organizations include the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Economic Developers Association and statewide utility companies.

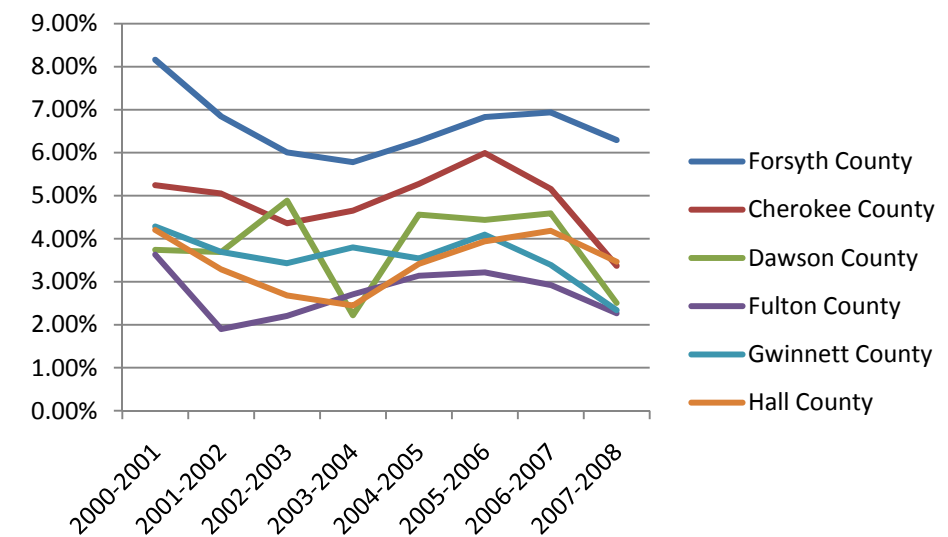
### Local Attributes, Strengths and Challenges

Forsyth County enjoys many regional advantages with respect to quality of life as well as the ability to attract and sustain business enterprises. For example, a superior healthcare system provides for outstanding employee wellness, proximity to Atlanta offers access to major markets; and an hour drive to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport enables domestic and international flights crucial for many businesses. Forsyth County is located along the State of Georgia's "Technology Corridor" of SR 400, which allows entrance to the community's major commercial and industrial areas encompassing numerous business and industrial parks. This location also supplies access to major north-south and east-west interstates, I-75, I-85 and I-20, while granting proximity to various academic institutions. Attractive incentives include low tax rates with exceptional lifestyle amenities such as Lake Sidney Lanier's approximate 200 miles of shoreline, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Sawnee Mountain Preserve, Big Creek Greenway, multiple PGA signature golf courses and cultural opportunities.

The attributes that bring businesses and new residents to Forsyth County are associated with both strengths and challenges having resulted in explosive population growth. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates, Forsyth County's growth has taken place at a much greater rate than surrounding counties as shown in Figure 1. Although a widely recognized indicator of

economic prosperity, growth presents the community with many needs as well as opportunities. An increased tax base and larger personal income bring prosperity with the need for proactive planning and decision making processes to address challenges that arise from a community's expansion. Contemporary challenges facing Forsyth County include securing a permanent source of water that will not be threatened by jurisdictional legal conflicts, ensuring sewer service is consonant with the county's master plan in the long range planning period and enhancing the transportation network to accommodate future mobility demands.

FIGURE I: RATE OF POPULATION CHANGE 2000 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Community Cash Flow Development

New dollars brought into the community can enter through two primary sources: Entities, such as businesses, organizations and governments; or individuals through earned income or transfer income. Personal income can come from five different sources: Wages and salaries; other labor; proprietor's income; dividends, interest and rent income; and transfer payments. Table 1 provides the distribution of personal income in Forsyth County in 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 1: PERSONAL INCOME DISTRIBUTION 1990 – 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Category	1990		2000	
	Dollars	%	Dollars	%
Total income	693,535,123	100%	2,855,889,600	100%
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	549,287,077	79.2%	2,365,743,100	82.8%
Aggregate other types of income for households	6,560,618	0.9%	27,736,900	1%
Aggregate self employment income for households	53,068,771	7.7%	170,430,100	6%
Aggregate interest, dividends or net rental income	42,155,387	6.1%	133,490,700	4.7%
Aggregate social security income for households	22,185,993	3.2%	66,352,300	2.3%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	2,570,394	0.4%	5,971,900	0.2%
Aggregate retirement income for households	17,706,883	2.6%	86,164,600	3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Earned Income and Wages

In 2008 and 2009, Forsyth County was recognized by Forbes as one of the best counties in the nation to get ahead and among the wealthiest counties based on median income comparisons nationwide. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2006 - 2008 estimates, the 2008 median household income was estimated to be \$86,938 in Forsyth County compared with \$50,429 in the State of Georgia and \$52,175 nationally. This figure exceeds that of adjacent counties as indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

County	Median Income
Forsyth County	\$86,938
Cherokee County	\$66,507
Dawson County	\$58,681
Fulton County	\$61,332
Gwinnett County	\$66,846
Hall County	\$51,637

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006 - 2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

Long-term data between 1970 and 2008 provided by Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. below reveals a household income trend in terms of mean in Table 3. This data indicates that the average income in Forsyth County is higher than all abutting counties except Fulton and Gwinnett from 1990 onwards. The general trend of increase in income is consistent for each county, steady until 2000 and then begins to plateau or decline. Forsyth County increased the greatest amount

between 1970 and 2008 at 132.86%.

A higher median income in comparison to mean income indicates that although lower wages differ enough to decrease the mathematical mean, higher wages may be more frequently occurring which maintains elevated amounts in the middle ranges of the distribution.

TABLE 3: MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 2004 DOLLARS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Mean Household Income	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$39,351.00	\$53,912.00	\$69,687.00	\$111,087.00	\$99,769.00	\$91,632.00
Cherokee County	\$39,347.00	\$54,230.00	\$65,785.00	\$96,325.00	\$89,158.00	\$84,059.00
Dawson County	\$34,750.00	\$42,768.00	\$56,367.00	\$75,380.00	\$75,973.00	\$72,934.00
Fulton County	\$55,058.00	\$58,214.00	\$85,352.00	\$122,592.00	\$121,621.00	\$120,338.00
Gwinnett County	\$48,833.00	\$67,413.00	\$78,510.00	\$99,750.00	\$86,467.00	\$83,384.00
Hall County	\$42,407.00	\$49,045.00	\$60,459.00	\$77,943.00	\$78,029.00	\$76,206.00

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. projections below in Table 4 anticipate increases between 2010 and 2040, but at a significantly slower rate than previously obtained.

TABLE 4: MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME PROJECTIONS IN 2004 DOLLARS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Mean Household Income	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forsyth County	\$89,009.00	\$94,160.00	\$100,493.00	\$108,032.00	\$116,891.00	\$138,923.00
Cherokee County	\$82,658.00	\$87,062.00	\$92,511.00	\$99,014.00	\$106,661.00	\$125,627.00
Dawson County	\$70,888.00	\$74,445.00	\$78,876.00	\$84,189.00	\$90,446.00	\$105,993.00
Fulton County	\$116,864.00	\$123,881.00	\$132,294.00	\$141,869.00	\$152,697.00	\$178,295.00
Gwinnett County	\$80,877.00	\$83,974.00	\$88,894.00	\$95,526.00	\$103,931.00	\$126,555.00
Hall County	\$75,502.00	\$79,070.00	\$83,702.00	\$89,314.00	\$95,966.00	\$112,535.00

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

Per capita income means how much each individual receives, in monetary terms, of the yearly income generated in the county. When determining the per capita income of a community, the total personal income is divided by the population. Per capita income is often used as a measure of the wealth of a jurisdiction, particularly in comparison to other locales. Please note that per capita income does not offer an indication of income distribution so this is provided separately.

Per capita income data provided by Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. indicates a general trend of steady increase for Forsyth County and surrounding counties between 1970 and 2000, followed by a plateau or decline for all counties by 2008 as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: PER CAPITA INCOME IN 2004 DOLLARS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Income Per Capita	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$11,995.00	\$18,176.00	\$25,093.00	\$39,222.00	\$35,756.00	\$32,913.00
Cherokee County	\$12,079.00	\$17,743.00	\$22,824.00	\$33,780.00	\$32,076.00	\$30,336.00
Dawson County	\$10,738.00	\$14,861.00	\$20,054.00	\$28,769.00	\$29,883.00	\$28,790.00
Fulton County	\$18,515.00	\$22,896.00	\$34,950.00	\$49,739.00	\$49,945.00	\$49,514.00
Gwinnett County	\$14,511.00	\$22,251.00	\$28,227.00	\$34,549.00	\$30,551.00	\$29,563.00
Hall County	\$13,117.00	\$17,139.00	\$22,290.00	\$26,817.00	\$27,290.00	\$26,752.00

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Woods and Pool Economics, Inc. projections for per capita income in Forsyth County and surrounding counties indicate continued gradual growth between 2010 and 2030, with sharper increases between 2030 and 2040 as specified in Table 6. These figures project that Fulton County will retain the highest per capita income followed by Forsyth County.

TABLE 6: PER CAPITA INCOME PROJECTIONS IN 2004 DOLLARS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Income Per Capita	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forsyth County	\$32,203.00	\$34,525.00	\$37,094.00	\$39,956.00	\$43,146.00	\$50,513.00
Cherokee County	\$30,044.00	\$32,076.00	\$34,318.00	\$36,812.00	\$39,585.00	\$45,959.00
Dawson County	\$28,181.00	\$29,995.00	\$31,995.00	\$34,217.00	\$36,686.00	\$42,343.00
Fulton County	\$48,403.00	\$51,931.00	\$55,752.00	\$59,817.00	\$64,146.00	\$73,530.00
Gwinnett County	\$28,879.00	\$30,394.00	\$32,395.00	\$34,888.00	\$37,889.00	\$45,475.00
Hall County	\$26,692.00	\$28,330.00	\$30,190.00	\$32,278.00	\$34,613.00	\$39,988.00

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Wages and salaries in Forsyth County have increased each decade since 1970, most dramatically between 1980 and 1990 (206.08%) and between 1990 and 2000 (320.45%). Although wages and salaries for the surrounding counties have also grown during the same period, Forsyth County has increased at the greatest rate between 1970 and 2008 (4,149.91%) with the exception of Gwinnett County (4,466.23%) as denoted in Table 7.

TABLE 7: TOTAL WAGES AND SALARIES IN MILLIONS, 2004 DOLLARS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Wages & Salaries	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$55.66	\$105.26	\$322.18	\$1,354.60	\$2,414.29	\$2,365.50
Cherokee County	\$114.45	\$180.74	\$410.49	\$1,087.72	\$1,648.67	\$1,615.35
Dawson County	\$15.12	\$17.91	\$30.84	\$116.93	\$207.61	\$203.42
Fulton County	\$13,523.95	\$17,594.41	\$24,451.95	\$42,217.68	\$45,143.10	\$44,230.45
Gwinnett County	\$318.14	\$1,313.47	\$4,913.51	\$13,123.50	\$14,826.78	\$14,527.00
Hall County	\$541.79	\$775.05	\$1,231.94	\$2,158.23	\$2,683.37	\$2,666.49

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Woods and Pool Economics, Inc. projections for wages and salaries in Forsyth County and surrounding counties indicate continued gradual growth between 2010 and 2030, to increase more sharply between 2030 and 2040 as shown in Table 8. These figures project that Fulton County will retain the highest wages and salaries through 2040, followed by Gwinnett County and then Forsyth County.

TABLE 8: TOTAL WAGE AND SALARY PROJECTIONS IN MILLIONS, 2004 DOLLARS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Wages & Salaries (Millions 2004 \$)	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forsyth County	\$2,394.02	\$2,814.86	\$3,312.73	\$3,906.58	\$4,614.53	\$6,463.40
Cherokee County	\$1,610.86	\$1,851.17	\$2,124.74	\$2,441.62	\$2,808.09	\$3,719.40
Dawson County	\$202.50	\$240.22	\$285.90	\$341.30	\$408.52	\$590.00
Fulton County	\$44,412.57	\$49,162.90	\$54,157.39	\$59,555.48	\$65,357.56	\$78,146.38
Gwinnett County	\$14,864.78	\$17,631.27	\$20,895.32	\$24,797.24	\$29,454.99	\$41,615.55
Hall County	\$2,693.14	\$3,003.68	\$3,346.81	\$3,731.40	\$4,161.18	\$5,173.69

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Income distributions comparing Forsyth County, the State of Georgia and U.S. reveal greater percentages of Forsyth County residents earning wages in higher distribution brackets as referenced in Table 9.

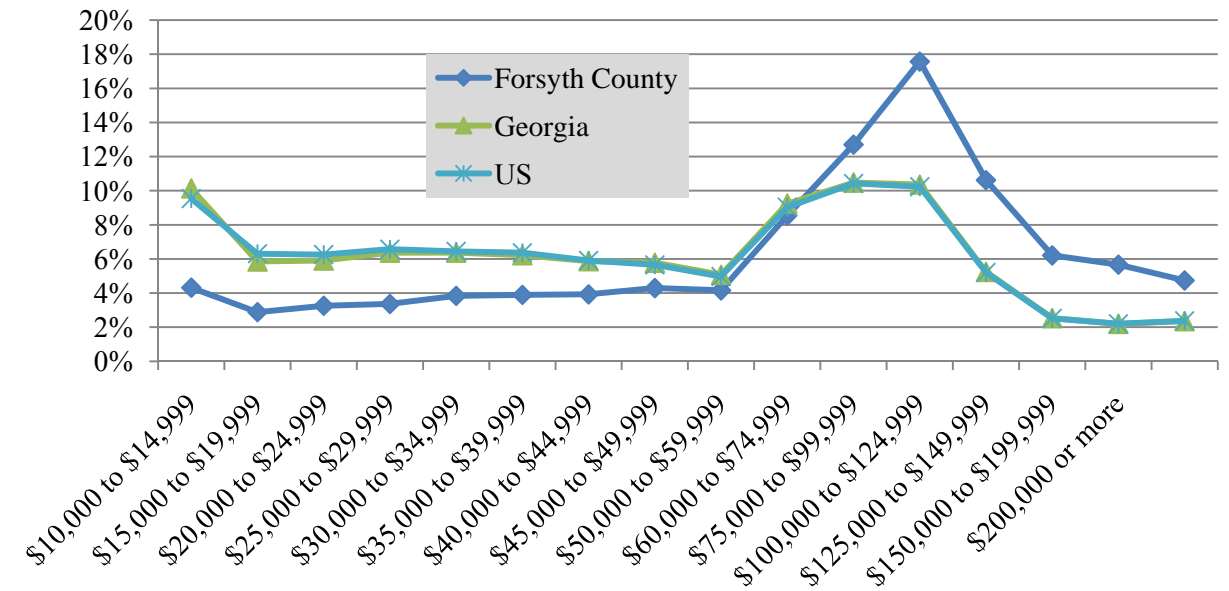
TABLE 9: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Category	Forsyth County		Georgia		U. S.	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	34,603	100%	3,007,678	100%	105,539,122	100%
Less than \$10,000	1,494	4%	304,816	10%	10,067,027	10%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	997	3%	176,059	6%	6,657,228	6%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	1,127	3%	177,676	6%	6,601,020	6%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	1,164	3%	191,603	6%	6,935,945	7%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	1,328	4%	191,619	6%	6,801,010	6%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	1,347	4%	187,070	6%	6,718,232	6%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	1,359	4%	176,616	6%	6,236,192	6%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	1,486	4%	173,820	6%	5,965,869	6%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	1,440	4%	152,525	5%	5,244,211	5%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	2,958	9%	278,017	9%	9,537,175	9%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	4,396	13%	315,186	10%	11,003,429	10%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,081	18%	311,651	10%	10,799,245	10%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	3,676	11%	157,818	5%	5,491,526	5%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	2,148	6%	76,275	3%	2,656,300	3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,962	6%	66,084	2%	2,322,038	2%
\$200,000 or more	1,640	5%	70,843	2%	2,502,675	2%
Median	\$68,890		\$42,433		\$41,994	

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census data for 2000 reveals a household income distribution in which the greatest percentage of residents (18%) earned between \$75,000 to \$99,999; this figure represents a larger portion of individuals making between these amounts than the State of Georgia or U.S. averages, which reveal 10% of residents at this level as illustrated in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: TOTAL WAGE AND SALARY PROJECTIONS IN MILLIONS,  
2004 DOLLARS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 10, provides a summary of Forsyth County's financial statistics from 1970 to 2008. This data includes the total earnings within the county, which have grown by 3,083.66% during this time, most significantly between 1990 and 2000 in which total earnings increased 246.02%. Personal income in Forsyth County and the State of Georgia is also growing. In 2008, total personal income in Forsyth County and the State of Georgia was \$5,531.31 million and \$293,305.22 million respectively; these figures increased from \$3,941.70 million and \$249,687.26 million in 2000. By 2040, total personal income in Forsyth County and the State of Georgia is projected to be almost \$17 million and over \$650 million correspondingly as shown in Table 11.

TABLE 10: INCOME SUMMARY IN MILLIONS 1970 - 2008  
2004 DOLLARS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Total Earnings	Forsyth County	\$91.48	\$166.08	\$480.42	\$1,662.35	\$2,968.38	\$2,912.42
	Georgia	\$55,468.76	\$79,632.80	\$123,868.11	\$202,730.84	\$232,135.29	\$227,929.85
Personal Income	Forsyth County	\$208.24	\$511.68	\$1,122.57	\$3,941.70	\$5,653.43	\$5,531.31
	Georgia	\$63,753.77	\$96,140.77	\$154,368.35	\$249,687.26	\$293,892.00	\$293,305.22
Wages and Salaries	Forsyth County	\$55.66	\$105.26	\$322.18	\$1,354.60	\$2,414.29	\$2,365.50
	Georgia	\$44,649.63	\$62,033.65	\$93,790.05	\$152,322.09	\$168,479.08	\$165,283.91
Other Labor Income	Forsyth County	\$5.38	\$17.77	\$62.68	\$243.57	\$490.30	\$484.85
	Georgia	\$4,799.18	\$11,586.78	\$19,399.35	\$29,642.79	\$38,585.68	\$38,245.09
Proprietors Income	Forsyth County	\$30.44	\$43.06	\$95.55	\$64.18	\$63.80	\$62.07
	Georgia	\$6,019.94	\$6,012.37	\$10,678.72	\$20,765.95	\$25,070.53	\$24,400.85
Dividends, Interest & Rent	Forsyth County	\$19.98	\$56.65	\$179.63	\$623.91	\$840.67	\$849.71
	Georgia	\$6,671.36	\$12,281.20	\$26,803.82	\$40,723.00	\$46,901.03	\$47,147.62
Transfer Pmts. To Persons	Forsyth County	\$13.94	\$40.40	\$80.74	\$195.26	\$361.03	\$406.59
	Georgia	\$5,323.28	\$11,352.08	\$16,935.72	\$28,014.43	\$40,161.62	\$43,194.73
Less Social Ins. Contributions	Forsyth County	\$4.98	\$13.33	\$47.97	\$180.68	\$332.76	\$350.96
	Georgia	\$3,427.09	\$6,888.08	\$13,087.26	\$20,992.20	\$24,449.37	\$24,090.44
Residence Adjustment	Forsyth County	\$87.82	\$261.89	\$429.76	\$1,640.86	\$1,816.11	\$1,713.55
	Georgia	-\$282.53	-\$237.24	-\$152.04	-\$788.81	-\$856.58	-\$876.53
Income Per Capita	Forsyth County	\$11,995.00	\$18,176.00	\$25,093.00	\$39,222.00	\$35,756.00	\$32,913
	Georgia	\$13,826.00	\$17,530.00	\$23,703.00	\$30,338.00	\$30,860.00	\$30,282
Income Per Capita (Current \$)	Forsyth County	\$2,927.00	\$8,733.00	\$18,635.00	\$36,185.00	\$38,813.00	\$36,922
	Georgia	\$3,374.00	\$8,422.00	\$17,603.00	\$27,990.00	\$33,499.00	\$33,971
W&P Wealth Index (U.S. = 100)	Forsyth County	\$77.74	\$91.42	\$101.57	\$131.64	\$111.95	\$104.16
	Georgia	\$84.47	\$84.91	\$92.14	\$95.43	\$89.28	\$88.10
Gross Regional Prod.	Forsyth County	\$147.23	\$257.53	\$740.83	\$2,584.31	\$4,593.08	\$4,547.67
	Georgia	\$81,999.11	\$120,819.91	\$193,662.91	\$315,298.23	\$360,426.27	\$358,031.47
Persons per Household (People)	Forsyth County	3.28	2.96	2.77	2.83	2.79	2.78
	Georgia	3.22	2.83	2.66	2.65	2.6	2.59
Retail Sales Per Household	Forsyth County	\$17,366.00	\$16,296.00	\$20,178.00	\$31,586.00	\$31,605.00	\$30,056.00
	Georgia	\$25,983.00	\$25,495.00	\$28,519.00	\$34,362.00	\$35,083.00	\$33,389.00
Mean Household Income	Forsyth County	\$39,351.00	\$53,912.00	\$69,687.00	\$111,087.00	\$99,769.00	\$91,632.00
	Georgia	\$44,900.00	\$49,892.00	\$63,389.00	\$80,737.00	\$80,660.00	\$78,926.00

TABLE 10: INCOME SUMMARY IN MILLIONS 1970 - 2008 continued  
2004 DOLLARS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Mean Household Income (Current \$)	Forsyth County	\$9,602.00	\$25,903.00	\$51,753.00	\$102,487.00	\$108,298.00	\$102,794.00
	Georgia	\$10,956.00	\$23,971.00	\$47,076.00	\$74,486.00	\$87,556.00	\$88,540.00
Households (Thousands)	Forsyth County	5.28	9.47	16.02	35.28	56.4	60.14
	Georgia	1380.75	1886.55	2383.13	3022.32	3561.39	3633.27
Less Than \$10,000 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	1.2	1.52	2.48	2.76
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	315.06	305.89	321.28	326.22
\$10,000 To \$29,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	3.43	4.71	7.68	8.53
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	672	739.98	789.74	804.1
\$30,000 To \$44,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	3.19	4.27	6.97	7.75
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	459.69	540.07	622.07	637.58
\$45,000 To \$59,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	2.83	4.48	7.31	8.13
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	347.55	432.81	538.3	552.72
\$60,000 To \$74,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	1.96	4.48	7.05	7.45
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	221.99	316.98	406.59	414.07
\$75,000 To \$99,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	1.53	6.2	9.77	10.01
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	165.98	313.51	404.07	410.93
\$100,000 To \$124,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	1.04	3.75	5.9	6.05
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	108.66	158.76	204.5	208
\$125,000 To \$149,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	0.33	2.19	3.45	3.54
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	33.73	76.72	98.67	100.34
\$150,000 To \$199,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	0.25	2	3.15	3.23
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	27.55	66.45	85.36	86.82
\$200,000 Or More (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	N/A	N/A	0.27	1.67	2.63	2.7
	Georgia	N/A	N/A	30.93	71.16	90.81	92.5

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

TABLE II: INCOME PROJECTIONS SUMMARY IN MILLIONS 2010 - 2040  
2004 DOLLARS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Total Earnings	Forsyth County	\$2,975.12	\$3,498.64	\$4,124.48	\$4,869.40	\$5,756.36	\$8,071.54
	Georgia	\$230,980.90	\$258,119.25	\$288,772.25	\$323,174.20	\$361,760.26	\$453,613.84
Personal Income	Forsyth County	\$5,742.81	\$7,048.27	\$8,542.29	\$10,254.91	\$12,215.95	\$16,994.21
	Georgia	\$299,910.47	\$341,042.44	\$388,306.64	\$442,190.83	\$503,385.37	\$650,070.27
Wages and Salaries	Forsyth County	\$2,394.02	\$2,814.86	\$3,312.73	\$3,906.58	\$4,614.53	\$6,463.40
	Georgia	\$167,456.39	\$187,315.09	\$209,261.43	\$234,003.97	\$261,838.83	\$328,244.15
Other Labor Income	Forsyth County	\$501.70	\$590.83	\$701.57	\$831.95	\$986.09	\$1,386.48
	Georgia	\$39,649.55	\$44,370.27	\$49,950.18	\$56,094.98	\$62,899.49	\$78,935.20
Proprietors Income	Forsyth County	\$79.39	\$92.94	\$110.18	\$130.87	\$155.74	\$221.66
	Georgia	\$23,874.96	\$26,433.89	\$29,560.64	\$33,075.24	\$37,021.94	\$46,434.48
Dividends, Interest & Rent	Forsyth County	\$859.53	\$1,100.26	\$1,386.17	\$1,725.06	\$2,126.01	\$3,158.27
	Georgia	\$46,553.98	\$54,696.09	\$64,126.06	\$75,044.71	\$87,683.44	\$119,227.79
Transfer Pmts. To Persons	Forsyth County	\$480.15	\$600.31	\$741.03	\$906.29	\$1,098.70	\$1,561.09
	Georgia	\$47,835.02	\$55,086.31	\$63,471.97	\$73,190.21	\$84,313.41	\$110,068.71
Less Social Ins. Contrib.	Forsyth County	\$372.45	\$449.95	\$538.47	\$641.10	\$761.47	\$1,072.08
	Georgia	\$24,432.12	\$28,059.43	\$31,879.81	\$35,996.47	\$40,506.38	\$51,057.33
Residence Adjustment	Forsyth County	\$1,800.47	\$2,299.01	\$2,829.08	\$3,395.27	\$3,996.35	\$5,275.40
	Georgia	-\$1,027.31	\$1,200.22	\$3,816.17	\$6,778.17	\$10,134.64	\$18,217.26
Income Per Capita (2004 \$)	Forsyth County	\$32,203.00	\$34,525.00	\$37,094.00	\$39,956.00	\$43,146.00	\$50,513.00
	Georgia	\$30,110.00	\$31,999.00	\$34,141.00	\$36,545.00	\$39,234.00	\$45,447.00
Income Per Capita (Current \$)	Forsyth County	\$37,815.00	\$47,341.00	\$60,147.00	\$77,545.00	\$100,853.00	\$172,271.00
	Georgia	\$35,356.00	\$43,877.00	\$55,359.00	\$70,926.00	\$91,708.00	\$154,994.00
W&P Wealth Index (U.S. = 100)	Forsyth County	\$100.99	\$101.27	\$101.51	\$101.76	\$102.02	\$102.60
	Georgia	\$87.29	\$87.01	\$86.80	\$86.64	\$86.52	\$86.36
Gross Regional Prod.	Forsyth County	\$4,549.13	\$5,347.91	\$6,303.08	\$7,439.90	\$8,793.35	\$12,325.65
	Georgia	\$356,333.20	\$395,772.74	\$440,519.54	\$490,628.73	\$546,686.91	\$679,586.37
Persons per Household (People)	Forsyth County	2.76	2.72	2.71	2.7	2.71	2.74
	Georgia	2.57	2.54	2.52	2.52	2.52	2.55
Retail Sales Per Household	Forsyth County	\$28,356.00	\$29,369.00	\$30,645.00	\$32,176.00	\$33,988.00	\$38,562.00
	Georgia	\$31,501.00	\$32,611.00	\$34,010.00	\$35,702.00	\$37,714.00	\$42,774.00
Mean Household Income	Forsyth County	\$89,009.00	\$94,160.00	\$100,493.00	\$108,032.00	\$116,891.00	\$138,923.00
	Georgia	\$77,929.00	\$81,721.00	\$86,598.00	\$92,485.00	\$99,451.00	\$116,808.00
Mean Household Income (Current \$)	Forsyth County	\$104,518.00	\$129,113.00	\$162,949.00	\$209,664.00	\$273,230.00	\$473,792.00
	Georgia	\$91,507.00	\$112,056.00	\$140,418.00	\$179,490.00	\$232,466.00	\$398,367.00

TABLE II: INCOME PROJECTIONS SUMMARY IN MILLIONS 2010 - 2040 continued  
2004 DOLLARS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Households (Thousands)	Forsyth County	64.27	74.54	84.6	94.4	103.82	121.16
	Georgia	3762.85	4080.43	4382.94	4669.05	4935.13	5404.84
Less Than \$10,000 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	2.93	3.13	3.26	3.35	3.37	2.95
	Georgia	328.35	322.92	309.72	289.92	267.11	219.46
\$10,000 To \$29,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	9.05	9.67	10.06	10.34	10.41	9.12
	Georgia	812.77	803.66	773.96	727.07	672.64	554.96
\$30,000 To \$44,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	8.22	8.78	9.13	9.39	9.45	8.28
	Georgia	656.12	668.5	658.77	627.91	585.06	483.73
\$45,000 To \$59,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	8.62	9.21	9.58	9.86	9.92	8.69
	Georgia	580.84	638.77	683.4	710.28	709.19	626.45
\$60,000 To \$74,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	7.96	9.09	9.61	9.89	9.95	8.71
	Georgia	437.49	516.53	601.63	683.19	751.65	810.71
\$75,000 To \$99,999 (Thousands)	Forsyth County	10.78	13.59	16.83	19.9	22.59	23.6
	Georgia	434.13	519.48	625.46	755.94	905.41	1206.1
\$100,000 To \$124,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	6.52	8.21	10.19	12.35	14.87	23.33
	Georgia	219.33	262.13	314.95	379.64	455.72	663.41
\$125,000 To \$149,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	3.81	4.8	5.95	7.22	8.69	13.63
	Georgia	105.66	126.02	150.97	181.23	216.58	313.46
\$150,000 To \$199,999 (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	3.48	4.38	5.44	6.59	7.94	12.45
	Georgia	91.28	108.47	129.43	154.62	183.89	263.31
\$200,000 Or More (2000 \$) (Thousands)	Forsyth County	2.91	3.66	4.55	5.51	6.63	10.41
	Georgia	96.89	113.95	134.66	159.26	187.87	263.26

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.



### Household Spending and Retail Growth

Income influences spending patterns and retail property demand, since it determines the level of retail expenditures and the types of goods purchased. The major source of income for most households is wage and salary income as represented in Table 2. Demographic factors impact spending patterns as well. For example, income tends to increase as a person gets older and single young adults tend to have lower incomes than mature couples, who are further on the wage scale due to experience and potentially are earning two incomes. Thus, household income changes as household members move through life cycle stages. The U.S. Bureau of the Census 2008 Age and Sex estimates indicate that the greatest concentration of Forsyth County residents fall between 35 and 49 years of age (25.6%). This age distribution category captures a prime portion of the workforce that is most likely achieving career advancement while being years away from retirement.

The disposable income available to a household for retail purchases is what is left from total income earned after taxes, interest payments, housing expenditures, health costs, education expenses, transportation and savings are taken out. Thus, factors that influence household expenditures on non-retail items have an effect on the level of disposable income available for retail items. When the median monthly housing costs of Forsyth County and surrounding counties are compared with median income divided into a monthly figure, based on the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2008 estimates, the result reveals that the proportion of monthly housing costs to income is lower in Forsyth County than any surrounding county (25.25%) compared with Cherokee County (29.63%), Dawson County (28.42%), Gwinnett County (29.05%), Hall County (32.14%) and Fulton County (35.79%).

Although the two primary structural characteristics that determine spending patterns of an area's population and households are its age and income mix, other factors play a key role including credit conditions, consumer expectations, relative prices, tax and other policies. Greater amounts of disposable income within the county usually result in more dollars spent in local retail markets, however, other economic and environmental factors can skew this tendency. Although Forsyth County had the second highest per capita income in 2008, when compared to each of its surrounding counties as indicated in Table 6, Forsyth County's 2008 retail sales per household are the lowest of any surrounding county. Retail sales per household, nonetheless, have generally increased each decade with the exception of figures that reflect market difficulties nationwide between 1970 and 1980 and again between 2007 and 2008 as referenced in Table 12.

Woods and Pool Economics, Inc. projections for retail sales per household in Forsyth County and surrounding counties indicate continued gradual growth between 2010 and 2030, to increase more sharply between 2030 and 2040 as denoted in Table 13.

TABLE 12: RETAIL SALES PER HOUSEHOLD, 2004 DOLLARS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Retail Sales Per Household	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$17,366.00	\$16,296.00	\$20,178.00	\$31,586.00	\$31,605.00	\$30,056.00
Cherokee County	\$17,424.00	\$14,775.00	\$15,853.00	\$30,427.00	\$31,651.00	\$30,098.00
Dawson County	\$5,822.00	\$9,104.00	\$8,835.00	\$37,064.00	\$42,466.00	\$40,381.00
Fulton County	\$39,690.00	\$31,848.00	\$34,196.00	\$43,215.00	\$43,661.00	\$41,543.00
Gwinnett County	\$21,479.00	\$23,915.00	\$35,706.00	\$51,200.00	\$52,449.00	\$49,867.00
Hall County	\$28,658.00	\$26,275.00	\$30,113.00	\$36,323.00	\$34,985.00	\$33,275.00

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

TABLE 13: RETAIL SALES PER HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS, 2004 DOLLARS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Retail Sales Per Household	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forsyth County	\$28,356.00	\$29,369.00	\$30,645.00	\$32,176.00	\$33,988.00	\$38,562.00
Cherokee County	\$28,391.00	\$29,380.00	\$30,629.00	\$32,126.00	\$33,893.00	\$38,323.00
Dawson County	\$38,094.00	\$39,434.00	\$41,135.00	\$43,193.00	\$45,640.00	\$51,819.00
Fulton County	\$39,238.00	\$40,741.00	\$42,626.00	\$44,909.00	\$47,637.00	\$54,513.00
Gwinnett County	\$47,039.00	\$48,675.00	\$50,745.00	\$53,233.00	\$56,173.00	\$63,549.00
Hall County	\$31,401.00	\$32,520.00	\$33,930.00	\$35,625.00	\$37,633.00	\$42,672.00

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

The relationship between local consumers and retail business is closely related to land use concerns that impact zoning decisions. Retail property demand drivers involve many of the same factors concerning the comprehensive planning process such as population, income, demographics, housing and land use. Population size is an important determinant of an area's total demand for retail property as it affects the magnitude of consumer expenditures in a given area. The total number of households also influences the sum of consumption expenditures since a number of these expenditures are household-related. Figure 8 illustrates existing or potential retail based on current zoning district coverage. Property for mixed use is also represented. This map reveals that retail properties are primarily located along the county's major roads and corridors with higher concentrations situated in the southernmost portions of the county. Spatially, this representation reveals that residents in the northwest and northeast portions of the county have the furthest distance to travel for retail shopping and are likely to visit shopping establishments in nearby Dawson County rather than travel further south. Currently, as a result of the residential boom across the State of Georgia in the last several decades, the proportion of residential (44%) to retail (17%) is greater than desired as represented in Table 14. Table 15 and Figure 3 summarize the current mix of zoning based on acreage as of early spring 2010.

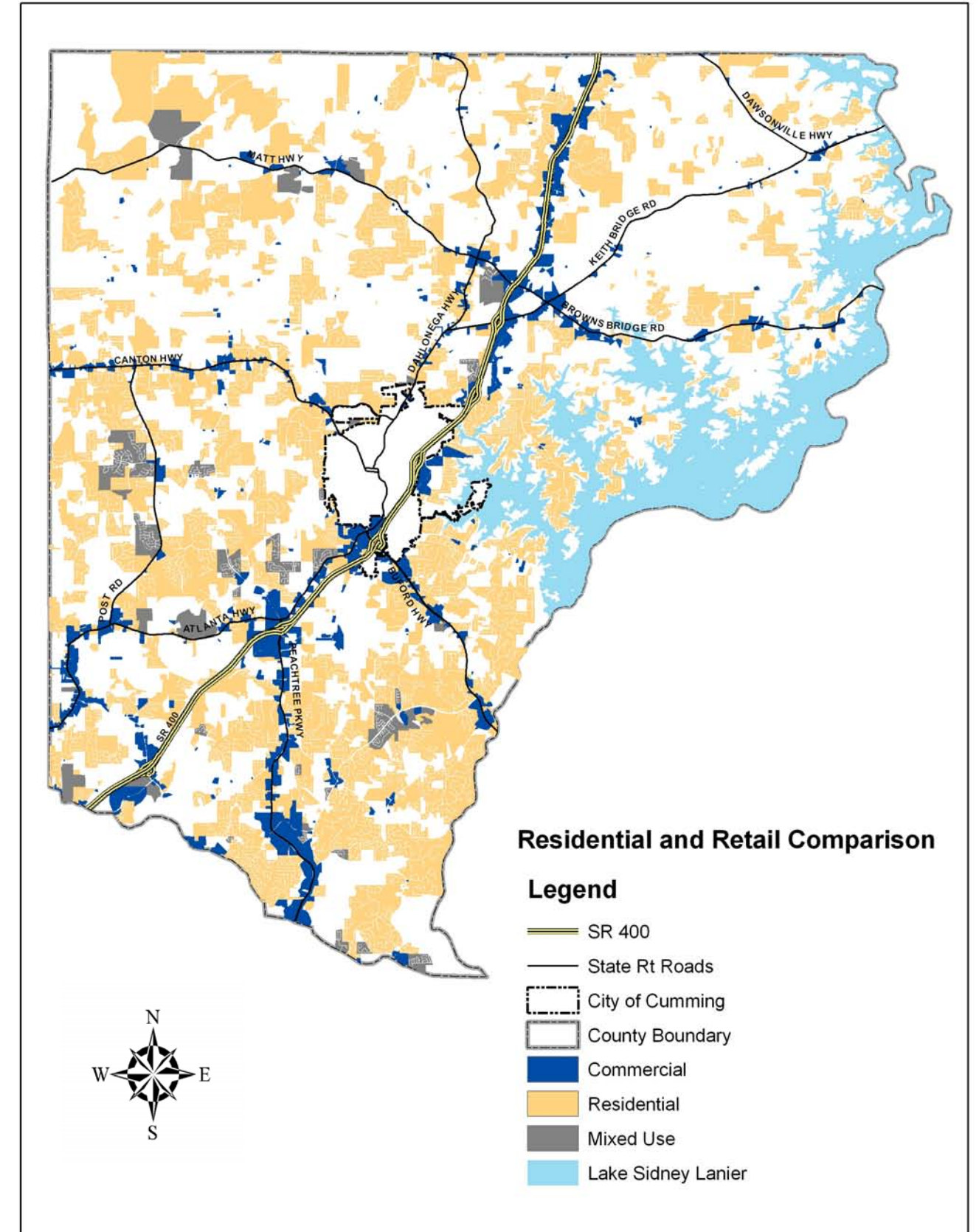
TABLE 14: EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE PROPORTION BASED ON CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT COVERAGE FORSYTH COUNTY

2010 Land Use by Parcels	
Residential	44%
Potential Retail	17%
Mixed Use	6%

TABLE 15: CURRENT ZONING PROPORTION BY ACREAGE FORSYTH COUNTY

2010 Land Use by Acreage		
Residential	53,130	42%
Commercial	6,370	5.1%
Mixed Use	3,658	2.9%
Industrial	5,586	4.4%
Agricultural	57,466	45.6%
Total	126,210	100%

FIGURE 3: CURRENT ZONING PROPORTION BY ACREAGE WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY



Although total retail sales in Forsyth County have increased each decade since 1970 at a rate consistent with surrounding counties, total numbers are less desirable when compared with counties of comparable size or growth indicated in Table 16. Currently, commercial development is primarily local-serving. Existing residents may choose to shop within the county or travel to regional shopping destinations elsewhere. This instance is very likely among the 51% of Forsyth County residents who commute outside the county for employment according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2008 estimates. The North Georgia Premium Outlets in Dawson County and the Mall of Georgia in Gwinnett County or North Point Mall in Fulton County are established examples of destination retail sites likely to draw consumers from other jurisdictions. New developments in Forsyth County such as the Avenue Forsyth and the future development of a large retail-based site within the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) area represent comparable regional centers, but only one of these is currently constructed. Future efforts to balance land use will likely provide more neighborhood-oriented retail, including large scale retail establishments, to serve Forsyth County residents throughout the county. Table 17 shows retail sales projections for Forsyth County and surrounding counties.

TABLE 16: TOTAL RETAIL SALES IN MILLIONS, 2004 DOLLARS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Total Retail Sales	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$91.62	\$154.32	\$323.35	\$1,114.25	\$1,782.50	\$1,807.58
Cherokee County	\$165.31	\$250.92	\$498.94	\$1,525.39	\$2,305.85	\$2,273.96
Dawson County	\$6.53	\$15.26	\$29.83	\$229.46	\$353.91	\$346.10
Fulton County	\$7,833.94	\$7,232.79	\$8,864.84	\$13,889.79	\$17,318.81	\$16,896.79
Gwinnett County	\$468.02	\$1,331.23	\$4,565.68	\$10,484.56	\$14,183.22	\$13,847.68
Hall County	\$523.89	\$690.45	\$1,054.39	\$1,737.60	\$2,163.52	\$2,135.67

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

TABLE 17: TOTAL RETAIL SALES PROJECTIONS IN MILLIONS, 2004 DOLLARS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Total Retail Sales	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forsyth County	\$1,822.51	\$2,189.15	\$2,592.59	\$3,037.45	\$3,528.63	\$4,672.21
Cherokee County	\$2,273.38	\$2,682.96	\$3,133.73	\$3,630.66	\$4,179.19	\$5,455.33
Dawson County	\$353.36	\$435.27	\$525.41	\$624.83	\$734.62	\$990.47
Fulton County	\$16,236.10	\$17,529.73	\$18,954.62	\$20,522.53	\$22,246.46	\$26,221.84
Gwinnett County	\$13,923.63	\$16,629.79	\$19,607.87	\$22,891.33	\$26,516.53	\$34,954.72
Hall County	\$2,084.83	\$2,335.46	\$2,611.36	\$2,915.29	\$3,250.28	\$4,026.89

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

### Forsyth County Workforce

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2008 estimates, 73% of Forsyth County residents are within the age 16 or older category, which represents the potential workforce; of this figure, approximately 8% are age 65 or older and probably signify retired persons, leaving just over 65% of residents likely working or seeking work (U.S. Census Bureau Data Set: 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, S0101, Age and Sex). Table 18 shows labor force participation in 1990 and 2000 through the identification of the number of men and women employed in the military and civilian labor forces. Reflective of the rapid population growth, Forsyth County has not experienced a decline in any category.

TABLE 18: LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION 1990 – 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Category	1990	2000
Total males and females	33,996	73,145
Total in labor force	24,229	52,904
Civilian labor force	24,221	52,875
Civilian employed	23,266	51,779
Civilian unemployed	955	1,096
In armed forces	8	29
Not in labor force	9,767	20,241

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Data on total employment in Forsyth County show a steady increase since 1970 as noted in Table 19. Although total employment figures in Forsyth County are lower than those of Cherokee, Fulton, Gwinnett and Hall Counties, the county's total employment has increased at the greatest rate, (1,232.71%) between 2001 and 2008 with the exception of Gwinnett County (2,216.46%). Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. projections in Table 20 point to the continuance of stable growth for each county until a more significant spike between 2030 and 2040.

TABLE 19: TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN THOUSANDS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Total Employment	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forsyth County	4.83	7.82	18.09	43.67	65.02	64.37
Cherokee County	8.32	12.41	26.89	50.03	76.24	75.09
Dawson County	1.11	1.62	2.65	6.91	12.37	12.09
Fulton County	490.43	592.02	715.32	911.42	970.52	966.33
Gwinnett County	17.51	59.08	182.74	352.76	409.89	405.61
Hall County	29.68	39.98	55.86	81.97	99.19	99.65

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

TABLE 20: TOTAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS IN THOUSANDS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Total Employment	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forsyth County	64.39	71.47	79.4	88.28	98.24	121.88
Cherokee County	74.49	81.72	89.68	98.41	108.01	130.14
Dawson County	11.9	13.56	15.46	17.62	20.09	26.12
Fulton County	953.79	1005.01	1056.69	1108.61	1160.54	1263.29
Gwinnett County	403.45	454.27	511.58	576.09	648.6	820.98
Hall County	99.08	105.99	113.41	121.38	129.92	148.83

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

### Unemployment

The 2008 U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics reports indicate that Forsyth County experienced a 4.8% unemployment rate as compared with 6.2% in the State of Georgia and 5.8% nationwide while maintaining a lower unemployment rate than state or national rates since 1990 as signified in Table 21 and Figure 4. This trend is also consistent among adjacent counties. Since 2000, the unemployment rate in Forsyth County has been consistently lower than adjoining counties as illustrated in Table 22. The unemployment rates in Forsyth County steadily decreased from 1990 to 2000, then began to increase. This increase in unemployment is consistent with surrounding county, state and national tendencies that reflect a market downturn beginning in 2001 and further economic difficulty beginning in 2007.

TABLE 21: EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS 1990 – 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Year	Location	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate (%)
1990	Forsyth County	24,886	23,813	1,073	4.3%
	Georgia	3,300,135	3,129,389	170,747	5.2%
	U. S.	125,856,000	118,795,000	7,061,000	5.6%
1991	Forsyth County	25,517	24,396	1,121	4.4%
	Georgia	3,298,665	3,132,597	166,069	5%
	U. S.	126,352,000	117,712,000	8,639,000	6.9%
1992	Forsyth County	27,104	25,671	1,433	5.3%
	Georgia	3,410,412	3,182,776	227,635	6.7%
	U. S.	128,099,000	118,487,000	9,611,000	7.5%
1993	Forsyth County	28,514	27,406	1,108	3.9%
	Georgia	3,485,593	3,278,794	206,798	5.9%
	U. S.	129,185,000	120,258,000	8,926,000	6.9%
1994	Forsyth County	31,255	30,304	951	3%
	Georgia	3,594,683	3,412,606	182,076	5.1%
	U. S.	131,046,000	123,071,000	7,975,000	6.1%

TABLE 21: EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS 1990 – 2008 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

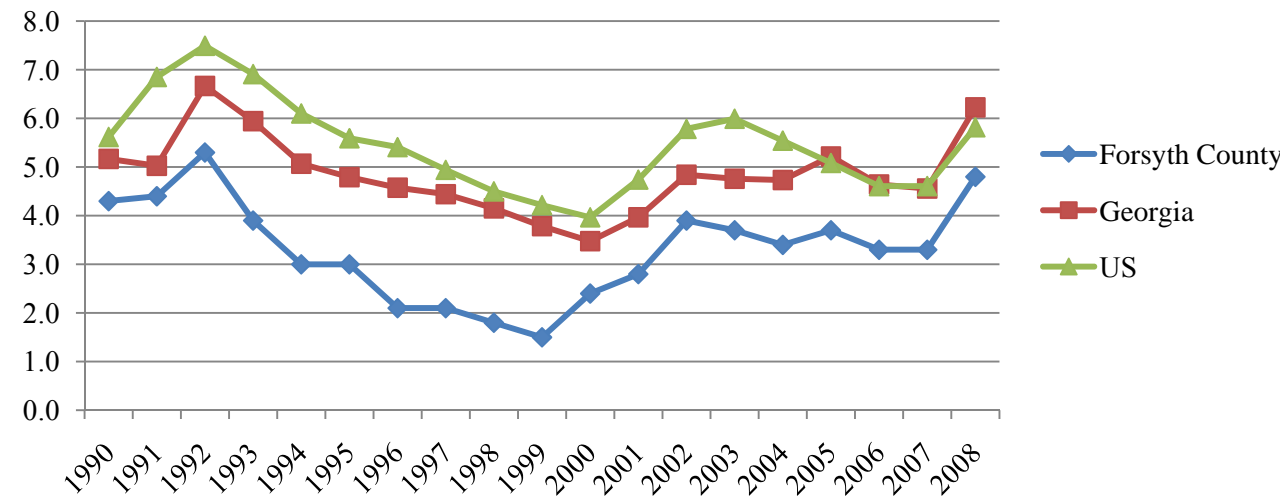
Year	Location	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate (%)
1995	Forsyth County	34,373	33,345	1,028	3%
	Georgia	3,699,727	3,522,905	176,822	4.8%
	U. S.	132,315,000	124,908,000	7,406,000	5.6%
1996	Forsyth County	38,466	37,668	798	2.1%
	Georgia	3,812,908	3,638,219	174,689	4.6%
	U. S.	133,951,000	126,720,000	7,231,000	5.4%
1997	Forsyth County	42,503	41,631	872	2.1%
	Georgia	3,926,801	3,751,699	175,102	4.4%
	U. S.	136,301,000	129,572,000	6,728,000	4.9%
1998	Forsyth County	48,937	48,072	865	1.8%
	Georgia	4,029,246	3,861,646	167,599	4.2%
	U. S.	137,679,000	131,475,000	6,203,000	4.5%
1999	Forsyth County	54,794	53,964	830	1.5%
	Georgia	4,106,678	3,951,684	154,994	3.8%
	U. S.	139,379,000	133,500,000	5,878,000	4.2%
2000	Forsyth County	57,527	56,164	1,363	2.4%
	Georgia	4,242,889	4,095,362	147,527	3.5%
	U. S.	142,614,000	136,931,000	5,685,000	4%
2001	Forsyth County	61,421	59,697	1,724	2.8%
	Georgia	4,283,157	4,112,868	170,288	4%
	U. S.	143,768,000	136,939,000	6,829,000	4.7%
2002	Forsyth County	64,627	62,081	2,546	3.9%
	Georgia	4,345,402	4,135,381	210,021	4.8%
	U. S.	144,856,000	136,480,000	8,375,000	5.8%
2003	Forsyth County	66,870	64,390	2,480	3.7%
	Georgia	4,382,182	4,173,787	208,395	4.8%
	U. S.	146,550,000	137,757,000	8,770,000	6%
2004	Forsyth County	70,370	67,947	2,423	3.4%
	Georgia	4,460,138	4,249,008	211,130	4.7%
	U. S.	147,428,000	139,309,000	8,139,000	5.5%
2005	Forsyth County	75,560	72,741	2,819	3.7%
	Georgia	4,613,585	4,373,348	240,237	5.2%
	U. S.	149,403,000	141,843,000	7,579,000	5.1%
2006	Forsyth County	80,069	77,427	2,642	3.3%
	Georgia	4,727,058	4,507,769	219,290	4.6%
	U. S.	151,516,000	144,529,000	6,992,000	4.6%

TABLE 21: EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS 1990 – 2008 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Year	Location	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate (%)
2007	Forsyth County	83,979	81,186	2,793	3.3%
	Georgia	4,798,003	4,578,828	219,175	4.6%
	U. S.	153,121,000	146,043,000	7,078,000	4.6%
2008	Forsyth County	84,607	80,512	4,095	4.8%
	Georgia	4,847,650	4,545,675	301,975	6.2%
	U. S.	154,355,000	145,266,000	8,967,000	5.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

FIGURE 4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 1990 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Forsyth County's unemployment rate has consistently stayed below state and national levels as well as surrounding counties as indicated in Table 22.

TABLE 22: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 2000 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Forsyth County	2.4%	2.8%	3.9%	3.7%	3.4%	3.7%	3.3%	3.3%	4.8%
Cherokee County	2.5%	2.8%	4%	4%	3.8%	4.1%	3.6%	3.6%	5.3%
Dawson County	2.7%	3.1%	4.3%	3.8%	3.9%	4.2%	3.7%	3.7%	5.9%
Fulton County	3.4%	4.1%	5.4%	5.3%	5.1%	5.7%	5%	4.8%	6.4%
Gwinnett County	2.7%	3.3%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	4.6%	4.1%	4%	5.6%
Hall County	2.9%	3.4%	4.1%	4%	4%	4.4%	3.8%	3.6%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Occupations

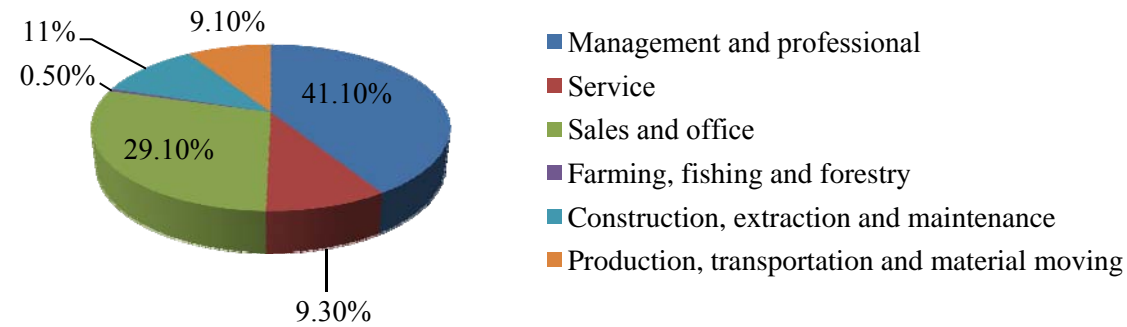
More than 40% of Forsyth County residents are employed in management, professional or related occupations as indicated by 2000 decennial data as denoted in Table 23. This figure is greater than all other surrounding counties, excluding Fulton County, which captures a portion of the City of Atlanta's job market as illustrated in Figure 5.

TABLE 23: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Category	Forsyth County	Cherokee County	Dawson County	Fulton County	Gwinnett County	Hall County
Management and Professional	41.1%	36.4%	30%	43.6%	39.7%	26.3%
Service	9.3%	11.2%	10.6%	13.5%	10.4%	12.1%
Sales and Office	29.1%	29.2%	26.9%	27.7%	30.1%	23.9%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	0.5%	0.3%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.9%
Construction, Extraction and Maintenance	11%	12.7%	13.4%	6%	10.1%	12.8%
Production, Transportation and Material Moving	9.1%	10.1%	18.4%	9.1%	9.6%	24%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

FIGURE 5: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Commuting Patterns or Trends

According to U.S. Bureau of the Census 2008 estimates, 49% of Forsyth County workers, age 16 and older, are employed as well as reside in the county. This figure is generally consistent with surrounding jurisdictions, falling slightly under Hall, Gwinnett and Fulton Counties, which predictably have a more extensive job market due to their proximity to the City of Atlanta and the presence of fair size cities within their boundaries. Between 1990 and 2000, workers commuting from outside Forsyth County increased by 434.21%, while residents commuting to employment outside Forsyth County rose 118.62% as denoted in Table 24. The significant increase in commuters into the county indicates growth in local job opportunities as population robustly increased both within the county and the metropolitan Atlanta area.

TABLE 24: COMMUTING PATTERNS 1990 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY RESIDENTS AND OUTSIDE WORKFORCE

Category	1990	2000
Workers commuting from outside Forsyth County	4,019	21,470
Residents commuting outside Forsyth County	13,807	30,185

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 25: RESIDENTS EMPLOYED WITHIN OWN COUNTY  
2008 ESTIMATE

County	Residents Employed within County
Forsyth County	49%
Cherokee County	42%
Dawson County	41%
Fulton County	73.9%
Gwinnett County	58.3%
Hall County	67.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, county-to-county worker flow files, 41.10% or 21,039 of Forsyth County residents also work in the county, while the remaining 58.9% of residents commuted to surrounding counties for employment in 2000 as shown in Table 26.

TABLE 26: LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR FORSYTH COUNTY RESIDENTS  
1990 - 2000

County of Employment	1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Forsyth County	9,031	39.5%	21,039	41.1%
Fulton County	5,971	26.2%	15,251	29.8%
Gwinnett County	2,758	12.1%	5,663	11.1%
DeKalb County	2,306	10.1%	3,067	6%
Cobb County	828	3.6%	1,790	3.5%
Hall County	914	4%	1,263	2.5%
Dawson County	138	0.6%	741	1.4%
Cherokee County	172	0.8%	457	0.9%
Other	720	3.2%	1,913	3.7%
Total Residents	22,838	100%	51,184	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – County-To-County Worker Flow Files

In addition, county-to-county worker flow files indicate 21,470 persons residing in surrounding counties entered Forsyth County each day for employment, comprising approximately 50.5% of persons working in Forsyth County as illustrated in Table 27.

TABLE 27: LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR AREA RESIDENTS 1990 - 2000

County of Residence	1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Forsyth County	9,031	69.2%	21,039	49.5%
Fulton County	439	3.4%	5,626	13.2%
Gwinnett County	504	3.9%	3,977	9.4%
Cherokee County	652	5%	1,961	4.6%
DeKalb County	102	0.8%	1,629	3.8%
Dawson County	794	6.1%	1,628	3.8%
Hall County	580	4.4%	1,577	3.7%
Cobb County	227	1.7%	1,529	3.6%
Other	721	5.5%	3,543	8.3%
Total Workers	13,050	100%	51,184	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – County-To-County Worker Flow Files

Table 28 provide an overall summary of the Forsyth County commuting characteristics according to U.S. Bureau of the Census data from 1990 and 2000 as well as 2008 estimates. On average, 28% of Forsyth County residents during these years commuted to work outside the county. The U.S. Bureau of the Census records also indicates that just over 74% drive alone to work in a car, truck or van.

TABLE 28: LABOR FORCE SUMMARY COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS 1990 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Category	1990		2000		2008 Estimate	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total population	44,083	N/A	98,407	N/A	168,060	N/A
Worked in state of residence	22,727	51.6%	50,578	51.4%	77,345	46%
Worked in county of residence	9,031	20.5%	21,039	21.4%	38,320	22.8%
Worked outside of county of residence, in state	13,696	31.1%	29,539	30%	39,024	23.2%
Worked outside of state of residence	111	0.25%	646	0.66%	860.255	0.51%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### Educational Attainment

#### Economic Impact of Failure

Statistics related to high school non-completion consistently show negative impacts on individuals as well as their community. Lower lifetime earnings result in reduced buying power, reduced tax revenues and less economic growth in the community. Decreased health status, higher mortality rates and a greater propensity toward criminal activity results in higher healthcare and criminal justice system costs. Less voting and volunteerism results in less community involvement. (Source: Levin, H., et al., “The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of

America’s Children,” January 2007.)

#### The Role of Higher Education

The role of higher education as a major driver of economic development is well established, and this role will increase as further changes in technology, globalization and demographics impact the United States. To remain competitive in light of these changes, regions will need to improve productivity and adopt an innovative spirit. Higher education has the capacity, knowledge and research necessary to help achieve these goals (Source: NIU Outreach, et al., “The Role of Higher Education in Economic Development,” May 2005).

Higher education has historically included economic development as part of its core mission contributing to the creation of a quality workforce by growing, training and attracting the best talent; supporting current business and industry; taking strong and visible roles in regional initiatives; disseminating research and promoting technology transfer; enhancing the technology infrastructure; promoting livable communities and employing a diverse workforce.

#### Quality Workforce

Training and attracting a quality labor force will be a dominant, if not decisive, factor in preparing workers with the robust skills needed to adapt to changing job requirements. The transition from manufacturing to the technology-based new economy dramatically raised the skill level needed to secure competitive wages. The requirements for current jobs are changing as well; from 1973 to 2003, the percent of workers age 30 to 59 with some postsecondary education increased from 28% to 60%, and nearly three-fourths of the increase in the need for postsecondary education was due to employer demands for advanced skills. In addition, college-trained workers will be necessary to replace the baby boomers since nearly 30% of the workforce will be at or over the retirement age by 2030. Higher education prepares a quality workforce by offering instructional programs, matching instruction to the needs of business and industry and helping individuals learn throughout their lives. (Source: NIU Outreach, et al., “The Role of Higher Education in Economic Development,” May 2005).

Successfully creating a quality local workforce is a collaborative effort that may involve a myriad of stakeholders and efforts such as the State of Georgia’s focus on promoting technical skills. The Quick Start program is a service available through the State of Georgia to qualifying businesses and industries. To qualify, businesses and industries must be locating to The State of Georgia or be an existing business or industry that is expanding and meets specific criteria. The service typically includes training analysis, development of training materials and training at no cost if an organization qualifies. The goal of Quick Start is to assist an organization reach maximum productivity in a minimum amount of time. During fiscal year 2008, Quick Start delivered 260 customized workforce training projects. By providing that training support, Quick Start helped to create or save 17,601 jobs. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, those jobs contributed \$493,532,040 in payroll revenue to the State of Georgia. Since it began in 1967, Quick Start has trained more than 706,168 Georgians through 5,668 projects. The State of Georgia’s network of technical colleges, including the Forsyth campus of Lanier Tech, have delivered services such as contract training for business and industry, continuing education, approval of retraining tax credits for eligible companies and Work Ready certification, all of which contribute significantly to an enhanced quality of life for thousands of Georgians. Forsyth County is

in progress toward becoming a certified work ready community. As part of the State of Georgia's Work Ready initiative, counties throughout the state have made a commitment to earn Certified Work Ready Community status, a designation showing they have the talented workforce that business demands and the means to drive economic growth and prosperity. By taking part in the effort, counties are transforming their economies and giving themselves a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses and jobs. To be designated a Certified Work Ready Community, counties must encourage the available workforce to earn Work Ready Certificates, demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates and build community commitment for meeting these goals. Each community needs to form a team of economic development, government and education partners to meet the certification criteria. Counties are given three years to reach the goals necessary to become a Certified Work Ready Community. Those counties willing to complete the process in 18 months are eligible for state-funded grants and serve as models for the initiative, showcasing successes and best practices for others to follow.

The Lanier Technical College Adult Education Program received a grant from the State of Georgia to aid residents seeking Work Ready Certification. This funding allowed them to hire staff and work toward providing Work Ready skills gap training to help citizens improve their core job skills and earn gold-level Work Ready Certificates. Lanier Technical College will receive \$200 for each Georgian who successfully improves their Work Ready Certificate level through skills gap training, up to \$10,000. There is also an incentive for students who are not working that includes a \$50 reward for taking their scores to the next level. Because the State of Georgia's Work Ready initiative is based on a skills assessment and certification for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses, the effort is an excellent approach to community economic development. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of the State of Georgia's workforce, the state can more effectively generate an in-demand workforce. Some businesses use this information to help make hiring decisions.

**Identifying Industry Needs**

Higher education connects workforce development to the economic development of the region by matching instructional programs to the needs of business. Efforts in making the connection between local educational opportunities and economic development include working with the business community to identify specific needs, providing work-based learning opportunities for students, offering and supporting apprenticeship programs and convening and being responsive to advisory committees with representatives from business and industry. Once needs are identified, higher education and industry work together to attract students into critical programs.

**The Future Forsyth County Workforce**

The quality of teaching and the educational experience offered a child has a direct impact on the ability and desire to complete high school. This responsibility rests with the Forsyth County Board of Education, however their capacity to provide this service is associated with Forsyth County government's ability to plan for growth and share information so that the school system can properly prepare to educate new school age residents. For this reason, the zoning process involves the distribution of information between the county and the school system with residential zoning applications requiring impact assessments including statistical estimates of numbers of school age children that may result from a new development. The quality of Forsyth County schools is also a community-oriented factor in whether a business desires to locate in Forsyth

County or elsewhere.

The Forsyth County high school graduation rate has improved over the last three years and the Pathways for Reaching Opportunities in Preparing for Excellence in Life (PROPEL) program seeks to continue this trend. Based on an understanding of the important role educational attainment plays in terms of the community workforce and overall economic health, Forsyth County schools and the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce have partnered to embark on an initiative to increase the county's graduation rate. PROPEL began in February 2010 and will carry on throughout the year. Although the current graduation rate is 88%, the program seeks to continue to improve this rate. PROPEL will incorporate business and community support in an effort to change students' mind-sets about the importance of a high school diploma. Local businesses will play a key role because they will reap the benefits of a more qualified workforce. The program also endeavors to guide students toward a future that may or may not involve college with a focus on the skills that will help them throughout their lives.

**Earnings Increase with Educational Attainment**

Adults ages 25 to 64 who worked at any time during the study period (1997-1999) of a special report issued by the U. S. Bureau of the Census in 2002 earned an average of \$34,700 per year. Average earnings ranged from \$18,900 for high school dropouts to \$25,900 for high school graduates, \$45,400 for college graduates and \$99,300 for workers with professional degrees (M.D., J.D., D.D.S. or D.V.M.). This trend is consistent with median earnings as correlated with educational attainment in Forsyth County according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census 2008 estimate as illustrated in Table 29 and Figure 6. Forsyth County's median wages for males and females in the workforce increase with educational attainment, although males consistently obtain higher earnings. For males and females in Forsyth County, workforce median earnings are generally higher when compared with the state or the nation.

TABLE 29: MEDIAN EARNINGS ESTIMATE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Category	Forsyth County	Georgia	U. S.
Total:	\$47,802	\$33,340	\$34,483
Less than high school graduate	\$23,387	\$19,801	\$19,989
High school graduate or GED	\$36,035	\$26,997	\$27,448
Some college or associate's degree	\$44,466	\$32,752	\$33,838
Bachelor's degree	\$64,535	\$47,864	\$47,853
Graduate or professional degree	\$77,796	\$60,972	\$63,174
Male:	\$61,708	\$39,627	\$41,298
Less than high school graduate	\$25,051	\$22,591	\$23,638
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$41,783	\$32,091	\$33,506
Some college or associate's degree	\$60,012	\$40,578	\$41,861
Bachelor's degree	\$84,269	\$60,177	\$59,079
Graduate or professional degree	\$98,089	\$77,609	\$79,276
Female:	\$36,868	\$27,950	\$28,104
Less than high school graduate	\$20,815	\$15,000	\$14,682

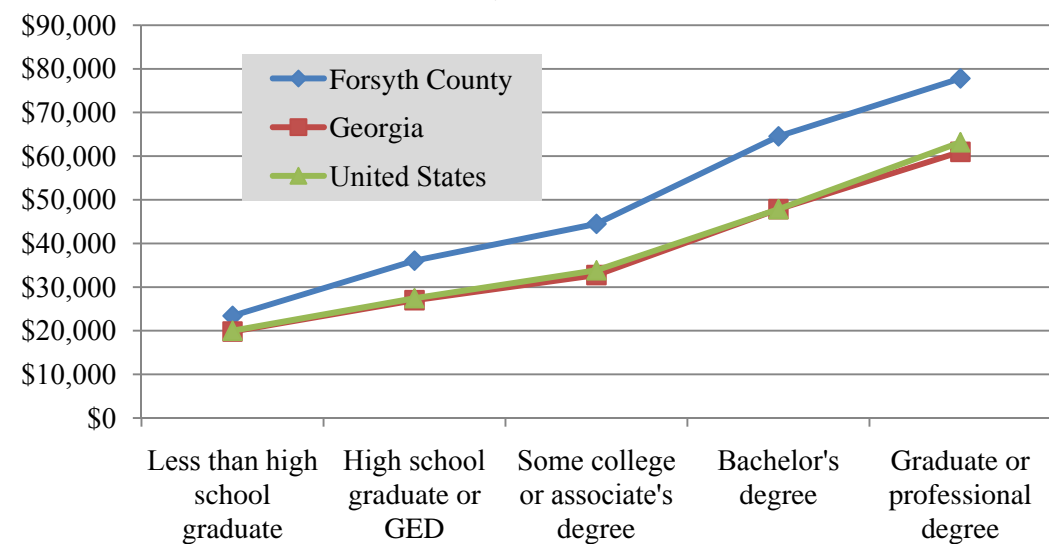


TABLE 29: MEDIAN EARNINGS ESTIMATE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2008 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Category	Forsyth County	Georgia	U. S.
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$28,689	\$21,732	\$21,711
Some college or associate's degree	\$34,559	\$27,335	\$27,663
Bachelor's degree	\$46,953	\$39,708	\$39,571
Graduate or professional degree	\$50,125	\$52,610	\$52,301

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

FIGURE 6: MEDIAN EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2008 ESTIMATE  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

**More Educated Americans**

In 2003, over four-fifths (85%) of all adults 25 years or older reported they had completed at least high school and more than one in four adults had attained at least a bachelor's degree; both measures are all time highs. In 2003, the percentage of the adult population who had completed high school increased for the first time since 2000, when it was 84% (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

**State and Nationwide Workforce Statistics**

Equivalent or exceptional levels of educational attainment are increasingly critical for the Forsyth County workforce's ability to compete for higher-paying jobs as well as recruitment and retention of business in the community. The 2008 U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates indicate that 31.6% of Forsyth County residents 25 years of age and older possess at least a bachelor's degree as indicated in Table 32 and Figure 17, which is significantly higher than state and national figures as denoted in Table 33. In addition, Forsyth County residents have lower percentages, in comparison with the state and nation, of incomplete levels of educational attainment, including less than a 9th grade education. As higher education becomes more important in order to provide a competitive workforce, it is vital to reach higher levels of educational attainment beyond a

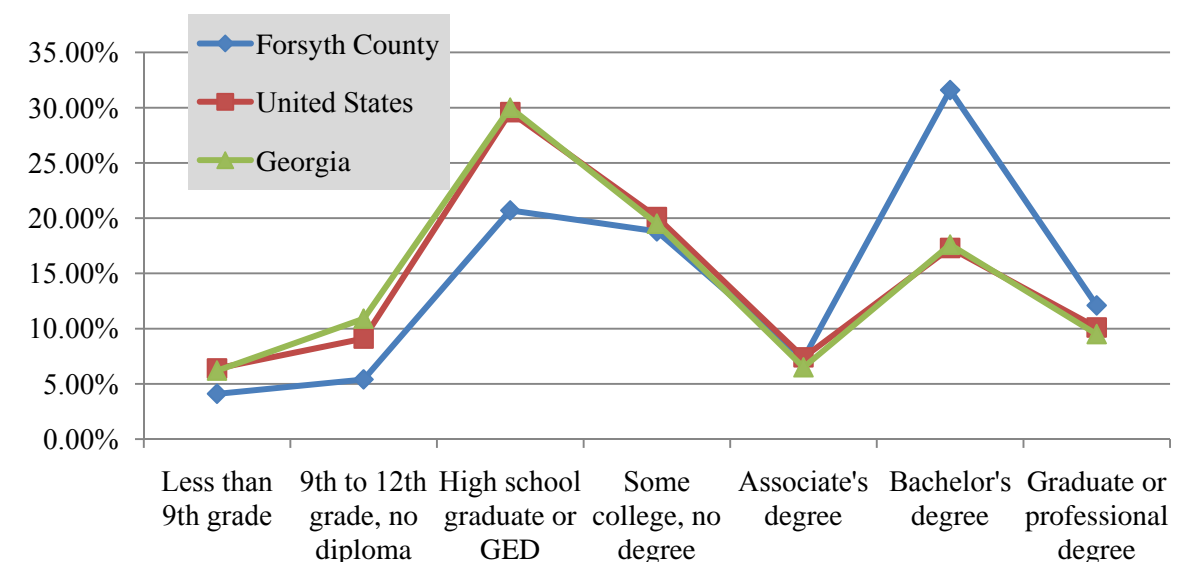
secondary education. Forsyth County in comparison with state and national figures as illustrated in Table 30 and Figure 7, indicate a greater percentage of adults earning high school diplomas or higher.

TABLE 30: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS 25 YEARS AND OLDER  
2008 CENSUS ESTIMATE  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Category	Forsyth County	Georgia	U. S.
Population 25 years and over	100,267	6,069,802	197,794,576
Less than 9th grade	4.1%	6.2%	6.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5.4%	10.9%	9.1%
High school graduate or GED	20.7%	30%	29.6%
Some college, no degree	18.8%	19.5%	20.1%
Associate's degree	7.3%	6.5%	7.4%
Bachelor's degree	31.6%	17.6%	17.3%
Graduate or professional degree	12.1%	9.5%	10.1%
Percent high school graduate or higher	90.5%	82.9%	84.5%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	43.7%	27.0%	27.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

FIGURE 7: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON – 2008 CENSUS ESTIMATE  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U. S.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

The educational attainment level of a population can be an indicator of the types of businesses and industries that are appropriate for a community. In the year 2000, 15,272 of Forsyth County residents over 25 years of age had achieved high school graduation, while 16,950 held a bachelor's degree and 5,540 achieved a graduate or professional degree as denoted in Table 31.

TABLE 31: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS 25 YEARS AND OLDER 1990 – 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Category	1990	2000
Total adult population 25 years & over	28,366	65,027
Less than 9th grade	3,734	3,617
9th to 12th grade (no diploma)	5,457	5,669
High school graduate (includes GED)	8,698	15,272
Some college (no degree)	4,676	14,062
Associate's degree	1,384	3,917
Bachelor's degree	3,161	16,950
Graduate or professional degree	1,256	5,540

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census

Access to training. Lanier Technical College is located in Forsyth County and other educational institutions are situated within reasonable proximity to the county. These institutions include North Georgia College and State University that offers a satellite MBA program in the City of Cumming as well as Brenau University, Reinhardt College and Gainesville State College. Additionally, Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology in the City of Atlanta, provide opportunities for county residents to acquire and expand their academic training.

### Economic Base

Since markets, technology and other factors change, economic development plans must be constantly evaluated and revised as necessary to capitalize on emerging opportunities and address challenges. Forsyth County's economic base refers to the industries or economic sectors that serve the community as well as those outside of the resident population. The main theme of economic base theory is that the economic growth of an area is dependent on outside demand. An area's growth depends on its ability to export goods and services outside of its territorial boundaries. The economic base, or basic sector, is made up of the export industries of the community and the non-basic, or local service sector, is made up of those industries that service the community's residents and workers. The economic base includes items such as employment and earnings rates, economic sectors, wage levels, unique local economic activities and sources of income. Using this data, it is possible to assess the viability of the local economy and the adequacy of the economic development tools and programs in use.

### Business and Employment

Employment opportunities within the county vary from entrepreneurial startup companies to Fortune 500 firms in diverse fields of employment from science, technology, healthcare and manufacturing. Thirty international companies are located within Forsyth County, half of which represent a company's North American corporate headquarters.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, approximately 64,447 employees work in Forsyth County, which has just over 57% 'white collar' jobs, whereas 41.5% are deemed 'blue collar.' Table 32 provides a summary of the overall business earnings in Forsyth County between 1970 and 2008.

TABLE 32: BUSINESS EARNINGS IN MILLIONS, 2004 DOLLARS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Total Retail Sales	Forsyth County	\$91.62	\$154.32	\$323.35	\$1,114.25	\$1,782.50	\$1,807.58
	Georgia	\$35,875.48	\$48,098.46	\$67,964.05	\$103,852.51	\$124,942.88	\$121,311.87
Motor Vehicles & Parts	Forsyth County	\$29.15	\$28.94	\$63.90	\$198.37	\$265.48	\$234.91
	Georgia	\$7,055.75	\$8,628.28	\$14,876.60	\$26,091.63	\$26,592.03	\$22,682.34
Furniture & Home Furnishings	Forsyth County	\$2.87	\$5.38	\$8.86	\$18.37	\$27.10	\$25.11
	Georgia	\$1,045.56	\$1,317.15	\$2,056.07	\$3,428.23	\$3,699.01	\$3,301.70
Electronics & Appliance Stores	Forsyth County	\$1.17	\$2.12	\$3.20	\$10.45	\$20.66	\$20.78
	Georgia	\$662.82	\$823.77	\$1,278.85	\$2,424.54	\$2,865.31	\$2,775.71
Building Materials & Garden	Forsyth County	\$8.32	\$24.71	\$39.56	\$259.49	\$378.15	\$369.17
	Georgia	\$2,983.59	\$4,116.55	\$5,766.76	\$9,056.15	\$10,744.30	\$10,107.36
Food & Beverage Stores	Forsyth County	\$18.84	\$33.37	\$73.62	\$144.03	\$169.75	\$181.30
	Georgia	\$7,123.27	\$9,866.66	\$11,680.48	\$13,406.07	\$15,366.78	\$15,751.83
Health & Personal Care	Forsyth County	\$2.99	\$5.04	\$13.91	\$37.92	\$84.72	\$89.81
	Georgia	\$1,500.35	\$1,672.51	\$2,718.49	\$4,130.87	\$5,793.54	\$5,885.56
Gasoline Stations	Forsyth County	\$7.14	\$20.99	\$24.02	\$102.32	\$186.08	\$208.32
	Georgia	\$3,791.35	\$6,200.99	\$6,675.41	\$9,392.29	\$14,963.32	\$16,002.36
Clothing & Accessories	Forsyth County	\$2.85	\$4.70	\$8.79	\$14.73	\$23.77	\$23.54
	Georgia	\$2,300.84	\$2,591.92	\$3,578.30	\$5,369.24	\$6,369.89	\$6,074.41
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books	Forsyth County	\$0.81	\$1.38	\$3.87	\$13.19	\$26.81	\$27.38
	Georgia	\$738.34	\$825.75	\$1,384.21	\$1,919.20	\$2,022.93	\$1,992.74
General Merchandise Stores	Forsyth County	\$4.42	\$4.90	\$32.26	\$157.15	\$331.74	\$347.98
	Georgia	\$4,270.09	\$5,118.82	\$7,798.21	\$12,930.08	\$17,085.72	\$17,224.88
Miscellaneous Stores	Forsyth County	\$3.73	\$3.75	\$10.18	\$33.06	\$52.62	\$53.44
	Georgia	\$1,231.65	\$1,619.12	\$1,877.81	\$2,925.59	\$2,795.76	\$2,731.08
Non-store Retailers	Forsyth County	\$5.73	\$5.28	\$13.88	\$37.17	\$66.06	\$68.77
	Georgia	\$964.13	\$1,265.55	\$1,452.64	\$2,661.71	\$3,746.87	\$3,758.73
Eating & Drinking Places	Forsyth County	\$3.60	\$13.77	\$27.29	\$88.01	\$149.55	\$157.06
	Georgia	\$2,207.73	\$4,051.41	\$6,820.21	\$10,116.90	\$12,897.42	\$13,023.18

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Business earnings in Forsyth County demonstrate growth trends that vary greatly from the State of Georgia and more uniquely reflect the county. According to Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. as illustrated in Table 32, the greatest increase between 1970 and 2008 took place in categories such as building and garden materials (4,337.14%), health and personal care (2,903.68%), gasoline stations (2,817.65%), general merchandise (7,772.85%) and eating and drinking places (4,286.78%). These increases take place gradually between 1970 and 1990, then drastically rise

until 2007, when they either plateau or begin to decline in 2008. In contrast, the State of Georgia's earnings for these categories increased at a much slower rate. These trends reflect both the population growth and behavior of the housing market in the county; they are also consistent with general industry trends that include construction and medical industries. Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. projections below anticipate that these categories will obtain the greatest increase between 2010 and 2040, yet at a significantly slower rate than previously obtained as denoted in Table 33.

TABLE 33: BUSINESS EARNINGS PROJECTIONS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Total Retail Sales	Forsyth County	\$1,822.51	\$2,189.15	\$2,592.59	\$3,037.45	\$3,528.63	\$4,672.21
	Georgia	\$118,534.78	\$133,066.29	\$149,065.60	\$166,693.16	\$186,124.11	\$231,185.81
Motor Vehicles & Parts	Forsyth County	\$228.26	\$282.75	\$345.06	\$416.26	\$497.54	\$695.76
	Georgia	\$21,453.70	\$24,852.44	\$28,706.28	\$33,072.29	\$38,013.70	\$49,911.89
Furniture & Home Furnishings	Forsyth County	\$25.30	\$30.41	\$36.02	\$42.18	\$48.95	\$64.56
	Georgia	\$3,238.69	\$3,649.11	\$4,099.66	\$4,594.00	\$5,136.02	\$6,379.93
Electronics & Appliance Stores	Forsyth County	\$21.39	\$26.06	\$31.25	\$37.03	\$43.45	\$58.47
	Georgia	\$2,765.56	\$3,133.65	\$3,540.18	\$3,988.87	\$4,483.72	\$5,629.44
Building Materials & Garden	Forsyth County	\$374.23	\$443.55	\$518.38	\$599.29	\$686.85	\$884.32
	Georgia	\$10,001.91	\$11,181.84	\$12,462.83	\$13,852.91	\$15,360.41	\$18,763.30
Food & Beverage Stores	Forsyth County	\$187.87	\$218.01	\$249.15	\$281.36	\$314.73	\$385.23
	Georgia	\$15,872.10	\$17,209.58	\$18,603.42	\$20,056.17	\$21,570.09	\$24,789.71
Health & Personal Care	Forsyth County	\$95.56	\$120.36	\$149.21	\$182.66	\$221.40	\$317.77
	Georgia	\$6,083.30	\$7,136.15	\$8,343.54	\$9,726.64	\$11,309.14	\$15,182.25
Gasoline Stations	Forsyth County	\$183.82	\$213.99	\$245.43	\$278.24	\$312.52	\$385.93
	Georgia	\$13,826.52	\$15,092.52	\$16,426.31	\$17,831.44	\$19,311.32	\$22,508.65
Clothing & Accessories	Forsyth County	\$24.33	\$28.72	\$33.37	\$38.30	\$43.52	\$54.92
	Georgia	\$6,078.16	\$6,678.72	\$7,316.09	\$7,992.44	\$8,709.90	\$10,276.70
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books	Forsyth County	\$28.51	\$34.31	\$40.67	\$47.64	\$55.27	\$72.78
	Georgia	\$2,011.61	\$2,260.02	\$2,531.42	\$2,827.76	\$3,151.12	\$3,887.86
General Merchandise Stores	Forsyth County	\$364.77	\$446.64	\$538.89	\$642.83	\$759.87	\$1,039.62
	Georgia	\$17,581.25	\$20,175.81	\$23,085.86	\$26,347.22	\$29,998.99	\$38,649.85
Miscellaneous Stores	Forsyth County	\$54.64	\$65.82	\$78.05	\$91.44	\$106.10	\$139.67
	Georgia	\$2,708.87	\$3,039.93	\$3,401.30	\$3,795.58	\$4,225.46	\$5,203.77
Non-store Retailers	Forsyth County	\$69.17	\$87.27	\$108.50	\$133.37	\$162.46	\$236.05
	Georgia	\$3,682.55	\$4,364.35	\$5,155.81	\$6,073.48	\$7,136.22	\$9,785.76
Eating & Drinking Places	Forsyth County	\$164.67	\$191.25	\$218.62	\$246.84	\$275.97	\$337.13
	Georgia	\$13,230.56	\$14,292.17	\$15,392.88	\$16,534.36	\$17,718.02	\$20,216.70

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

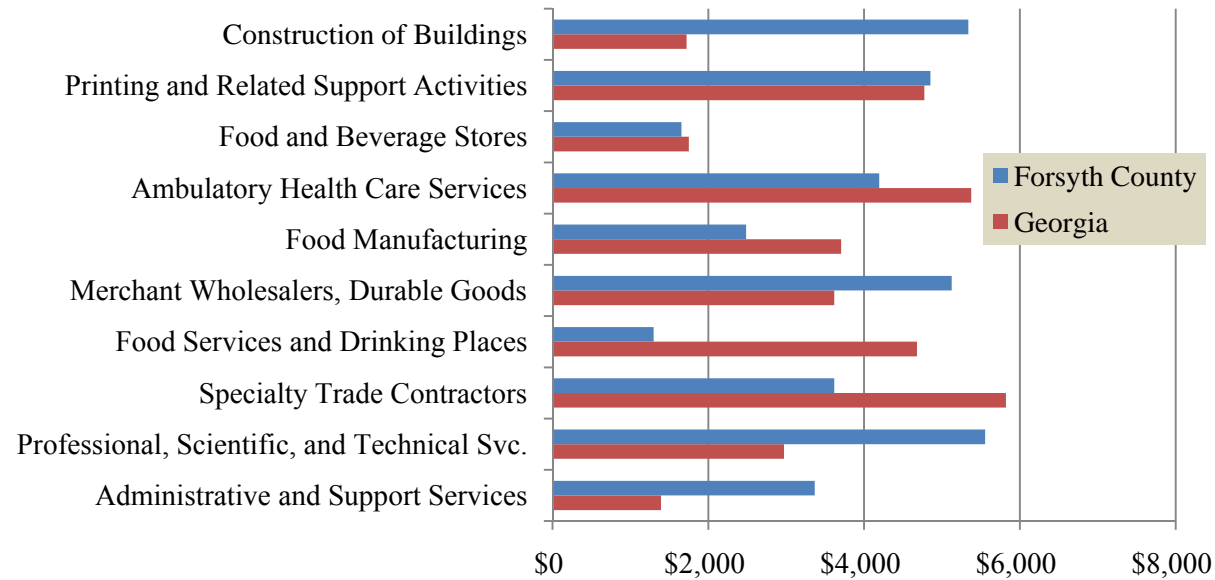
Data on wages by employment sector can provide insight into what segments of the employment base are providing the most economic benefit to workers in the community. Table 34 and Figure 8 show the average monthly wages for Forsyth County and the State of Georgia based on 2008 and 2009 quarterly reports, considering Forsyth County's top ten industries according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) subsectors. In Forsyth County, the highest-paying sector was the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector paying an average of \$5,554 per month.

TABLE 34: QUARTERLY AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES BY INDUSTRY  
(NAICS SUBSECTORS) 2008 - 2009  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Rank	Industry Subsector	Forsyth County	Georgia
1	Administrative and Support Services	\$3,367	\$1,393
2	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$5,554	\$2,972
3	Specialty Trade Contractors	\$3,618	\$5,821
4	Food Services and Drinking Places	\$1,298	\$4,679
5	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	\$5,124	\$3,618
6	Food Manufacturing	\$2,486	\$3,705
7	Ambulatory Healthcare Services	\$4,194	\$5,376
8	Food and Beverage Stores	\$1,655	\$1,751
9	Printing and Related Support Activities	\$4,852	\$4,774
10	Construction of Buildings	\$5,339	\$1,722

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

FIGURE 8: QUARTERLY AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES BY INDUSTRY (NAICS SUBSECTORS)  
2008 - 2009  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA



Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Data on average annual or weekly wages for employment within Forsyth County helps direct community economic development and labor force development goals. Average annual wages, as indicated in Table 35 and average weekly wages as shown in Table 36, in Forsyth County have increased steadily since 2001. Forsyth County's average annual and weekly wages are consistently higher than surrounding counties, with the exception of Gwinnett and Fulton Counties, which function in a more urban market and are likely to bring higher wages. Forsyth County's annual wages however, have increased at a greater rate of 19.92% between 2001 and 2008, which is more than Fulton (19.84%) or Gwinnett (9.63%) Counties.

TABLE 35: AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES 2001 - 2008  
FORSYTH AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Average Annual Wages	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$34,919	\$35,694	\$36,089	\$37,981	\$38,950	\$40,369	\$42,456	\$43,279
Cherokee County	\$27,829	\$28,663	\$29,769	\$30,987	\$32,259	\$32,736	\$33,605	\$33,894
Dawson County	\$23,698	\$24,837	\$24,128	\$26,936	\$26,244	\$26,248	\$26,328	\$26,642
Fulton County	\$47,761	\$48,639	\$49,916	\$51,880	\$54,631	\$55,901	\$59,462	\$59,819
Gwinnett County	\$39,405	\$39,488	\$40,874	\$41,294	\$42,676	\$44,754	\$45,211	\$44,810
Hall County	\$29,969	\$31,000	\$31,589	\$32,849	\$33,828	\$34,765	\$36,994	\$37,929

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

TABLE 36: AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES 2001 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Average Weekly Wages	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Forsyth County	\$672	\$686	\$694	\$730	\$749	\$776	\$816	\$832
Cherokee County	\$535	\$551	\$572	\$596	\$620	\$630	\$646	\$652
Dawson County	\$456	\$478	\$464	\$518	\$505	\$505	\$506	\$512
Fulton County	\$918	\$935	\$960	\$998	\$1,051	\$1,075	\$1,144	\$1,150
Gwinnett County	\$758	\$759	\$786	\$794	\$821	\$861	\$869	\$862
Hall County	\$576	\$596	\$607	\$632	\$651	\$669	\$711	\$729

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

### Trade

Trade, or importing and exporting goods, is an important economic aspect and bears relationship to regional, national or global markets. In fact, companies that do business internationally tend to grow faster and fail less often than companies that do not. Forsyth County imports currently exceed exports and primarily involve Canada, Mexico and China as illustrated in Table 37.

TABLE 37: TOP 15 TRADING PARTNERS 2009 YTD  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Rank	Country	Exports (YTD)	Imports (YTD)	Total (YTD)	Percent
N/A	Total, all countries	863.2	1,269.20	2,132.40	100%
N/A	Total, top 15 countries	601.1	929.9	1,531.00	71.8%
1	Canada	167.9	183.5	351.5	16.5%
2	China	53.9	242.4	296.2	13.9%
3	Mexico	105.2	142.4	247.5	11.6%
4	Japan	42	76.7	118.8	5.6%
5	Federal Republic of Germany	35.7	57.5	93.2	4.4%
6	United Kingdom	38.2	39.1	77.3	3.6%
7	Korea, South	23.2	32.5	55.7	2.6%
8	France	22	28.1	50.1	2.4%
9	Netherlands	26.8	13.2	40	1.9%
10	Brazil	21.4	16.4	37.8	1.8%
11	Taiwan	14.5	22.9	37.4	1.8%
12	Italy	10.1	21.7	31.8	1.5%
13	India	14	17.7	31.6	1.5%
14	Singapore	18.2	13.1	31.4	1.5%
15	Venezuela	7.9	22.9	30.8	1.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census - Foreign Trade Statistics YTD December 2009

## Evolution of Industry in Forsyth County

Forsyth County was created in 1832 and was settled mostly by subsistence farmers on former Cherokee Nation territory. For many years, much of the area remained set aside for agriculture except a brief involvement in the local gold rush. Forsyth County prospered during the 1830s and 1840s because of gold mining and the Federal Road, which ran through the county and led settlers to numerous roadside inns and taverns. By the early 1840s, the heyday of the State of Georgia's gold rush had ended and the building of new roads and railroads in North Georgia diverted a large amount of traffic from the Federal Road, forcing many local businesses to close by the end of the decade. Although the Civil War (1861-65) bypassed Forsyth County, Reconstruction harshly impacted the area as it did most of the State of Georgia and for the remainder of the nineteenth century, the county remained rural and poor, with an economy based largely on cotton. In the early twentieth century, local farmers raised chickens primarily for their eggs. Gradually, farmers began to market eggs and chickens on a larger scale. By 1924, North Georgia chickens were sold out of state through rail transport. Even before the devastating 1929 stock market failure, the 1920s were a disaster for most State of Georgia farmers due to the cotton crash. Then, in the 1930s, Gainesville feed salesman, Jesse Jewell, offered North Georgia farmers a deal in which he would sell them baby chicks and feed on credit. When the chicks were grown, Jewell's company, J. D. Jewell, would buy back the adult chickens (broilers) at a price that would cover his costs and guarantee farmers a profit. Once Jewell enlisted enough farmers to produce broilers for him, he invested in his own processing plant and hatchery. World War II (1941-45) accelerated the growth of the State of Georgia poultry industry. The War Food Administration reserved all the processed chicken in north Georgia, and thus Jewell's company and others now had a guaranteed buyer. After World War II, the poultry industry continued to expand throughout north Georgia, including Forsyth County. During the 1950s due to the introduction of the poultry industry, Forsyth County saw a steady economic growth. By 1995, the State of Georgia annually processed more than five billion pounds of chicken. In 1998, the State of Georgia emerged as the top broiler-producing state in the country, and in 2003 the state continued to rank first in production of broilers and sixth in egg production. The State of Georgia poultry industry is a highly mechanized production system that markets chicken and egg products around the globe. These vertically integrated companies combine all the phases of the business, raw materials, processing, and distribution within a single company. A number of other poultry companies also operate in the State of Georgia including Tyson, Con-Agra and Continental Grain. Poultry products, including turkeys, earn more than any other State of Georgia crop. The state-wide economic impact of this industry is an estimated \$13.5 billion annually. Tyson Foods, which has maintained a poultry processing plant in downtown Cumming since the 1950s, remains one of Forsyth County's top employers. Industries in Forsyth County continued to grow and diversify particularly since the 1970s as a result of population growth and improved vehicular connectivity with the City of Atlanta. SR 400 was first opened in 1971 and eventually extended through the county and northward. Further transportation enhancements have taken place to support the population boom as the county became a bedroom community for metropolitan Atlanta.

Although traditional agriculture in the State of Georgia and Forsyth County is waning, agritourism is breathing new life into the sector with a combination of agriculture and tourism. With interest in adventure, outdoor and family travel is also growing significantly in recent years. The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism (GDITT), the University of Georgia and the

Georgia Department of Agriculture are working together to develop agritourism sights and destinations in the State of Georgia while more aggressively marketing existing agritourism products. The State of Georgia is rich in assets that can be leveraged for agritourism such as vineyards, corn mazes, farm stays, pick-your-own fruit and vegetable outlets, hayrides and food-related festivals. Although a variety of Forsyth County attractions may be suitable for marketed agritourism in the future, current agritourist destinations located in the surrounding North Georgia area likely draw consumers up the SR 400 corridor and through Forsyth County, which may further spark spending and recreational interest within the county.

## Major Employers

### **Siemens Energy and Automation, Inc.**

According to a 2008 inventory, Forsyth County's largest employer is the Forsyth County Public School System, employing over 4,300 employees. The second largest employer is Forsyth County Government. Outside of the public sector, the five largest employers are listed below.

Employing 800 persons in the Forsyth County location, Siemens is the world's single-source leader of automation technology products engineered and manufactured for all industrial sectors. Their primary focus is geared towards energy utilities and industrial companies for which they offer services related to power generation, transmission and distribution as well as the production, conversion and transport of oil and gas fuels. Siemens' integrated automation technology products are designed to optimize companywide processes through a unique range of products. Other businesses associated with Siemens include Siemens Healthcare, which is one of the first companies to combine medical imaging and therapy, laboratory diagnostics and healthcare IT solutions across the continuum of healthcare intervention; consumer products such as appliances, phones, hearing instruments and lighting as well as corporate research, information and communications, and solutions-based IT and financial services.

### **Northside Hospital – Forsyth**

This medical facility continues to expand and add services to meet the ever-growing healthcare needs of Forsyth County and surrounding communities. Currently, nearly 300 physicians are members of its medical staff with more than 1,000 other healthcare specialists and employees on the medical staff. As the State of Georgia leader in maternity and newborn care, Northside Hospital - Forsyth offers comprehensive services for labor and delivery, neonatal care, high-risk perinatal diagnostics, parenting and newborn classes and lactation consultation to the county. The new 108,000 square foot Women's Center was designed to rival the nationally acclaimed Women's Center at Northside Hospital in the City of Atlanta. Northside Hospital - Forsyth has distinguished itself among the very best maternity and newborn hospitals in the country and more importantly, Northside remains the most preferred hospital in overall healthcare services in metropolitan Atlanta in independent consumer research surveys conducted by the National Research Corporation.

### **Scientific Games International**

A leading supplier of a complete range of products and services to legally authorized lotteries worldwide including instant tickets, on-line and instant validation systems and terminals, and facilities management services to lotteries. Scientific Games Corporation, the parent company, is a global marketing and technology leader and provider of comprehensive, end-to-end gaming

solutions to the multi-billion dollar lottery and pari-mutuel racing industries. Scientific Games Corporation is a publicly-traded (NASDAQ:SGMS) company headquartered in New York City with major production and operational facilities in the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, Asia and Australia. With annual revenue approaching \$1 billion and a worldwide staff of 5,500 people, Scientific Games Corporation is engaged in the business of delivering end-to-end gaming solutions to customers in more than 60 countries on six continents.

**Tyson Poultry, Inc.**

This company was founded in 1935 with headquarters in Springdale, Arkansas. It is one of the world's largest processors and marketers of chicken, beef and pork; the second-largest food production company in the Fortune 500; and a member of the S&P 500. The company produces a wide variety of protein-based and prepared food products and is the recognized market leader in the retail and foodservice markets it serves. Tyson provides products and services to customers throughout the United States and more than 90 countries. The company has approximately 117,000 team members employed at more than 400 facilities and offices in the United States and around the world.

According to 2008 Georgia Department of Labor data, Forsyth County consists mainly of service producing (62.3%), goods producing (26.4%) and government (11.2%) industries as illustrated in Table 38.

TABLE 38: INDUSTRY MIX 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Industry	Firms	Percent	Weekly Wage
Goods Producing	1017	26.4%	\$938
Service Producing	3920	62.3%	\$796
Government	64	11.2%	\$774
Other	235	0.2%	\$991

Source: Georgia Department of Labor Industry Mix - 2008, Updated 06-15-2009

The distribution of employment by industry from 1970 - 2008 as referenced in Table 39 and Figure 9, reveals a tendency within the county towards a higher concentration of employment in more technical or professional employment that pays a higher wage yet demands the support of a highly skilled workforce and the availability of technology and other support services. Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. anticipates the continuance of this trend through 2040 as denoted in Table 40.

TABLE 39: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN THOUSANDS 1970 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Total Employment	Forsyth County	4.83	7.82	18.09	43.67	65.02	64.37
	Georgia	2,120.78	2,747.33	3,689.34	4,892.35	5,559.98	5,518.50
Farm Employment	Forsyth County	1.13	1.06	0.81	0.61	0.57	0.55
	Georgia	94.13	96.56	74.29	67.25	63.01	63.6

TABLE 39: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN THOUSANDS 1970 - 2008 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

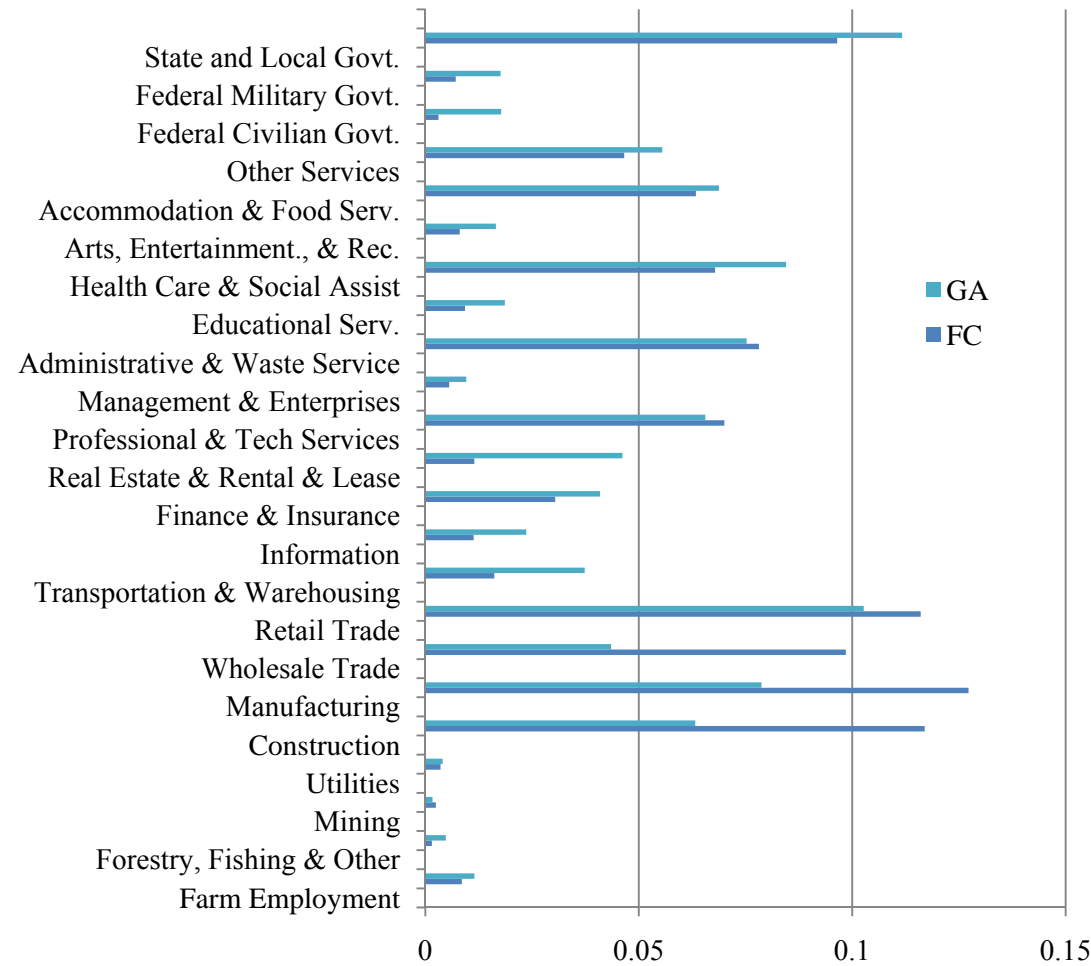
Category		1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
Forestry, Fishing & Other	Forsyth County	0.01	0.02	0.11	0.18	0.11	0.1
	Georgia	10.49	14.45	22.37	28.91	27.8	26.54
Mining	Forsyth County	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.16	0.17	0.16
	Georgia	8.41	10.05	10.62	9.75	9.14	9.33
Utilities	Forsyth County	0.02e	0.06	0.11	0.11	0.22	0.23
	Georgia	13.16	18.19	24.18	20.55	21.6	22.44
Construction	Forsyth County	0.48	0.9	2.73	7.57	8.73	7.53
	Georgia	106.52	144.32	219.55	308.66	382.87	348.96
Manufacturing	Forsyth County	1.06	1.59	3.66	7.23	8.59	8.19
	Georgia	432.24	483.63	520.92	540.3	449.55	434.48
Wholesale Trade	Forsyth County	0.12	0.16	1	3.91	6.11	6.34
	Georgia	90.42	143.32	185.73	228.69	240.5	240.22
Retail Trade	Forsyth County	0.43	0.8	2.06	4.45	7.46	7.47
	Georgia	204.42	288.29	423.57	548.02	587.74	566.75
Transportation & Warehousing	Forsyth County	0.09	0.24	0.42	0.67	1.06	1.04
	Georgia	69.85	98.08	140.23	193.66	215.6	206.05
Information	Forsyth County	0.07	0.12	0.31	0.89	0.69	0.73
	Georgia	53.66	66.72	95.31	154.99	128.78	130.49
Finance & Insurance	Forsyth County	0.09	0.26	0.42	0.87	1.89	1.96
	Georgia	86.71	125.82	152.16	202.79	226.87	225.92
Real Estate & Rental & Lease	Forsyth County	0.06	0.17	0.29	0.64	0.83	0.74
	Georgia	55.95	85.39	103.44	153.31	272.22	254.79
Professional & Tech Services	Forsyth County	0.1	0.22	0.82	2.62	4.18	4.51
	Georgia	69.45	99.54	176.25	294.64	342.37	361.96
Management & Enterprises	Forsyth County	0.02	0.04	0.15	0.31	0.36	0.36
	Georgia	26.12	36.43	62.54	67.03	56.25	53.11
Administrative & Waste Service	Forsyth County	0.07	0.17	0.52	1.9	4.99	5.03
	Georgia	66.72	92.31	156.04	322.54	417.63	415.33
Educational Serv.	Forsyth County	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.15	0.57	0.6
	Georgia	16.12	22.5	38.23	70.26	98.63	102.96
Healthcare & Social Assist	Forsyth County	0.08	0.18	0.67	2.22	4.16	4.37
	Georgia	98.18	128.25	215.45	359.08	453.3	466.5
Arts, Entert., & Rec.	Forsyth County	0.04	0.07	0.23	0.61	0.61	0.52
	Georgia	20.02	28.55	46.78	69.02	89.23	91.3
Accommodation & Food Serv.	Forsyth County	0.14	0.28	0.87	2.24	4	4.08
	Georgia	98.54	136.08	218.85	311.21	382	379.59
Other Services	Forsyth County	0.13	0.26	1.01	2.48	3.19	3
	Georgia	82.03	108.52	186.31	246.47	308.85	306.38
Federal Civilian Govt.	Forsyth County	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.18	0.2	0.2
	Georgia	82.65	84.6	102.99	96.89	96	98.13
Federal Military Govt.	Forsyth County	0.11	0.12	0.2	0.33	0.48	0.46
	Georgia	115.03	92.3	90.75	94.38	96.72	97.39

TABLE 39: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN THOUSANDS 1970 - 2008 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2008
State and Local Govt.	Forsyth County	0.5	1.01	1.51	3.34	5.84	6.21
	Georgia	219.93	343.43	422.79	503.96	593.31	616.27

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

FIGURE 9: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA



Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

TABLE 40: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS IN THOUSANDS 2010 - 2040  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Total Employment (Thousands)	Forsyth County	64.39	71.47	79.4	88.28	98.24	121.88
	Georgia	5,504.45	5,883.38	6,289.83	6,726.04	7,194.39	8,236.90
Farm Employment	Forsyth County	0.5	0.49	0.48	0.47	0.46	0.43
	Georgia	62.82	63.39	63.91	64.36	64.76	65.38

TABLE 40: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS IN THOUSANDS 2010 - 2040 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
Forestry, Fishing & Other	Forsyth County	0.1	0.1	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.13
	Georgia	26.73	27.92	29.12	30.35	31.62	34.22
Mining	Forsyth County	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.14
	Georgia	9.31	9.34	9.38	9.39	9.41	9.44
Utilities	Forsyth County	0.25	0.26	0.27	0.28	0.29	0.31
	Georgia	23.96	24.83	25.65	26.5	27.32	28.94
Construction	Forsyth County	6.61	7.04	7.5	7.97	8.46	9.52
	Georgia	328.55	351.41	375.77	401.71	429.32	490.03
Manufacturing	Forsyth County	7.72	8.15	8.58	9.01	9.43	10.25
	Georgia	416.19	412.19	407.71	402.77	397.4	385.5
Wholesale Trade	Forsyth County	6.62	7.41	8.25	9.16	10.14	12.28
	Georgia	240	249.01	257.99	266.87	275.65	292.77
Retail Trade	Forsyth County	7.64	7.98	8.33	8.67	9	9.64
	Georgia	561.28	584.25	607.82	631.95	656.7	707.98
Transportation & Warehousing	Forsyth County	1.05	1.09	1.13	1.17	1.21	1.26
	Georgia	206.03	219.29	233.08	247.44	262.35	293.8
Information	Forsyth County	0.76	0.82	0.87	0.93	0.99	1.1
	Georgia	130.08	134.25	138.39	142.51	146.58	154.6
Finance & Insurance	Forsyth County	1.96	2.33	2.77	3.27	3.85	5.28
	Georgia	216.91	230.61	244.77	259.42	274.51	306.07
Real Estate & Rental & Lease	Forsyth County	0.66	0.69	0.73	0.77	0.81	0.89
	Georgia	242.99	275.97	312.99	354.5	400.98	511.02
Professional & Tech Services	Forsyth County	4.77	5.67	6.72	7.94	9.35	12.86
	Georgia	371.36	407.75	447.52	490.93	538.36	646.59
Management & Enterprises	Forsyth County	0.38	0.41	0.44	0.47	0.49	0.53
	Georgia	54.74	57.26	59.81	62.38	64.96	70.11
Administrative & Waste Service	Forsyth County	4.99	6.13	7.49	9.12	11.06	16.06
	Georgia	401.36	445.24	493.16	545.43	602.34	731.32
Educational Serv.	Forsyth County	0.66	0.76	0.87	0.99	1.12	1.43
	Georgia	110.38	121.8	134.25	147.79	162.51	195.84
Healthcare & Social Assist	Forsyth County	4.75	5.77	6.99	8.45	10.18	14.63
	Georgia	492.1	546.71	606.96	673.45	746.79	916.72
Arts, Entert., & Rec.	Forsyth County	0.45	0.49	0.54	0.59	0.64	0.75
	Georgia	93.86	103.06	113	123.74	135.32	161.25
Accommodation & Food Serv.	Forsyth County	4.26	5	5.86	6.83	7.94	10.62
	Georgia	383.05	420.39	460.82	504.51	551.66	657.26
Other Services	Forsyth County	2.82	3.03	3.25	3.47	3.7	4.16
	Georgia	304.48	335.05	368.15	403.92	442.57	529.02
Federal Civilian Govt.	Forsyth County	0.19	0.2	0.22	0.23	0.24	0.27
	Georgia	98.41	99.03	99.5	99.79	99.98	99.9
Federal Military Govt.	Forsyth County	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.43	0.43
	Georgia	96.03	96.56	97	97.37	97.65	97.97

TABLE 40: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS IN THOUSANDS 2010 - 2040 continued  
FORSYTH COUNTY AND STATE OF GEORGIA

Category		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040
State and Local Govt.	Forsyth County	6.67	7.06	7.44	7.82	8.19	8.91
	Georgia	633.84	668.04	703.09	738.98	775.66	851.14

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, by the year 2000 the greatest percentage of Forsyth County residents were employed in either manufacturing or a professional, scientific, management, administrative or waste management service industry as shown in Table 41.

TABLE 41: EMPLOYMENT PERCENTAGES BY INDUSTRY 1980 - 2000  
FORSYTH COUNTY

Category	1980		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Employed Civilian Population	12,706	100%	23,266	100%	51,779	100%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	607	4.8%	938	4%	422	0.8%
Construction	1,603	12.6%	2,786	12%	5,460	10.5%
Manufacturing	3,382	26.6%	4,821	20.7%	7,111	13.7%
Wholesale Trade	787	6.2%	1,836	7.9%	2,740	5.3%
Retail Trade	1,837	14.5%	3,400	14.6%	6,615	12.8%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	958	7.5%	1,858	8.0%	2,340	4.5%
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,690	5.2%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	644	5.1%	1,691	7.3%	4,589	8.9%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	482	3.8%	1,196	5.1%	6,874	13.3%
Educational, Health and Social Services	1,107	8.7%	2,371	10.2%	6,739	13%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	463	3.6%	304	1.3%	2,717	5.2%
Other Services	331	2.6%	1,500	6.4%	2,185	4.2%
Public Administration	505	4%	565	2.4%	1,297	2.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

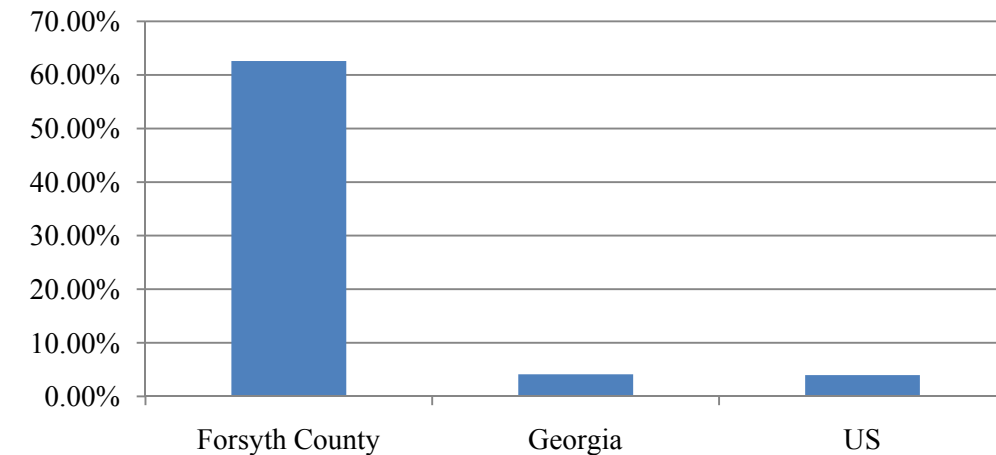
Total employment numbers in Forsyth County reflecting all industries increased 62.59% between 2001 and 2008 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This rate, an average of nearly 9% a year, is significantly higher than the state, which increased just over 4% or the U.S. which increased 3.98% over this same period as illustrated in Table 42 and Figure 10.

TABLE 42: EMPLOYMENT BY ALL INDUSTRIES 2001 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.

Year	Forsyth County	Georgia	U.S.
2001	35,876	3,871,763	129,635,800
2002	36,891	3,807,915	128,233,919
2003	39,902	3,783,232	127,795,827
2004	42,330	3,840,663	129,278,176
2005	45,716	3,932,315	131,571,623
2006	49,128	4,024,699	133,833,834
2007	56,462	4,077,184	135,366,106
2008	58,331	4,031,467	134,805,659

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

FIGURE 10: EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY ALL INDUSTRIES 2001 - 2008  
FORSYTH COUNTY, STATE OF GEORGIA AND U.S.



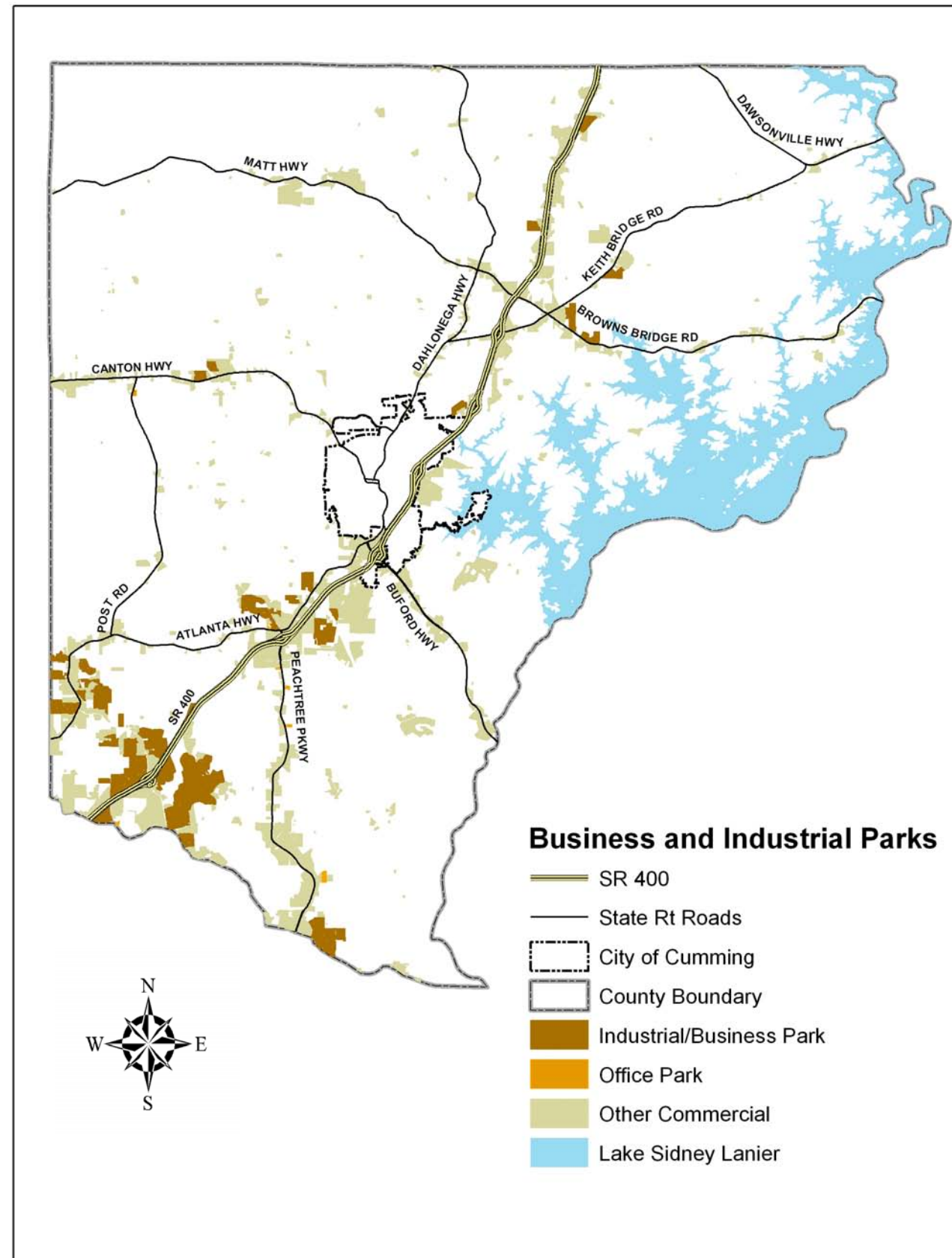
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Areas for Industry Development

Appropriate infrastructure is necessary to both attract and support industry growth. An industrial park is generally defined as a special area for industrial and business purposes that has been designed in accordance with local zoning policy, which provides adequate infrastructure including access to necessary transportation corridors. Forsyth County is fortunate to have numerous industrial and business or office parks that provide companies the opportunity to locate within Forsyth County. These parks ultimately represent revenue and job opportunities. Figure 27 conveys the general location of the industrial and business or office parks within the county.



FIGURE II: INDUSTRIAL, BUSINESS AND OFFICE PARKS WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY



### Areas for Industry Development

Appropriate infrastructure is necessary to both attract and support industry growth. An industrial park is generally defined as a special area for industrial and business purposes that has been designed in accordance with local zoning policy, which provides adequate infrastructure including access to necessary transportation corridors. Forsyth County is fortunate to have numerous industrial and business or office parks that provide companies the opportunity to locate within Forsyth County. These parks ultimately represent revenue and job opportunities. Figure 27 conveys the general location of the industrial and business or office parks within the county.

### Initiatives and Resources

#### Target Market Study

The Development Authority of Forsyth County, in conjunction with Forsyth County Government and the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce, commissioned a target market analysis for the City of Cumming and Forsyth County. This in depth report prepared by Whittaker Associates, Inc. consulting firm identifies our community's strengths and opportunities while defining those industry sectors that we are best able to support and expand. Based on analysis and review, the Development Authority of Forsyth County identified target industry sectors for their recruitment program including: Professional and Business Services, Financial Services, Educational and Health Services, Information, Leisure and Hospitality, Trade, Transportation and Utilities, Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Testing and Other Manufacturing. Together these industries currently account for approximately 83% of the Forsyth County workforce. The target industry analysis took into account the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, competitive advantages, current growth and investment trends, input from the community as well as predictive analytics, local, regional, and national industry trends, the existing economic base, desired industry targets and growth potential.

### Identified Target Markets

#### Professional and Business Services

- Based on strong presence in the area, 28,302 workers or 44% of the current workforce
- Offers alternative location to the business districts of the City of Atlanta and high quality of life
- Software technology
- Medical and other Research and Development
- Printing
- Energy and environmental service firms
- Homeland security and home and business security firms
- Regional and national headquarters for law firms, CPA's engineers and architects, energy and environmental firms and electrical engineering firms

#### Financial Services

- Based on future potential as satellite commercial hub to the City of Atlanta
- 4,371 current workers or 6.8% of county workforce
- Insurance headquarters
- Data centers

**Educational and Health Services**

- Based on national and metropolitan Atlanta regional growth trends and educational attainment levels
- 7,780 current employees or 12% of the county workforce
- Software technology
- Medical Research and Development
- Life sciences
- Occupational health
- Radiology
- Services for the aging and elderly

**Information**

- Small current workforce of 518 employees or 2.7% of workforce
- Good target for development of satellite commercial hub
- Data center
- Back office operations for medical services
- Insurance and financial services
- Software technology
- Homeland security

**Leisure and Hospitality**

- Fits outdoor recreation opportunities, commercial growth and hotel and resort development
- 977 current employees in workforce or 1.5% of county employment
- Full service hotels
- Major destination resort
- Regional meeting facilities
- Sport teams
- Outdoor recreation and outfitters
- Water activities and suppliers

**Trade, Transportation and Utilities**

- 2,387 workers or 3.7% of current workforce
- Shopping center developers
- Wholesale distributors
- Logistics and warehousing
- Advanced telecommunication companies

**Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Testing**

- New growth industry target that matches county education levels
- Testing

**Other Manufacturing**

- Strong presence, 7,756 employees or 12% of current workforce
- Value added food processing
- Aerospace
- Electrical equipment manufacturing
- Computers and other communications equipment

**Focus on Forsyth**

This refers to a strategic economic development recruitment and retention campaign for the City of Cumming and Forsyth County. This endeavor is a partnership initiative of the Development Authority of Forsyth County and the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce that is a proactive plan for guiding industry growth in the community largely based on analysis provided by the Forsyth County Target Market Study recommendations. The Chamber and Development Authority seek to attract regional headquarters with many benefits to the county including high paying executive jobs and the prestige of a regional headquarters location. A major goal of the Focus on Forsyth campaign is to create a direct link to industry clusters that would be suitable for new facility construction and expansion. The Chamber has included attempts to engage German companies in their recruitment plan since Germany is Forsyth County's largest foreign investor to date, with twelve companies represented. The Georgia Department of Economic Development and the German American Chamber of Commerce have made considerable progress in fostering trade relations between the State of Georgia and Germany. Forsyth County enjoys ties with both entities and will seek to foster stronger relations throughout this marketing effort. Based on the support structure that can be provided from the creation of a nucleus of companies, particularly global partners, the Chamber has targeted the environmental and healthcare technology sectors as top targeted business recruitment sectors to grow and diversify for which a 2010 plan of action was created. The campaign includes measurable goals outlining capital investment and job creation benchmarks for each industry and outlines specific measures for achieving these goals.

**Promoting Access to Investment Capital**

Numerous locally oriented credit unions and cooperative banks provide flexible opportunities and access to investment capital that otherwise may not be offered by national banks. Although the economic downturn resulted in the closing of many community banks, particularly in the State of Georgia, Forsyth County retains a number of these institutions.

**Promoting Green Business**

The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners approved the Green Project Incentive Addendum to the Development Authority's location and expansion incentive policy that provides a tax break if a project meets criteria set by the Development Authority. The incentive is intended to attract companies into the county, bringing jobs and boosting the tax base as workers pay sales and property taxes. Eligible projects include producing a green product, or building a facility in the county to green standards, or a combination of the two. Some of the targeted market areas include energy or utility component manufacturers, energy production, battery or computer component manufacturers, industrial, commercial or residential building component manufactures and industries that qualify for the federal "green" stimulus monies as defined under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Buildings must meet 75% of the total possible points available in the green building standards. Businesses can gain between one and three year tax abatements by meeting various levels of green criteria specified in the addendum.

**Tourism Development**

**Hospitality Highway**

Originating in Dahlonega, Georgia, the SR 400 corridor passes through Dawsonville, Cumming, Alpharetta, Roswell and Sandy Springs on the way to the City of Atlanta, connecting motorists with mountains, lakes, woodland and marsh trails plus other diverse tourist destinations. This

corridor also provides cultural options in its vicinity such as historic sites, upscale galleries, theaters, tea rooms, continental cuisine, down home cooking and the South's famous barbecue. Outdoor recreational activities involve gold panning, hiking, tubing, rafting, canoeing and kayaking. Retail choices consist of historic storefronts with quaint antique stores and cafes together with shopping malls and retail centers that provide diverse shopping experiences for both residents and visitors.

**Old Federal Road Driving Tour**

This highway coincides closely with the course of the Old Federal Road, Northwest Georgia's first vehicular way which linked the States of Tennessee and Georgia across the Cherokee territory. A section runs through Forsyth County and links adjoining communities as it did historically, which brought major transitions to the communities it traversed in prior centuries.

**Recreational Attractions**

Located on the southern edge of Lake Sidney Lanier, Forsyth County sports affordable fun from the top of Sawnee Mountain to the bottom of Buford Dam where trout fishing flourishes. Add upscale dining and live theater and the area offers entertainment to everyone from casual campers and boaters to serious hikers and fishers to those who appreciate a spectrum of cultural activities. Two local festivals include the Grass in the Grove Bluegrass Festival in mid-September and the Cumming Country Fair and Festival during October. A new interpretive visitor center has been constructed amidst the native flora and fauna of the Sawnee Mountain Preserve, which has educational and recreational programming throughout the year. There is a local arts community in a small-town atmosphere that supports a local bookstore hosting art shows and a theater housed within an historic school. A favorite option is spending the day on Lake Sidney Lanier; perhaps hiring a fishing guide, enjoying trout fishing in the Chattahoochee River below Buford Dam or relaxing in a multitude of park areas around the lake, operated by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, that provide, picnicking, campgrounds, boat launching ramps, swimming areas, group picnic shelters and hiking trails. These recreational amenities add to the quality of life that attracts employers and employees alike to the county and are of consequence for retaining a diverse workforce who will want to stay in the area based on its character and lifestyle options.

**Business Incentives**

**Low Millage Rate**

The City of Cumming and Forsyth County operate under a highly competitive tax and incentive structure. The Forsyth County millage rate is the lowest in the metropolitan Atlanta area and the City of Cumming does not assess any additional property tax.

**Industrial Revenue Bonds**

The Development Authority of Forsyth County is a seven member statutory authority operating under the regulatory control of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners. By utilizing the State of Georgia's industrial revenue bond process, the Development Authority can partner with new business and industry to make locating to the City of Cumming and Forsyth County even more affordable. Industrial revenue bonds can be administered in the form of taxable and tax free financing. Tax-free bond financing up to \$10 million is currently available under federal tax laws with an additional \$10 million in options to the company, totaling \$20 million. Interest rates are usually lower than other sources. Taxable bonds are a more flexible alternative and are also available. Variable and fixed rates are offered up to twenty-year terms, but a maximum of fifteen-year terms are preferred in most cases. Local development authorities do not operate in place of a banking institution and a company must still seek out lending partners.

**Tax Credits**

**State of Georgia Tax Incentives**

Forsyth County is allowed, under powers granted by the State of Georgia, to afford new and expanding business and industry certain taxation incentives through the use of local development authorities as listed below.

**Regional Partnerships**

This program, administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, grants additional job tax credits for companies hiring new employees. Forsyth County's participation with neighboring Cherokee and Hall Counties in the Lanier Joint Development Authority raises the per job tax credits for expanding and newly located companies to \$1,250.

**Enterprise Zones**

This option is for businesses that locate in state approved enterprise zones that can take advantage of breaks on property taxes, income taxes, sales taxes and may also receive tax credits for job creation and investment. This program is pursuant to the Georgia Enterprise Zone Empowerment Act (O.C.G.A. 36-88-1). Currently, Forsyth County does not have an enterprise zone.

**Recovery Zones**

Recovery zone economic development bonds are designated as a category of Build America Bonds (BABs) for public infrastructure and facilities in "recovery zones." Recovery zones are designated by the issuer as any area with significant poverty, unemployment or home foreclosure rates any area currently designated as an Empowerment Zone or Renewal Community and any area designated as economically distressed by reason of closure or realignment of a military installation pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990. Eligible issuers include the state and local governments and certain "on-behalf-of" issuers. BABs may be distributed as a tax credit bond or a "direct payment" taxable bond. The benefit to the issuer of a

recovery zone economic development bond is a 45% interest subsidy with 100% of the proceeds being used for qualified economic development purposes, which include promoting development or other economic activity in a recovery zone; new money capital expenditures for property in a recovery zone; public infrastructure or facilities that promote economic activity in a recovery zone; expenditures for job training and education programs. The total allocation to State of Georgia local governments is \$355,785,000. This opportunity must be issued by the end of 2010.

Opportunity zones and urban redevelopment plans. In order to create an opportunity zone, an organization must first establish an Urban Redevelopment Plan for a subject area that is in or adjacent to a census block group with greater than 15% poverty and other indications of economic distress. The intent of the plan is to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of the area, which must be adopted in the form of a resolution. Local governments who undertake such an effort to encourage redevelopment can now qualify those areas for the state's maximum job tax credit of \$3,500 per job. The incentive is available for new or existing businesses that create two or more jobs through the form of credits, which can be taken against the business's income tax liability and state payroll withholding. In 2009, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution for an Urban Redevelopment Plan consisting of a parcel specific geographic area encompassing primarily commercial sites in need of redevelopment, alteration of existing sites or use for conformity as well as infill development. This plan will take advantage of the job creation tax credit and was approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in 2010. The plan is pursuant to the State of Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Act (O.C.G.A. 36-61-1) and the Georgia Business Expansion and Support Act (O.C.G.A. 48-7-40.1). See Figure 12 for the location of the SR 400 North Opportunity Zone within Forsyth County.

**Other Programs**

These include investment tax credits, optional investment tax credits, headquarters tax credit, research and development tax credit, retraining tax credit, child care tax credit and small business tax credits.

**Tax Exemptions**

**Freeport Exemptions**

Forsyth County voters elected to exempt the following types of commercial and industrial inventory: Class 1 raw materials and goods in process of manufacturing; Class 2 finished goods produced in the State of Georgia within the last twelve months; Class 3 finished goods stored in the State of Georgia within the last twelve months and destined for shipment out-of-state. Businesses apply for these exemptions each year with the Forsyth County Board of Tax Assessors much like a homeowner applies for a homestead exemption.

**High Tech Development**

Access to technology and a skilled workforce assists recruitment and retention efforts. Many states and some communities have invested public resources in efforts to foster high technology development. In general, these efforts focus on research oriented industries that employ highly skilled workers. Such industries can contribute to a regional economy's strength and vitality. Any public sector initiatives aimed at high-tech development must be rooted in careful analysis of the regional economy, including its existing industrial structure and comparative advantages

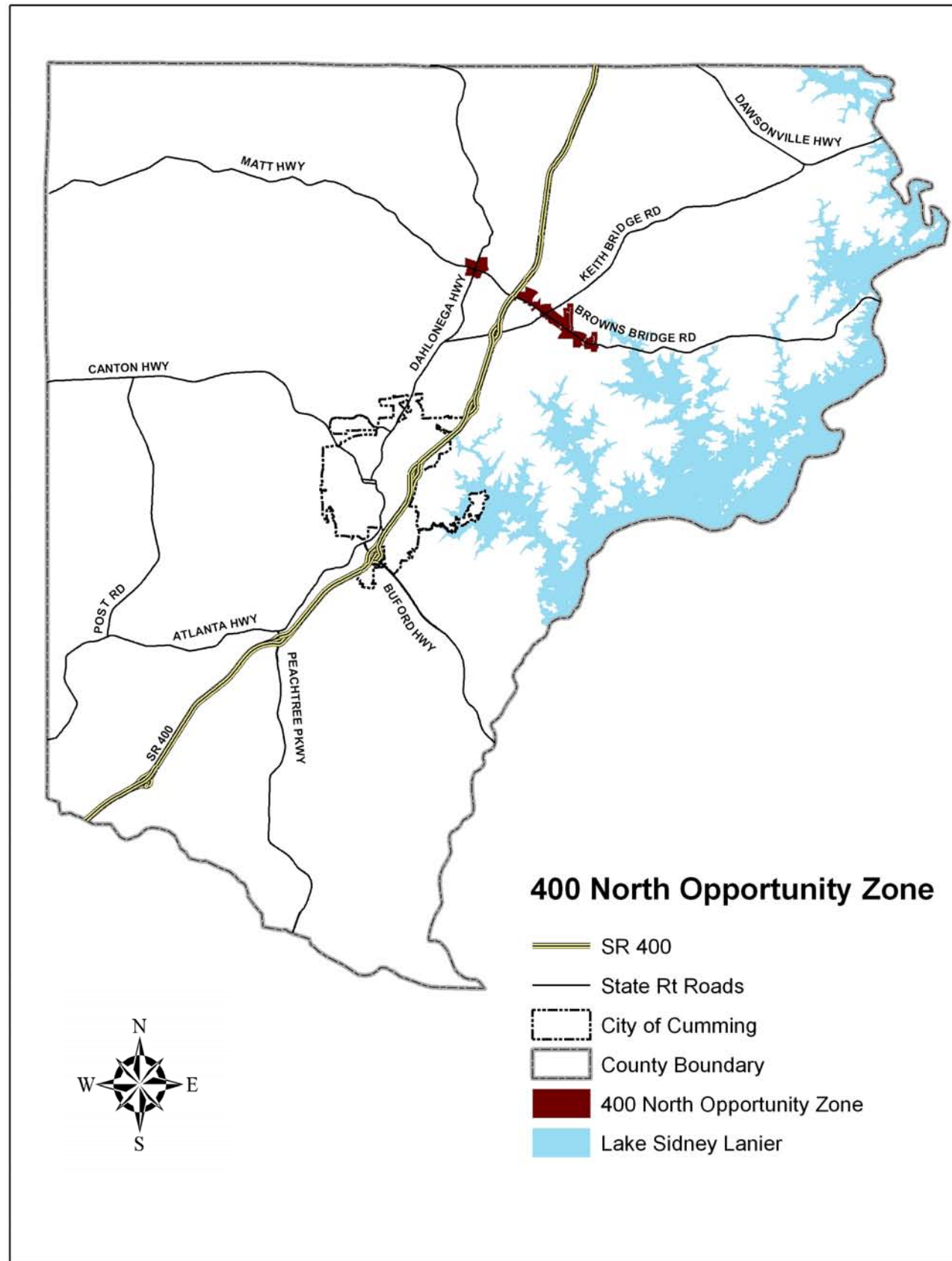
over other jurisdictions. Occupations with the potential to shape the regional economy require high levels of skill, show probable growth, are well-suited across several industries, tend to cluster geographically and offer opportunities for self-employment and business start-up. The high-tech industry environment's ability to foster such characteristics is exceptionally advantageous to the local economy.

An example of technology development within Forsyth County is a broadband grant divided among six counties, which will bring broadband through the county and into White, Towns, Union, Lumpkin and Pickens Counties. This regional effort utilizing American Recovery and Reinvestment funds to establish or expand broadband technology will increase the productivity of existing businesses and help attract new development.

**Training Programs**

Worker training can improve the productivity of local businesses. Whereas a business may have more limited inducement to invest in training that make their employees more competitive in the greater market, this initiative on behalf of a state or local program can be beneficial to the community economy by strengthening the workforce. The Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce in partnership with North Georgia College and State University's 'Next Level' classes and Lanier Technical College's on-site training are examples of local programs geared to employee preparation.

FIGURE 12: SR 400 NORTH OPPORTUNITY ZONE WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY



### Economic Development Funding Utilized by Forsyth County

#### Grant Revenues

Forsyth County utilizes a grants administrator in order to identify grant opportunities and oversee county-wide grant programs from private, corporate and government sources to support county initiatives such as economic development.

#### General Fund

These revenues include taxes and commissions, license and permit fees, court and law enforcement fines and forfeitures, intergovernmental revenue from state and federal grants, charges for services and investment income. This fund is the primary fund for the Forsyth County operational budget, in which a portion is contributed to partners in local or regional economic development efforts.

#### Special Revenue Fund 275

The Hotel and Motel Fund is derived entirely from fees charged to persons staying in hotels or motels located within the county. The fund is remitted to the Chamber, which under contract with the county, promotes tourism in Forsyth County.

#### Impact Fee Program (OCGA 36-71-3)

The Georgia Development Impact Fee Act (DIFA) was enacted into law in 1990. It sets rules for local governments that wish to charge new development for a portion of the additional capital facilities needed to serve it. Under DIFA, local governments may impose exactions on developers to help finance the expansion of their infrastructure systems only through an impact fee system and only for the specific types of facilities and infrastructure listed in the law. Forsyth County enacted impact fees in 2004, as enabled by the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act. Impact fees are a charge on development to pay for the construction or expansion of capital improvements that are necessitated by and benefit the development. Impact fees are not a tax, but rather a part of the development approval process, similar to meeting site planning and zoning requirements. Impact fees must be paid when a building permit is obtained. Forsyth County charges impact fees on residential buildings for parks, libraries and public safety while non-residential buildings are charged only for public safety.

#### SPLOST

This is the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, which is a voter-approved, five-year, one-percent sales tax that has been in effect in Forsyth County since 1983. For every dollar spent in Forsyth County, one penny goes into a fund devoted to capital improvement projects. SPLOST programs have been approved by Forsyth County voters six times since 1983. Some of the projects funded through SPLOST programs include community park buildings, new fire stations and road projects. Forsyth County's most recent SPLOST program, SPLOST VI, was approved by voters on February 5, 2008, which went into effect July 1, 2008 and will expire June 30, 2013. SPLOST VI projects include transportation projects as well as library, recreation and public safety improvements. While a number of projects are proposed to utilize SPLOST VI funding, the actual number of projects able to be completed through these funds will depend upon actual sales tax collections.

## Technical Assistance

### Additional Funding Tools

#### TADs

A Tax Allocation District (TAD) is established for the purpose of catalyzing investment by financing certain redevelopment activities in underdeveloped or blighted areas using public dollars. Redevelopment costs are financed through the pledge of future incremental increases in property taxes generated by the resulting new development. Upon creation, TADs typically have vacant commercial and residential properties as well as blighted areas that may be in need of significant environmental remediation. A TAD is created under the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Law enacted in 1985 to give additional authority to local municipalities in order to facilitate the redevelopment of economically depressed areas.

#### CIDs

A Community Improvement District (CID) is a mechanism for funding certain governmental services including road construction and maintenance, parks and recreation, stormwater and sewage systems, water systems, public transportation and other services and facilities. The administrative body of a CID may levy taxes, fees and assessments within the CID, not to exceed 2.5 percent of the assessed value of the real property. Such taxes, fees and assessments may only be levied on real property that is used for non-residential purposes and revenues may only be used to provide governmental services and facilities within the CID. Bonded debt is permitted, but such debt may not be considered an obligation of the state or any other unit of government other than the CID. A CID is established by the jurisdiction's governing board and is authorized by Article IX, Section VII of the Georgia Constitution.

#### Grants

Economic development grants are typically awarded to communities to revitalize, expand and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. Local governments, state government and the federal government all provide economic development grants. Private foundations and trusts, as well as corporate foundations and trusts, also award grants for economic development.

### Low Interest Loans

#### State Bond Bank

Bond banks consolidate local bond issues to create a single, pooled issue. This capability takes advantage of high investment grade ratings and spreads the risk, netting better interest rates and lower issuing costs. For smaller localities with fewer staff resources to handle the paperwork and administration, bond banks save time and money.

#### Revolving Loans

Revolving loan funds are usually program based funds administered by state agencies for specified uses in which an application is made to demonstrate that the intent of the project is consistent with the overall fund purpose. The advantages are usually rates well below market and access to a longer repayment period.

### Issuance of Debt

#### General Obligation Bonds

A municipal bond that is backed by the credit and taxing authority of the issuing jurisdiction rather than assets being used as collateral; these bonds finance projects that do not produce income, but provide services for the entire community. These bonds must mature within 30 years of issuance per State of Georgia debt referendum requirements.

#### Revenue Bonds

A municipal bond that is secured by specific income of the issuer; these bonds finance income-producing projects that pay revenue bondholders their interest and principal. Projects funded by these bonds serve only those in the community who pay for their services. Income generated by a project is put in a revenue fund from which operation expenditures are paid first, than bondholder payments are issued.

#### Special Assessment Bonds

A particular type of municipal bond used to fund a development project. Interest is paid by taxes levied on the community benefiting from the bond funded project.

## Organizations and Assistance

There are a variety of agencies that are proud to promote the State of Georgia for economic development and related purposes as noted below.

Secretary of State's First Stop Business Information Center:

- Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA provides a number of programs that are useful to potential and existing business owners.

Department of Community Affairs:

- Office of Labor Management Standards (OLMS): (202) 693-0123  
Labor Management and Reporting Disclosure Act, Elections, Financial Safeguards, Trusteeships, Executive Order 13201
- Employment and Training Administration (ETA): (877) US2-JOBS  
Grant and Contract Recipients
- Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP): (202) 693-6489, (888) 9-SBREFA Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Act (SBREFA): Key Points for Small Business

State of Georgia  
[www.georgia.gov](http://www.georgia.gov)

Georgia Economic Developers Association  
[www.geda.org](http://www.geda.org)

Georgia Municipal Association  
[www.gmanet.com](http://www.gmanet.com)

Association of County Commissioners of Georgia  
[www.accg.org](http://www.accg.org)

Georgia Academy for Economic Development  
<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/academy/>

Georgia Power  
[www.georgiapower.com](http://www.georgiapower.com)

Oglethorpe Power Corporation  
<http://www.opc.com/opccom/>

Georgia Center for Site Selection  
[www.gcss.opc.com](http://www.gcss.opc.com)

Georgia Chamber of Commerce  
[www.gachamber.com](http://www.gachamber.com)

Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives  
[www.gacce.org](http://www.gacce.org)

Georgia GIS Clearinghouse  
[www.gis.state.ga.us](http://www.gis.state.ga.us)

Better Business Bureau  
[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

National Federation of Independent Business  
[www.nfib.com/ga](http://www.nfib.com/ga)

Georgia Center for Non-Profits  
[www.gcn.org/](http://www.gcn.org/)

# Land Use





## Introduction

The community's vision for land use within the county is a central component of the comprehensive plan. It serves as the synthesis of all other elements of the plan and functions as a mechanism to guide future growth in the county. Its overarching intent is to direct the intensity, location and phasing of development while ensuring compatibility with existing land uses, future population and economic trends, community infrastructure and natural as well as cultural resources.

The future vision is created through a series of steps that involve an analysis of present conditions with a view towards locales that may require special attention and planning subareas referred to as character areas. These initial actions ultimately culminate in a policy guide for future land use through the creation of a future development map in the course of public input from residents, property owners, elected and appointed officials, the business community, professional planning staff and other stakeholder involvement.

## Inventory and Assessment

### Existing Land Use Map

A comprehensive land use survey was conducted for Forsyth County in the spring of 2010 using aerial photographs and field review. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has established a state-wide land use classification system for regional and local government agencies in the State of Georgia. The land uses shown in Figure 1 and Table 1 follow these standards.

TABLE 1: EXISTING LAND USE WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Residential	54,540	37.5%
Agriculture	29,068	20.0%
Undeveloped	23,382	16.1%
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	12,675	8.7%
Road Right-of-Way	10,678	7.3%
Industrial	5,386	3.7%
Institutional/Public	2,993	2.1%
Commercial	2,879	2.0%
Office	258	0.2%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	145	0.1%
City of Cumming	3,301	2.3%
Total Land Acreage for the County	145,305	100%
Total Land Square Miles for the County	227.0	N/A

Please note: County totals do not include Lake Sidney Lanier

The largest land use category in the county is residential land, comprising approximately 38 percent of the total land area. Residential development is found throughout the county with the largest concentration in the southern and central portions and along Lake Sidney Lanier's perimeter. Single-family detached units are the predominate dwelling type within the county.

The second largest use is agriculture, which accounts for 20 percent of the total land area. Most of the agricultural land can be found in the northern section of the county. There is very little crop production in the county; most of the agricultural uses are poultry and cattle related. Many of the identified agricultural lands receive a tax credit for agricultural use and production.

The third largest category is undeveloped land, which accounts for 16 percent of the total land area. Undeveloped land is found dispersed across the county with numerous large tracts in the northern portion of the county, located on both sides of SR 400. The other substantial undeveloped section is located in the southern end of the county in the vicinity of the McFarland Parkway interchange.

The remaining land uses comprise approximately a quarter of the county's land area and include commercial, industrial, office, public and institutional uses as well as parks. Much of the commercial land uses are concentrated along the SR 400 corridor, other state routes, particularly SR 20 and SR 9, and SR 141. Industrial uses are clustered in the southern segment of the county along SR 400, SR 9, McFarland Parkway, Shiloh Road and SR 141.

### Historic Considerations

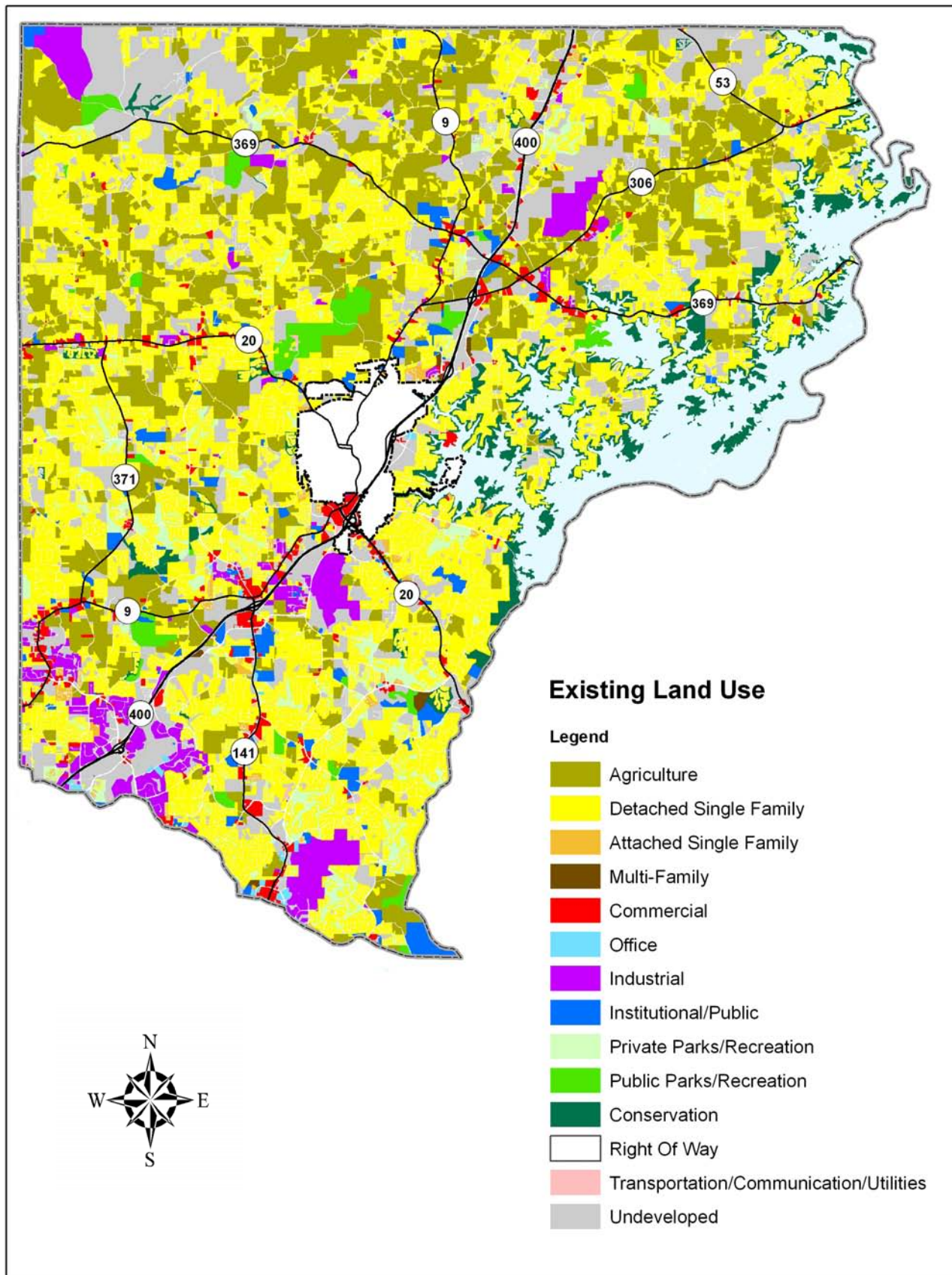
Prior to the construction of Buford Dam and the creation of Lake Sidney Lanier in the mid-1950s, unincorporated Forsyth County was primarily utilized as farmland. Until the widening of SR 400 in the mid-1980s, most of the new growth was associated with the development of lake front homes. Over the last twenty years, however, the growth of metropolitan Atlanta has been the catalyst for rapid development. In particular, the development of suburban employment centers in Fulton and Gwinnett Counties has led to extensive expansion of single-family housing as well as the creation of a strong employment base within the county itself.

The nature of the county's fast paced growth is illustrated by comparing the 2003 existing land use survey prepared for the previous comprehensive plan with the 2010 survey. In 2003, 27 percent of the county was undeveloped whereas in 2010 this figure has decreased to 16.1 percent. The other notable change in comparing the existing land use surveys is that agricultural land increased in 2010, but this is due to the survey method. In addition, the park/recreation/conservation category increased as a result of county property purchases through the parks, recreation and greenspace bond that was approved in 2008.

Transportation networks have made a significant impact on Forsyth County's development pattern. SR 400, SR 141, SR 9 and SR 20 continue to emerge as strong development corridors. These roads have made it easier for people to commute to work either outside the county or within its borders as employment areas have expanded within the county.

The availability of sewer has also had a major influence on the location and magnitude of development. Sewer accessibility assists in determining the density or intensity of developments, and to some extent, the location as well. High-density developments such as apartments, manufacturing or large scale retail require sewer; whereas, low-density developments can be supported by septic tanks that necessitate relatively large drainage fields. There are areas of the county that are not presently served by sewer so development impacts must be kept relatively low at these

FIGURE 1: EXISTING LAND USE OF FORSYTH COUNTY



sites until infrastructure improvements are available; these locales are predominately in the north section of the county.

#### Land Use Patterns in Relation to Infrastructure

Owing to the swift expansion of Forsyth’s population and employment growth, the county’s public infrastructure has been placed under strain in its attempts to keep pace with rising demand. The county has spent considerable resources to improve its transportation network and water and sewer infrastructure in order to accommodate the significant increase in population and the expanded number of employment areas. To date, the southern segment of the county has placed the greatest pressure on county infrastructure, yet the concern is county-wide as more development spreads to the north and east portions of the county. A key factor that exacerbates this concern is the low- density, auto-oriented development patterns that neglect to concentrate growth around existing infrastructure networks.

#### Blighted and Transitional Areas

The suburban development in the unincorporated portions of Forsyth County is relatively new. Yet, like most counties in metropolitan Atlanta, Forsyth County has some areas that may be considered to be declining due to the time period of construction or the need for infrastructure improvements. These segments include residential areas in older neighborhoods that need re-investment, which are located primarily along the perimeter of Lake Sidney Lanier with some subdivisions situated close to the City of Cumming. In addition, commercial uses along portions of SR 9 as well as the intersection of SR 369 and SR 306 are in need of redevelopment; the latter intersection is now a state designated opportunity zone that offers tax credits to businesses that wish to locate or expand their establishment around this state highway intersection.

#### Environmentally Sensitive or Locally Valued Land

Forsyth County is fortunate to possess a number of natural and cultural resources that are worthy of protection. In particular, state and local laws help to protect all of the county’s water resources including Lake Sidney Lanier, the Chattahoochee River and the Etowah River as described in the natural resources section of the plan. There are approximately 24,358 acres of floodplain areas in the county. Floodplain development is regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District through the provision of county ordinances that must comply with state, regional and federal guidelines.

There are an estimated 33,556 acres of land associated with groundwater recharge areas in the county. Significant recharge areas have been mapped by DNR at the state level. State provisions outline restrictions on locating landfills and hazardous waste facilities, above ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks, agricultural waste, impoundment sites, septic tank drain fields, slow rate land treatment, stormwater infiltration basins and waste treatment basins.

Steep slopes, defined as slopes over fifteen percent, comprise approximately 44,830 acres in the county. This acreage amounts to approximately 31 percent of the total land area. Where steep slopes are present, greater care must be taken to control erosion and sedimentation.

A number of man-made resources are valued by the community such as Lake Sidney Lanier and 2,431 acres of county parklands, the largest of which is Sawnee Mountain Preserve, which occupies over 963 acres in the central portion of the county.

A variety of archaeological and historic sites also exist in the county. A portion of the famous Trail of Tears has been traced within Forsyth County and there are documented sites of Cherokee Indian villages and mounds dispersed throughout the area. In the mid-1990s, a historic resources inventory was completed and an update of these identified resources maybe found in the cultural resource section.

### Existing Development Concerns

Forsyth County, like other rapidly growing suburban counties, has developed through auto-oriented growth patterns common to traditional suburban development patterns that are typically characterized by large spans of low-density, single purpose development and strip commercial areas along arterial roads. This growth model is prevalent within the county, mainly south of the City of Cumming and next to state highways. However, as infrastructure expands, leap-frog development could perhaps become the most costly manifestation of this form of growth. Leap-frog development is the premature construction of low-density housing distant from existing development. The consequences of this premature development usually entail higher infrastructure costs. In addition, the quality and capacity of infrastructure may not be upgraded in a suitable time frame therefore necessitating larger lots in order to accommodate septic tanks and ditched streets. This means lower 'yield' for the developer, but may also create a decreased tax base for the county to pay the costs of community services.

Traditional suburban development also has an important impact on the quantity of land available for future generations. Expanding suburban communities often experience the amount of land being consumed by development increases at a faster rate than population growth. Over the long run, this outward expansion narrows future land use options. Eventually, the diminishing supply of developable land drives land prices, causing the cost of housing and public facilities to rise.

Given a diminishing supply of undeveloped land, Forsyth County could incorporate land use planning tools that direct and orient development patterns and economic incentives away from traditional suburban configurations to patterns that support compact development. Compact development is not synonymous with higher residential density. Residential density is a measure of the quantity of development since it is defined as the number of housing units per acre. It is not, however, a reliable gauge of qualitative characteristics such as the amount of open space, impervious area, building mass or achieving a jobs-housing balance. These attributes relate more directly to the quality of living within a community and are linked with the arrangement between land uses and site design factors rather than a sole density calculation.

Compact development manages density and intensity of development through design to conserve land, reduce impacts on traffic and stormwater and maximize use of existing infrastructure. It also protects against the negative impacts of traditional suburban development by placing varied, but complementary land uses in proximity to each other. Compact development promotes a mix of land uses that are conducive to pedestrian activity and alternative modes of transporta-

tion. With well-designed compact development, more everyday destinations such as retail shops, churches and schools, are within convenient walking distance with benefits ranging from a more pedestrian-friendly environment to reductions in land consumption through the preservation of open space as well as lower infrastructure costs.

### Infill and Traditional Neighborhood Development

The American Planning Association defines infill development as "the construction of a building on a vacant parcel located in a predominately built up area. It also refers to the reuse or change of use of a previously developed parcel or group of parcels, or the intensification of use or change or use by remodeling or renovating an entire structure" (APA Planning Advisory Service Report Number 491/492). Since most of the county's building stock is relatively new, there are few potential sites for infill development, but the opportunities for Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) are much greater.

A TND can be defined as "an innovative development approach that fosters more compact, walkable communities. TND emphasizes a return to the way we used to build neighborhoods. . . . TND neighborhoods typically include small-lot single-family homes, multi-family residences and neighborhood commercial developments within easy walking distance of one another" (Georgia Quality Growth Partnership). In recent years there have been a number of mixed use communities approved in the county that incorporate TND design in their concept plans. The county's Unified Development Code (UDC) has specific regulations for this development type to ensure a mix of land uses and the promotion of land use connections and pedestrian access through site design guidelines.

### Local Policies That Could Affect Future Land Use Patterns

Market demand, population growth, economic development, community infrastructure and the environmental suitability of the land are major factors affecting Forsyth County future land use needs and development patterns. Adopted land use goals and implementation strategies are also influential in defining those patterns. Whether qualitative or quantitative, these factors will play a significant role in guiding the intensity, location and timing of future growth.

The major shapers in a community typically involve the availability of community facilities and services such as roads, water and sewer, schools, libraries and public safety. From both a social and market perspective, land that provides access to a network of supporting infrastructure and community facilities has greater development value. As such, the availability of these facilities and services is a key determinant for land development decisions.

As previously indicated, current transportation routes in Forsyth County play a significant role in the accessibility of land parcels, and thereby the potential for development. As in most communities, extensions of transportation, water and sewer infrastructure greatly expand the supply of land for development. Also influential to future growth are established environmental standards, which have played a more significant role in shaping community growth as metropolitan Atlanta has expanded. Air and water quality programs at the federal and state level recognize the connection between land use and environmental quality. At the local level, this is likely to necessitate more sophisticated studies of environmental quality and more precise performance standards

for environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands and floodplains.

Finally, a policy of promoting TND and compact type developments can have a significant effect on the future land use patterns of the county. Such developments will offer a greater variety of housing choices and help to encourage wider access to retail markets and employment opportunities. These types of development also lend a greater sense of character and community identity, which could help distinguish Forsyth County from other surrounding jurisdictions.

### Future Land Use Needs Analysis

Population, housing and employment forecasts are helpful in determining the amount of land necessary to accommodate both residential and non-residential future land use needs. Based on county-wide future population projections of 370,479 persons by 2030 and the future household projection of 156,677 by 2030, Forsyth County will see major construction of new housing units with this substantial population growth. The 2010 county tax digest indicated that there are 73,260 existing dwelling units including mobile homes and apartments. It is reasonable to assume that as the county matures and more people move to the City of Cumming and the unincorporated portion of the county, additional land will be developed for residential use and the overall housing density will also rise to accommodate future housing demand.

Forecasting the land use needs for non-residential growth is a critical element in the relationship between land use and economic development planning. The application of land requirements associated with industry type aid the county in facilitating concurrence of community needs with the availability of appropriate land or infrastructure. Table 2 provides 2010 through 2030 estimates of the quantity of land necessary to satisfy estimates of employment by industry sector, per Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. data presented in the Economic Development element. This assessment involves a projection of the future employment level within Forsyth County at a given time, and correlates the estimated quantity of land for private development with respect to use. This particular model based on density standards published in the 4th edition of Urban Land Use Planning, applies a control factor for the type of land use to the projected value of growth for each employment category between 2010 and 2030.

TABLE 2: FUTURE EMPLOYMENT LAND ACREAGE REQUIREMENTS 2010 - 2030 FORSYTH COUNTY

Employment Category	Land Use Type	2010 Total Employment*	2030 Total Employment*	Employment Change*	Acres/Employee**	Acres Gained/Lost
Farm Employment	Resource Based	0.5	0.46	-0.04	N/A	N/A
Forestry, Fishing & Other	Resource Based	0.1	0.12	0.02	N/A	N/A
Mining	Resource Based	0.15	0.15	0	N/A	N/A
Utilities	Industrial	0.25	0.29	0.04	0.125	5
Construction	Industrial	6.61	8.46	1.85	0.125	231
Manufacturing	Industrial	7.72	9.43	1.71	0.125	214

TABLE 2: FUTURE EMPLOYMENT LAND ACREAGE REQUIREMENTS 2010 - 2030 continued FORSYTH COUNTY

Employment Category	Land Use Type	2010 Total Employment*	2030 Total Employment*	Employment Change*	Acres/Employee**	Acres Gained/Lost
Manufacturing	Industrial	7.72	9.43	1.71	0.125	214
Wholesale Trade	Warehouse	6.62	10.14	3.52	0.125	440
Retail Trade	Retail	7.64	9	1.36	0.1	136
Transportation & Warehousing	Warehouse	1.05	1.21	0.16	0.04	6
Information	Office	0.76	0.99	0.23	0.04	9
Finance & Insurance	Office	1.96	3.85	1.89	0.04	76
Real Estate & Rental & Lease	Office	0.66	0.81	0.15	0.04	6
Professional & Tech Services	Industrial	4.77	9.35	4.58	0.125	573
Management & Enterprises	Office	0.38	0.49	0.11	0.04	4
Administrative & Waste Service	Industrial	4.99	11.06	6.07	0.125	759
Educational Serv.	Office	0.66	1.12	0.46	0.04	18
Health Care & Social Assist	Industrial	4.75	10.18	5.43	0.125	679
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	Industrial	0.45	0.64	0.19	0.125	24
Accommodation & Food Service	Industrial	4.26	7.94	3.68	0.125	460
Other Services	Industrial	2.82	3.7	0.88	0.125	110
Federal Civilian Govt.	Office	0.19	0.24	0.05	0.04	2
Federal Military Govt.	Industrial	0.42	0.43	0.01	0.125	1
State and Local Govt.	Office	6.67	8.19	1.52	0.04	61
Total		64.38	98.25	33.87	1.795	3,814
Vacancy Adjustment (+5%)						191
<b>Total Additional Acres Required</b>						<b>4,004</b>

\*Projections in thousands

\*\*Note: Based on density standards published in Urban Land Use Planning, 4th Edition by Edward J. Kaiser, David R. Godschalk, and F. Stuart Chaplin, Jr., University of Illinois Press, p.331.

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

Little redevelopment is likely to take place within Forsyth County in the immediate future given the current availability of undeveloped land. As of 2010, 45.6% of Forsyth County land is zoned agricultural as shown in Table 15, 'Current Zoning Proportion by Acreage' within the Economic

Development element. Although much of this land is currently occupied by low-density, detached dwelling units or utilized for agricultural commerce, this current land use designation represents the county's greatest source of future development sites as traditional agricultural industries continue to decline in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Because rezoning agricultural land for the purpose of development often provides a fiscal advantage over real estate already designated for development, this has been the preferred approach of the development community. Approximately 70% of approved rezoning applications between January 2005 and January 2009 changed agriculturally zoned property to a non-agricultural zoning district. As Forsyth County becomes more urban over the next twenty years, the increasingly limited supply of available land will boost real estate values and likely lead to a gradual increase in redevelopment; the tipping point being where real estate prices for raw land supersedes that of existing development. Until the market for potential, redeveloped property reaches economic equilibrium with raw land, only redevelopment policies that provide financial incentives for redevelopment will likely increase the rate of existing development replacement.

## Implementation Program

There are two parts contained within the Community Assessment implementation program. The third aspect of the implementation program, the future development map, will be created during the Community Agenda portion of the full update.

The first part is the analysis of areas requiring special attention. These areas may signify one or more of the following: Important natural or cultural resources; places where rapid development is likely to occur and where such development may outpace available infrastructure; areas in need of redevelopment or aesthetic improvement; abandoned structures or sites; potential infill opportunities; and locations with significant disinvestment. Figure 2 shows identified areas requiring special attention within the county. This map and accompanying narrative was submitted as part of the partial update to the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted on May 21, 2009, by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners after state review and approval.

### Areas Requiring Special Attention Narrative

#### *Areas in need of redevelopment or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness*

- There are three intersections in the county that have been identified as being areas requiring special attention. These intersections are located in the northern area of the county: Keith Bridge Road (SR 306) and Old Keith Bridge Road/Dawsonville Highway (SR 53) that is also identified as a commercial node on the future land use map; Keith Bridge Road (SR 306) and Browns Bridge Road (SR 369); and Matt Highway (SR 369) and Bannister Road/John Burruss Road that is also identified as a commercial node on the future land use map. These intersections have not fully developed so there is still an opportunity to address architectural standards and site design regulations prior to the intersections becoming built out. Focus on these intersections will be based on public participation if and when this is a stated community objective for these areas.
- A segment of Atlanta Highway (SR 9) from the Fulton County line to Castleberry Road is

an older commercial area which would benefit greatly from architectural guidelines and site design standards as this corridor moves into redevelopment.

- The quarry site on Ronald Reagan Boulevard will require an exit strategy and redevelopment plan in the long-range planning period.

#### *Areas where rapid development or change of land use is likely to occur*

- Matt Highway/Browns Bridge Road (SR 369) from the Cherokee County line to the Hall County line is considered an area of rapid growth and development. Travel volumes on this road have increased dramatically with the county's gain in population and employment. Based on the Comprehensive Plan's future land use map and four of the subarea vision statements, this area is proposed to be primarily residential use with a rural character and limited commercial development. A network of greenways is projected to run throughout the area connecting passive parks via a trail system. With the Georgia Department of Transportation's proposed widening and roadway improvement plans for Matt Highway/Browns Bridge Road (SR 369) from the Cherokee County line to the Hall County line, the rural atmosphere of the area may be compromised with increased commercial development.
- Forsyth County's Major Transportation Plan provides a list of committed projects from the Georgia Department of Transportation 2006 – 2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that reflects roadway improvements including widening and roadway operational upgrades for Old Atlanta Road and Sharon Road as well as the completion of Ronald Reagan Boulevard. These expansions may usher in land use changes as the roadway character is modified.
- The Comprehensive Plan's future land use map indicates that Old Atlanta Road is primarily a residential corridor. The proposed widening will significantly change the character of the areas involved, possibly changing land uses as a result; hence the designation as an area requiring special attention. When fully constructed, Ronald Reagan Boulevard will extend throughout the Livable Center Initiative (LCI) study area. In addition, the proposed Taubman development project, at the intersection of Union Hill Road and Ronald Reagan Boulevard, includes up to 1,400,000 square feet of gross leaseable area of retail, 900,000 square feet of rental office space, a 500 room hotel, and 875 residential dwelling units. This development proposal alone constitutes a significant increase in density and intensity of use which warrants Ronald Reagan Boulevard as an area requiring special attention.

#### *Areas of significant natural and cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development*

- Forsyth County contains two protected river corridors; the Etowah, which is located in the northern section of the county, and the Chattahoochee, which runs between Forsyth County and Gwinnett County. Both rivers are environmentally protected, but the Chattahoochee River is under stricter regulations through the Georgia Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA). The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan includes two greenways and a blueway proposal. One greenway project consists of the Chat-

tahoochee Greenway which is to be developed in two phases: Phase I – from Settles Bridge to McGinnis Ferry Road and Phase II – from Buford Dam Road to Settles Bridge. The other is the Etowah Greenway, which will stretch between Cherokee and Dawson Counties, and also includes a design for a blueway or canoe trail. Although the rivers are protected by both state and local regulations, there is concern regarding access management and the promotion of water quality as these facilities are developed and used by recreationists.

- Lake Sidney Lanier’s shoreline is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This is an area requiring special attention since the lake is both a regional water supply reservoir and recreation destination for the county.

*Future Greenway Phases*

- Forsyth County’s Big Creek Greenway multi-use trail, located in the southern portion of county, will provide recreational opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists. The development of the greenway has been divided into five phases and extends from McFarland Road to the entrance of the Sawnee Mountain Preserve. Phase I runs from McFarland Road to Atlanta Highway (SR 9) ending at Fowler Park and is proposed to be completed in July 2009. Phase II and III of the greenway begins at Atlanta Highway (SR 9) and travels along the Big Creek River and then terminates at Bethelview Road. These sections of the project are scheduled to be completed in June 2009.
- Future plans to develop phases IV and V of the Big Creek Greenway are still being determined. Phase IV is planned to begin at Bethelview Road and proceed north to Kelly Mill Road with Phase V proposed to continue from Kelly Mill Road and conclude at Spot Road, in front of the Sawnee Mountain Preserve. Properties or easements along these intended portions of the greenway trail need to be acquired once engineered plans are finished in order to guarantee trail completion and the recreational connectivity from the southern end of the county to the Sawnee Mountain Preserve.
- Forsyth County has future plans to create a Sawnee Mountain Greenway which would extend from the Sawnee Mountain Preserve to Poole’s Mill Park.

*McFarland – Stoney Point Livable Centers Initiative*

- The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) was created by the Atlanta Regional Commission in 1999 to encourage local governments in the metropolitan Atlanta region to plan and implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create mixed use communities consistent with regional development policies and air quality requirements. Through the LCI program, federal transportation funds matched with local funds provide planning grants to local governments and select non-profit organizations to conduct studies in their area. The primary goals of the LCI program are to encourage a diversity of mixed income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices; provide access to a range of travel options including buses, roadways, walking and biking; and to engage the community’s stakeholders in the planning process, including groups not previously involved in community planning activities. In Forsyth County, the

implementation of the McFarland-Stoney Point LCI study area should consider the incorporation of an overlay district to achieve high quality design standards, changes to the future land use map to support the 2006 adopted plan, and other minor Comprehensive Plan amendments to sustain the LCI study area concepts as outlined in the McFarland-Stoney Point LCI plan.

*Areas where the pace of development has or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services*

- Forsyth County has master plans for water and sewer service, transportation, parks and recreation, which are regularly updated to reflect current conditions and future trends in order to plan for population growth. A capital improvements element, updated annually, focuses on essential facilities planning as well. In addition, the Forsyth County Board of Education manages planning initiatives for public education facilities. County master plans are based on aggressive population projections in order to ensure adequate service county-wide. Service expansions throughout the county are anticipated and strategized within these plans, which take appropriate phasing into account as the county continues to experience population increase. The county will need to continue to monitor infrastructure capacity and development patterns in all geographic areas to make certain community facilities and services maintain citizen expectations.

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

- In the subsequent decades, large abandoned sites such as the quarry on Ronald Reagan Boulevard, as identified previously within this narrative, the landfill along the Etowah River, and the surface mine near the vicinity of Peachtree Parkway, will need to undergo mitigation measures for land use conversion. At this time, these sites are not abandoned and therefore are not ready for environmental remediation.

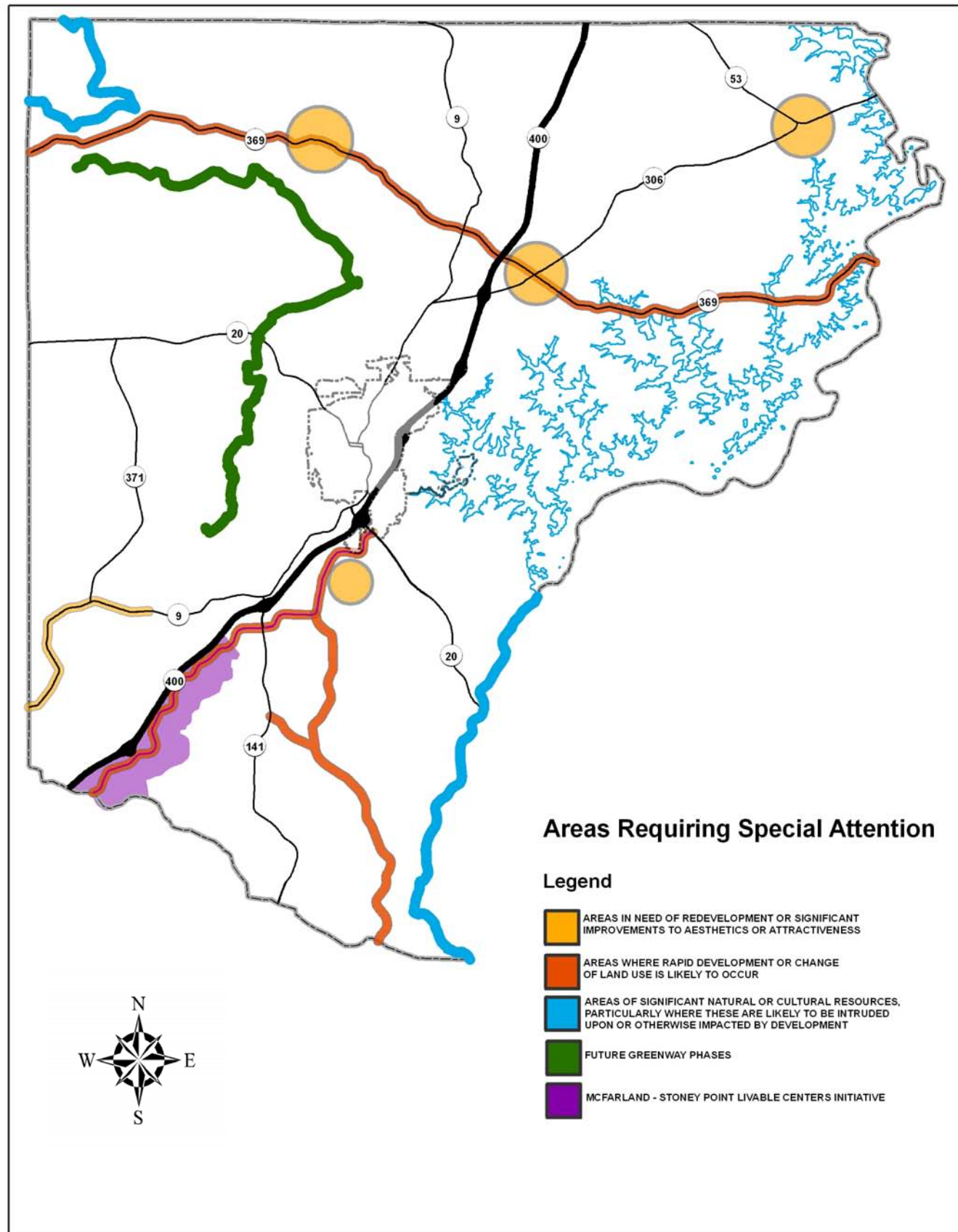
*Areas with significant infill development opportunities*

- Forsyth County contains large tracts of undeveloped land particularly north of the City of Cumming while areas south of the city have undergone substantial development over the last twenty-five years as population growth has sharply risen. Significant infill areas will not emerge until the county matures as a suburban region. Currently, the county has sizable greenfield developments that do not warrant infill planning.

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

- Forsyth County does not presently have identifiable areas that are experiencing disinvestment although current economic conditions may create such neighborhoods if the national recession persists long term.

FIGURE 2: MAP OF AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION



### Recommended Character Areas

The second part of the implementation program for the Community Assessment is the identification of recommended character areas. These are existing or potential areas covering the entire community and may be viewed in Figure 3. Character areas are specific geographic locales that have unique, recognizable characteristics that are different from adjacent areas. Distinctions are based on the form, pattern and intensity of land development. Character area designation is required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) as part of the Community Assessment component for the major update to the Comprehensive Plan. These areas may contain special features to preserve or enhance, have the potential to develop into a distinctive district through planning and appropriate implementation measures or require special consideration due to specific development concerns. Unlike the current future land use map that is based on conventional zoning categories, character areas focus on an environment's character, appearance and function rather than separate land uses.

Character areas are identified through assessing existing physical characteristics and uses including lot configuration, intensity of development, interaction of land uses, natural features and level of existing infrastructure. Current land use and zoning are also evaluated with planned expansions for transportation as well as water and sewer services so that recommended future development areas can be properly selected. The character area map will be reviewed as the future development map is generated during the Community Agenda element of the Comprehensive Plan update.

### Recommended Character Areas Narrative

**Development Corridor:** Major arterials that have developed or emerging commercial, industrial as well as office uses; these corridors function as town centers along high-volume transportation facilities. Development nodes at key intersections are also identified.

**Neighborhood Center:** Developed or emerging, low-intensity commercial uses that serve neighborhood residents including retail and service establishments located in close proximity to residential areas at strategic intersections.

**Town Center:** Primarily commercial centers that accommodate residential sectors across the county that are composed of multiple subdivisions, which may include large scale retail establishments and mixed use developments containing pedestrian networks between land uses.

**Regional Center:** Commercial and employment areas that attract populations from multiple jurisdictions due to the intensity or distinctive function or character of the development; the one identified includes a lifestyle center and state technical college.

**Employment Center:** Area of concentrated employment ranging from industrial, commercial and office uses.

**Major Highway Corridor:** Corridor that is primarily buffered through landscaping on either side of SR 400 for the limited access portion of the county's only freeway; this corridor serves as the

principal access and visual introduction to the county from locations south.

Business and Retail Parkway Corridor: Corridor that is comprised of developed or emerging retail and service establishments along the controlled access portion of SR 400 with limited direct-access, residential areas. A development node at a key intersection is also identified.

McFarland-Stoney Point LCI: Area targeted for new development and redevelopment intended for a combination of commercial, office, residential and mixed uses per the LCI plan; the LCI encompasses various character areas including a proposed regional center.

Heavy Industrial: High intensity uses related to mineral extraction, poultry rendering and landfill facilities.

Lakeside Residential: Residential developments, existing and developing, surrounding Lake Sidney Lanier.

River Residential: Residential developments, existing and developing, surrounding the Chattahoochee River and the Etowah River, both state protected waterways that have additional stream buffer and setback protections to safeguard water quality.

Estate Residential: Residential developments, existing and developing, that typically contain considerable open space, pastoral views and significant building separation between single-family dwelling units, which are primarily located on streets with lower traffic volumes.

Suburban Living: Residential developments, existing and developing, normally characterized by single family detached units, curvilinear street networks and auto-dependent connections to surrounding land uses; low-intensity commercial appropriately located based on transportation and site design considerations, including uses such as neighborhood retail, schools and daycare centers, may be integrated into this category.

Village Living: High density residential developments that contain single family attached or multifamily units, including mixed-use designs that usually combine multiple dwelling types, which are located adjacent to transitional or development corridors where non-residential uses are present or are likely to emerge as a result of being a prominent growth area.

Transitional Corridor: Corridors that are designed to allow for high density residential development and compatible non-residential uses; typically provide connection between existent or future commercial areas and suburban residential development.

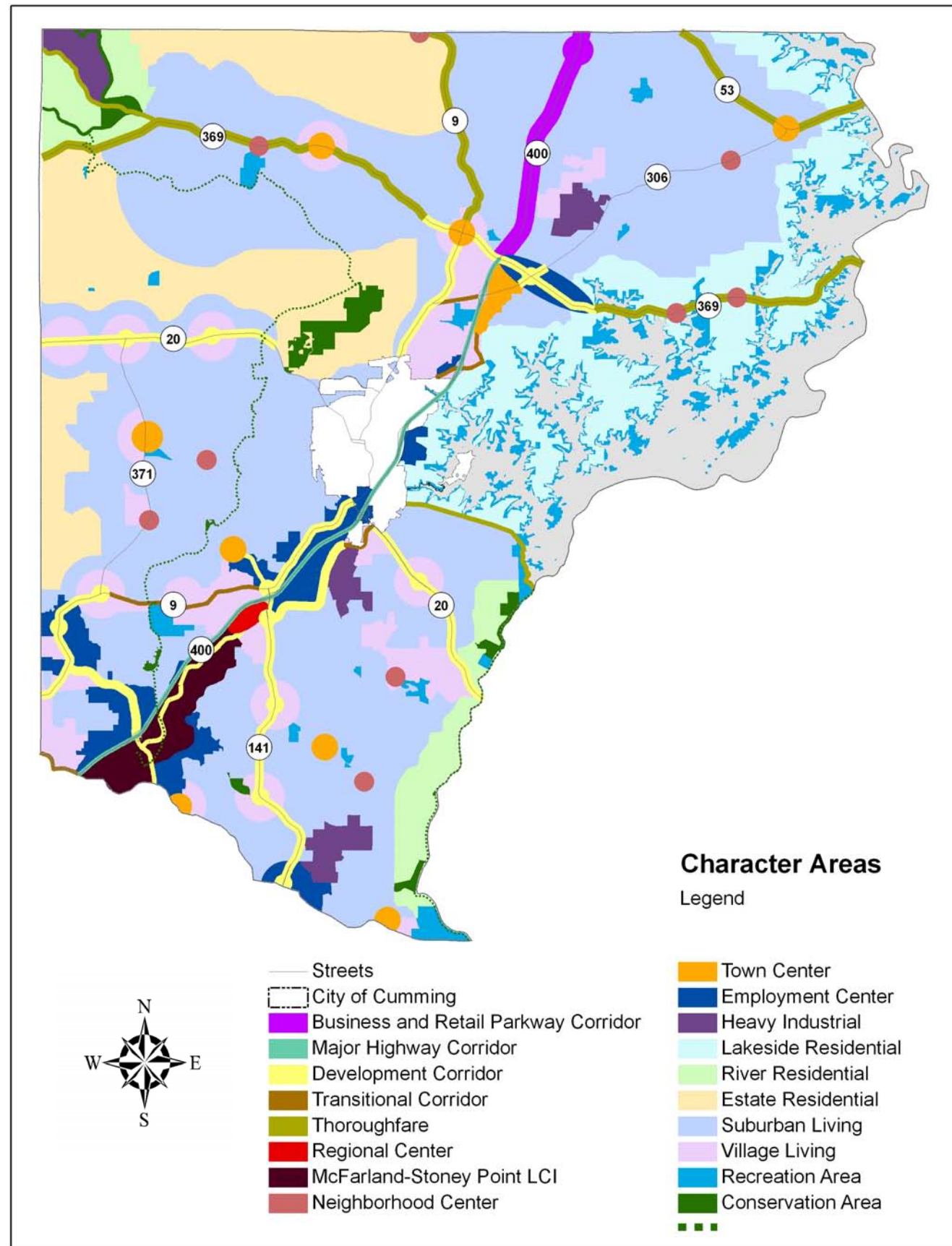
Recreation Area: Areas of active recreation that encompass county and federal parks including recreational amenities along Lake Sidney Lanier as well as the state fish hatchery.

Conservation Area: Areas of protected open space utilized for recreation and conservation purposes such as linear greenway trails and passive-use parks including national park property along the Chattahoochee River.

Thoroughfare: Corridors that have controlled areas of non-residential growth and provide viewshed access to natural and cultural landscapes including lakeside vistas.



FIGURE 3: MAP OF RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS



# Transportation



## Introduction

A major transportation plan update was last adopted in November of 2006 and is being revised in 2010. This plan inventories components of the local transportation network and assesses its adequacy for serving current and projected future population along with economic needs. An associated implementation program for providing the desired level of transportation facilities and services through the long-range planning period is outlined and shall be continued to be amended as necessary. Information about land use, growth trends and emerging development patterns is also addressed in the plan since expansion of development leads to increased mobility demands across different sectors of the county. The plan contains an analysis of employment, population and income in the county with a description of the land use types, their intensity and location as well as an analysis of travel demand for the area. In order to predict future transportation needs, it is necessary to determine the capacity of the existing transportation system and to develop and validate a transportation model. Furthermore, an update to the county's Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan was completed in the summer of 2008, which supplements the major transportation plan through envisioning a network of alternate modes of transportation. This is intended to supply connectivity through non-motorized means between various destinations not only within the county, but inter-jurisdictionally with surrounding communities.

## Inventory

### Roadway Functional Classification

The existing highway and street system in Forsyth County consists of a facility network comprised of roads, rights-of-way, bridges, multi-purpose trails and sidewalks that serve multiple uses and functions throughout the region. This system can be classified in terms of the character of the transportation service each component provides the county. All roadways in the county network have been grouped using the following five categories: Freeways, major arterials, minor arterials, collectors and local roads. This functional classification of the highways and streets is important because it identifies the desired or minimum right-of-way, which exists now or may be needed in the future to expand the network over the twenty-year planning period.

#### Freeways

This type of highway usually consists of limited access freeways including interstate highways and other expressways serving large volumes of high speed auto and truck traffic. The major purpose of this roadway type is to provide mobility between metropolitan areas, regions or states and generally they are not designed to provide access to private property. A considerable amount of traffic on these road facilities consists of through traffic. These highways generally have a minimum of four lanes, with some freeways being much wider, especially in major metropolitan areas. Typical rights-of-way range from 200 to 400 feet, with medians or barrier walls to separate directional traffic.

#### Major Arterials

These highways or streets serve the major activity centers of a metropolitan or urban area and consist mainly of the highest traffic volume corridors. These highways usually carry a large proportion of trips with origins and destinations within the region as well as a considerable amount of through trips. This type of roadway is intended to provide mobility within major metropolitan areas or cities and may provide some access to private property. Controlled access facilities can

be classified within this system. Major arterials typically have between 100 to 200 feet of right-of-way, four or more lanes and may have a median to improve operational characteristics of the roadway.

#### Minor Arterials

Streets and highways that interconnect with and complement the major arterials are classified as minor arterials. This system serves trips of moderate length and puts more emphasis on land access than the major arterial system. All arterials that are not classified as primary are included in this class. Minor arterials will have between 80 to 120 feet of right-of-way, wider intersections with turning lanes and may have up to five lanes of traffic.

#### Collectors

The main purpose of streets within this system is to gather traffic from local streets in residential areas, major activity centers and central business districts in order to carry it to the arterial highway system. Thus, collector streets provide a large amount of access to private property and usually go through residential areas to facilitate traffic circulation to commercial, industrial, medical, educational and other public facility areas. Collectors typically have rights-of-way between 80 to 100 feet with two to four undivided lanes.

#### Local Roads

This system consists of all other streets within a community or region that are not included in the four classifications described above. The primary purpose of these streets is to provide access to abutting land and connection to the collector streets. These streets can often be found in neighborhoods; thus, through traffic is deliberately discouraged on these roads. Local roads generally have rights-of-way between 50 to 80 feet, and in some cases, will allow on-street parking.

Figure 1 provides a map of existing roadways, excepting local roads, with their respective functional classification within Forsyth County.

### Traffic Volumes

Traffic volume is normally measured through the average amount of traffic calculated over a 24-hour period. This determination is recorded as the average annual daily traffic (AADT), which is provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for 2010 in Figure 2.

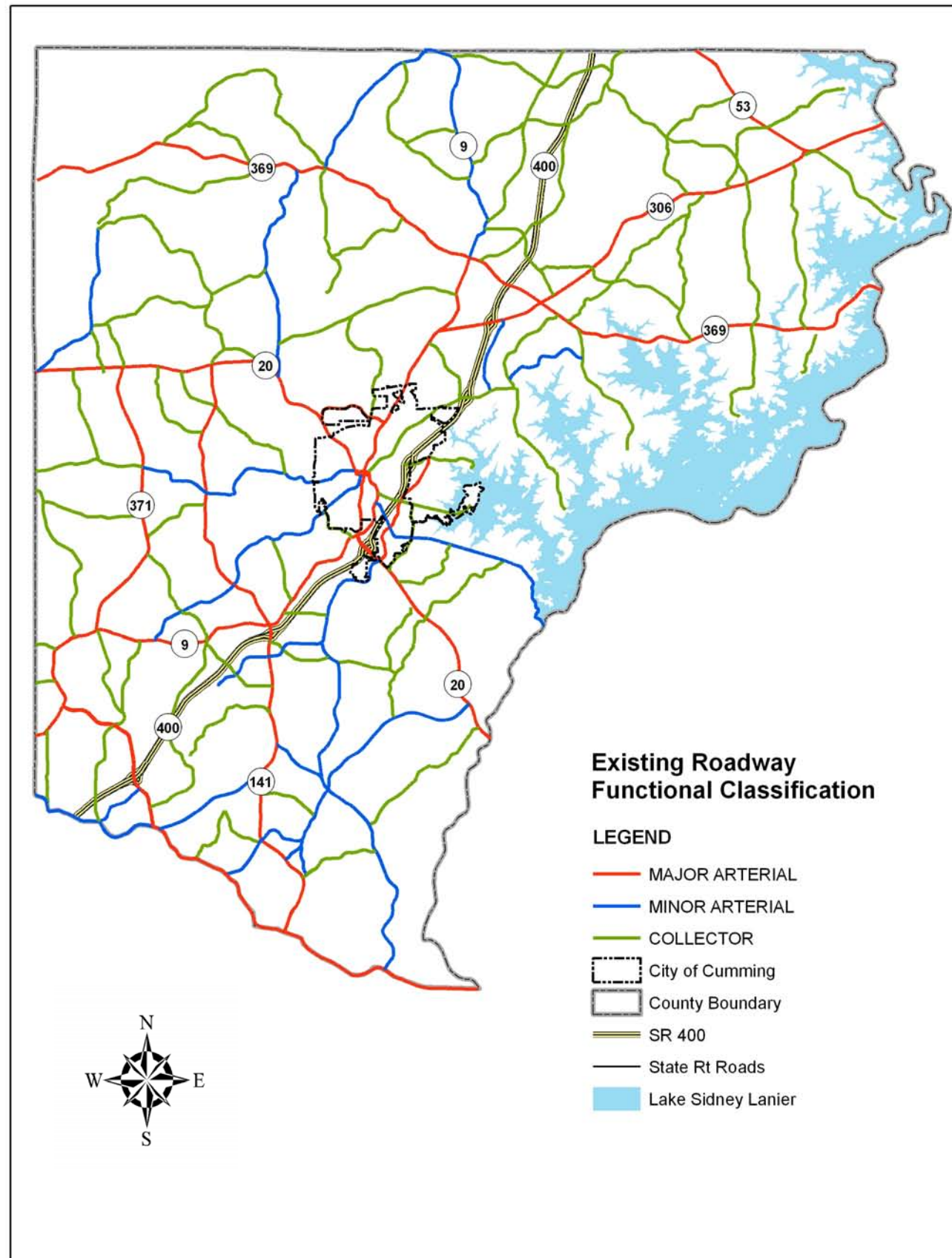
### Major Roadways

Several major transportation corridors exist in Forsyth County that are state routes or county roads. A brief description of these arterial roadways is listed below.

#### SR 400

State Route (SR) 400 is the most significant transportation facility in Forsyth County. This freeway provides access to the City of Atlanta and Fulton County to the south and the North Georgia mountains and Dawson County to the north. The roadway is six lanes from Alpharetta to the McFarland Parkway interchange and then narrows to four lanes as it continues north. Much of the growth and development in Forsyth County and the northern area of metropolitan Atlanta has occurred and persists in locating near this multi-lane freeway. SR 400 provides access to employment and regional activity centers and is considered a high growth corridor in the metropolitan

FIGURE 1: EXISTING ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Atlanta area. It is increasingly being used by residents, visitors and businesses as a major artery in the region.

This corridor has six interchanges within Forsyth County and north of SR 306, the freeway converts to a major arterial with five signalized intersections. The major transportation plan recommends the addition of a new interchange at McGinnis Ferry Road in the long-range planning period. The northern portion of the highway provides access to private property, predominately commercial land uses. A SR 400 corridor study was completed in May of 2009 which focused on the SR 306 interchange north to its terminus in Lumpkin County. This study identified and prioritized transportation projects that would primarily focus on safety and congestion improvement for anticipated future conditions. The key findings of this report, in regards to Forsyth County, acknowledged that widening from four to six lanes beginning at SR 20 and continuing north to the Dawson County line is recommended since the entire corridor will be operating below the adopted service standard by 2030. The two high crash locations that were identified included the intersection with Settingdown Road along with Hubbard Town Road and Cross Roads Road. The long-range recommendation is for this portion of SR 400 to become a limited access freeway as it is to the south with six general purpose lanes and two managed lanes. Additionally, frontage roads are recommended where appropriate for connectivity and necessary access to existing development. A phased approach appears likely given the costs not only of construction, but of additional right-of-way, since approximately 50 extra feet will be necessary. These phased improvements would ultimately necessitate expansion of the corridor south of the study area, which is not currently programmed. To minimize the costs and planning complexities of these recommendations, it is advisable that GDOT prepare an access management plan based on the scenario proposals put forth in the corridor study.

**SR 9**

SR 9 from SR 20 to Maple Street is a three-lane major arterial leading into the City of Cumming. This section of SR 9 is predominantly fronted by strip commercial development.

SR 9 from SR 141 to SR 20 is a two-lane rural major arterial running parallel to SR 400. A significant amount of non-residential development along SR 9 between SR 20 and SR 141 is expected in the future. The interchange of SR 20 and SR 400 and the interchange of SR 400 and SR 141 are significant commercial areas. Projected traffic volumes will be the result of traffic to and from the commercial uses rather than through traffic. GDOT has identified this section of SR 9 to be widened to four lanes.

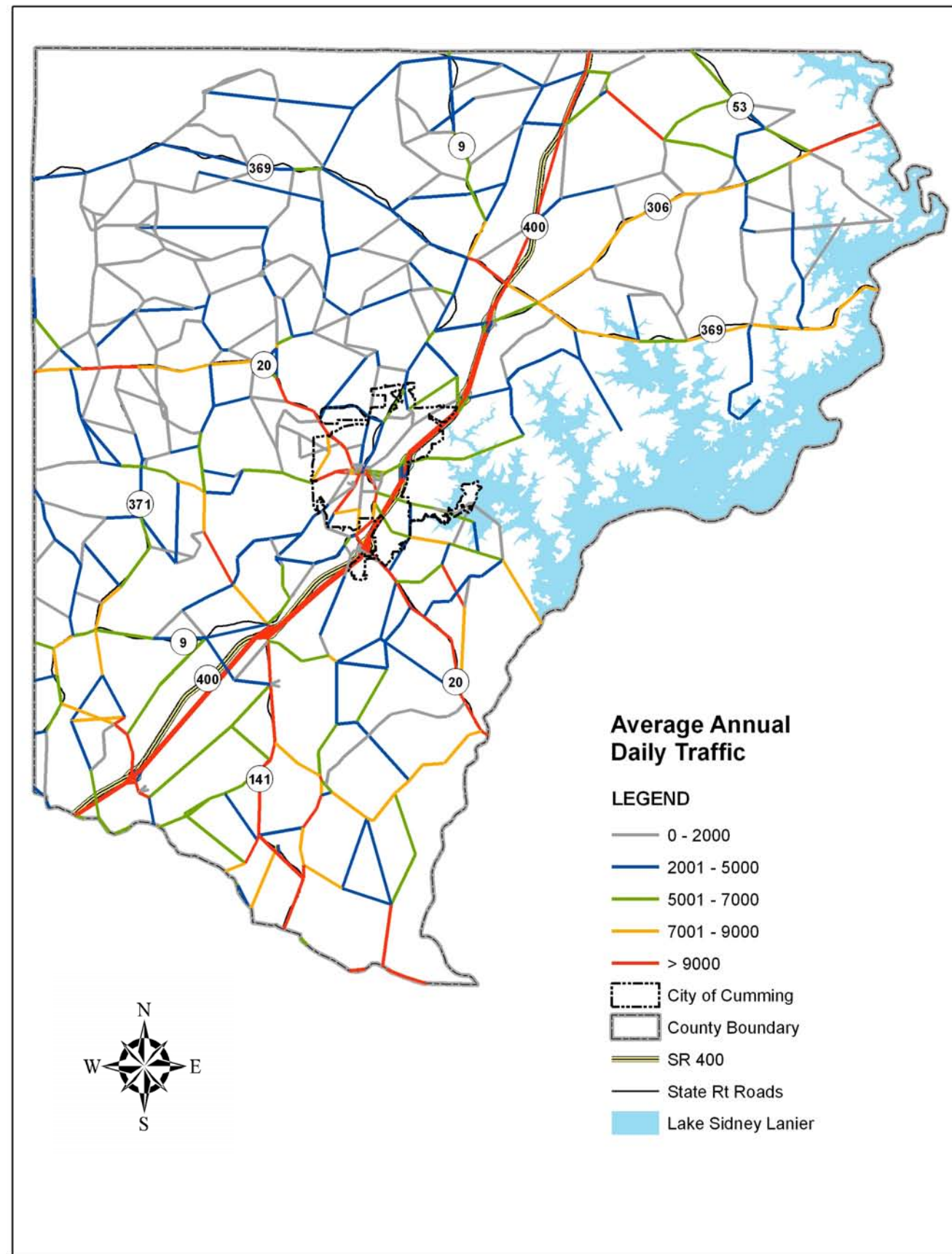
SR 9 from the Fulton County line to SR 141 is a two-lane major arterial. The section of SR 9 from Hamby Road to McFarland Road carries a significant amount of traffic due to through southbound traffic from Cherokee County to SR 400.

SR 9 from Maple Street to SR 306 is a two-lane major arterial leading into the City of Cumming from the north and running parallel to SR 400. As residential development

**Veterans Memorial Boulevard**

Veterans Memorial Boulevard is a five-lane undivided major arterial connecting SR 9 to Main Street within the City of Cumming.

FIGURE 2: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT) OF FORSYTH COUNTY



**SR 20**

SR 20 east of Samples Road is a two-lane major arterial connecting SR 400 with I 985 and I-85 in Gwinnett County. This section of SR 20 is currently over capacity. Continued residential and commercial development along this roadway will continue to increase traffic volumes. SR 20 west of the City of Cumming to Cherokee County is currently a five/three-lane section with a two-way left turn lane.

**Market Place Boulevard**

Market Place Boulevard is a four-lane divided major arterial that connects SR 20 with Bald Ridge Marina Road. Within the city limits, this roadway is constructed as a five-lane undivided roadway with large scale retail and strip commercial.

**Ronald Reagan Boulevard**

Ronald Reagan Boulevard is a four-lane divided minor arterial that connects SR 20 to McGinnis Ferry Road.

**SR 141**

SR 141 is a major arterial currently under construction to become a four-lane divided highway from SR 9 to the Fulton County line, which is scheduled for completion by December 2010. Increased commercial development is projected along SR 141 similar to existing developments in North Fulton County. Commercial developments along SR 141 must comply with the Peachtree Parkway Overlay District to ensure quality build standards.

**McGinnis Ferry Road**

McGinnis Ferry Road is a major and minor arterial currently under construction to become a four-lane divided highway from the Gwinnett County line to Sargent Road, which is scheduled for completion by May 2011. This arterial is a major east-west corridor connecting SR 141/ Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and SR 400 to I-85. Continued residential, industrial and commercial development along this corridor has increased traffic volumes above capacity. Forsyth County, in cooperation with GDOT, have plans to widen McGinnis Ferry Road from Sargent Road to SR 400. A new interchange on SR 400 at McGinnis Ferry Road is being designed for the mid-range planning period.

**McFarland Parkway**

McFarland Parkway is a four-lane divided major arterial. McFarland Parkway connects McGinnis Ferry Road and SR 9 with an interchange at SR 400. McFarland Parkway has and will continue to experience rapidly growing traffic volumes as the development of industrial parks such as John's Creek Park, Blue Grass Park and Windward Park continues. Multi-family residential development along with large office parks near SR 400 combines to create high peak hour levels of traffic congestion on a daily basis.

**Old Atlanta Road**

Old Atlanta Road is a two-lane minor arterial providing access from McGinnis Ferry Road to Ronald Reagan Boulevard. There are many major residential developments located on Old Atlanta Road, some of which contain 500 or more homes. Old Atlanta Road runs relatively parallel to SR 141, thus diverting some traffic from that roadway. Old Atlanta Road is being designed to widen into a four-lane median divided roadway from Sharon Road to McFarland Parkway.

**Sharon Road**

Sharon Road is a two-lane minor arterial connecting SR 141 on the west to Old Atlanta Road on the east. As development continues in this portion of Forsyth County, Sharon Road will need to be improved in order to provide better access to SR 141 and SR 400 from residential areas around Old Atlanta Road.

**Mathis Airport Parkway**

Mathis Airport Parkway is a four-lane divided minor arterial connecting SR 141 to Old Atlanta Road.

**Windermere Parkway**

Windermere Parkway is a four-lane divided minor arterial connecting Old Atlanta Road to SR 20.

**SR 306**

SR 306 is a two-lane major arterial connecting SR 400 with the northeast portion of Forsyth County. Currently, the corridor is operating below capacity. However, the section from SR 400 to SR 369 has reached capacity and must be widened.

**SR 369**

SR 369 is a two-lane major arterial extending through Forsyth County from Cherokee County to Hall County, which has a very high percentage of truck traffic. SR 369 from SR 400 to the Hall County line serves many residential communities located along Lake Sidney Lanier. GDOT has programmed a widening improvement to four lanes from SR 400 to Hall County for 2014.

**SR 53**

SR 53 is a two-lane major arterial cutting through the northeast corner of the county. SR 53 primarily provides access between the Cities of Gainesville and Dawsonville and grants access to residential areas along Lake Sidney Lanier.

**Bethelview Road**

Bethelview Road is a two-lane major arterial connecting SR 20 from the north to SR 9 and SR 141 to the south. Widening plans to four lanes have been completed for the entire length of Bethelview Road with the section from SR 9 to Castleberry Road scheduled for construction beginning in July 2011.

**Kelly Mill Road**

Kelly Mill Road is a two-lane minor arterial leading into the City of Cumming from the western portion of the county. Due to extreme horizontal and vertical curves, Kelly Mill Road is currently an operationally substandard road. Increased residential development along this corridor will require Kelly Mill Road to be substantially improved in the future.

**Castleberry Road**

Castleberry Road is a two-lane minor arterial that parallels SR 9 that will continue to see traffic volumes increase as SR 9 becomes more congested. Increased residential development along this corridor will require Castleberry Road to be improved in the future.

**SR 371**

SR 371 is a two-lane major arterial running parallel to Bethelview Road. It provides access between SR 20 to the north and SR 9 to the south. Residential development is expected to continue along the corridor with some commercial development at key intersections.

**Dr. Bramblett Road**

Dr. Bramblett Road is a two-lane minor arterial connecting SR 369 to the north and SR 20 to the south. It is a standard rural road with a significant percentage of truck traffic. Currently, there is no adequate access from SR 369 to SR 20 west of SR 9 in Forsyth County. As development gradually increases in this area, Dr. Bramblett Road will need to be improved to provide better access in this area.

**Collector Road System**

The collector road system will run parallel to SR 400 from McGinnis Ferry Road to SR 306. This road system will provide alternate access between major east-west arterials as well as a potential detour route for SR 400 in the event of emergency closings. The 9.6 mile combined sections from SR 306 to Pilgrim Mill Road, from Bald Ridge Marina Road to Majors Road and from McFarland Parkway to McGinnis Ferry Road are now completed, with the 2.7 mile section from Majors Road to McFarland Parkway in various stages of design or construction.

**Accident Frequency**

The accident history of roadways helps identify intersections and streets where potential safety improvements should be considered. Information provided by the GDOT Office of Traffic Safety and Design show that most accidents occur on state routes, which carry the majority of traffic within the county. When compared with state-wide crash rates, SR 9 between SR 20 and the western county line is higher than the state average. Additionally, signalized intersections in the vicinity of SR 400 and SR 369, SR 20 and SR 141 are locations with elevated accident frequency as illustrated in Figure 3.

In addition to the GDOT data, the Forsyth County Department of Engineering regularly reviews traffic incident reports and enters them into a database, which is used to determine if roadways or intersections warrant further safety studies. Once the studies are completed, projects are identified and prioritized to be incorporated into the major transportation plan or the intersection improvement program for funding.

**Signalization and Signage**

**Signals**

Traffic signals are maintained and operated by state and local jurisdictions. Typically, GDOT is responsible for those signals located on state routes. Forsyth County installed the first county maintained traffic signal in 1998. Table 1 and the succeeding section denote current traffic signals and the jurisdiction or agency responsible for their maintenance.

FIGURE 3: TOP 30 CRASH LOCATIONS FOR FORSYTH COUNTY

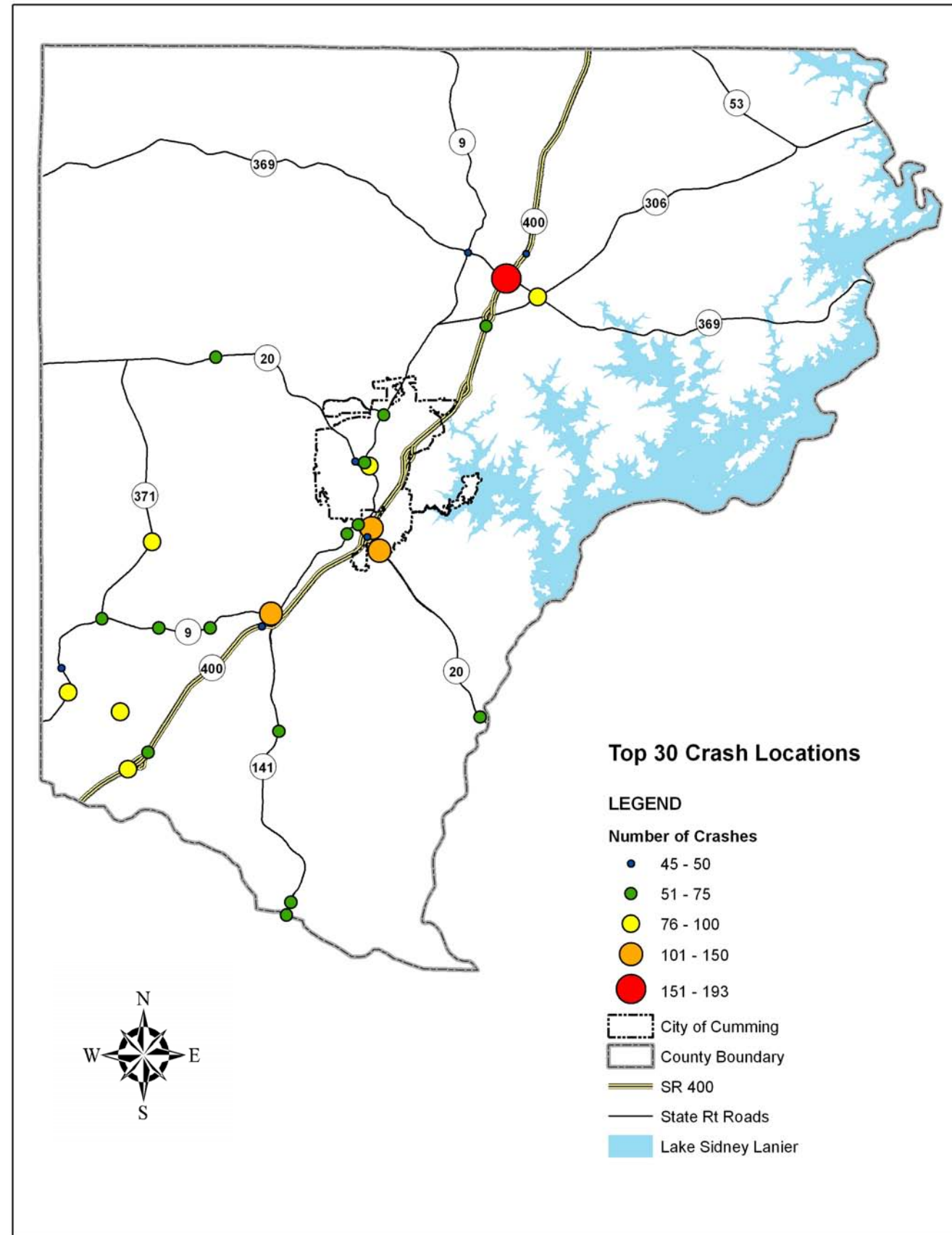


TABLE 1: SIGNALIZATION LOCATIONS WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

1) Bethelview Road @ Big Creek Township	32) McGinnis Ferry Road @ New Boyd Road
2) Bethelview Road @ Castleberry Road	33) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Old Atlanta Road
3) Bethelview Road @ Kelly Mill Road	34) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Old Alpharetta Road
4) Brookwood Road @ Vaughn Drive	35) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Sargent Road
5) Buford Dam Road @ Samples Road	36) Mullinax Road @ Union Hill Road
6) Buford Dam Road @ Nuckolls Road	37) Old Atlanta Road @ James Burgess Road
7) Buford Dam Road @ Sanders Road	38) Old Atlanta Road @ Mathis Airport Parkway
8) Castleberry Road @ Majors Road	39) Old Atlanta Road @ Nichols Road
9) Castleberry Road @ Hutchinson Road	40) Old Atlanta Road @ Sharon Road
10) Drew Campground Road @ Enclave Subdivision	41) Old Atlanta Road @ Westminster Lane
11) Echols Road @ Princeton Square	42) Pilgrim Mill Road @ Holtzclaw Road
12) Freedom Parkway @ Pilgrim Mill Road	43) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Majors Road
13) Freedom Parkway @ Kroger	44) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Brannon Road
14) Hutchinson Road @ North Old Atlanta Road	45) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Haw Creek Drive
15) Market Place Boulevard @ Buford Dam Road	46) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ North Old Atlanta Road
16) Market Place Boulevard @ Taco Mac	47) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Northside Forsyth Drive
17) Market Place Boulevard @ Bald Ridge Marina Road	48) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Old Atlanta Road
18) Market Place Boulevard @ Mary Alice Park Road	49) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Pendley Road
19) Mathis Airport Parkway @ Target	50) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ The Avenue Forsyth
20) McFarland Parkway @ Bluegrass Lakes Parkway	51) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Union Hill Road
21) McFarland Parkway @ Bluegrass Valley Parkway	52) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Unnamed Spur
22) McFarland Parkway @ Curie Drive	53) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Unnamed Spur
23) McFarland Parkway @ McGinnis Ferry Road	54) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Counselors Way
24) McFarland Parkway @ Shiloh Road	55) Ronald Reagan Boulevard @ Jamestown Subdivision
25) McFarland Parkway @ Trotters Parkway	56) Sharon Road @ Kroger
26) McFarland Parkway @ Union Hill Road	57) Spot Road @ Bettis Tribble Gap Road
27) McFarland Parkway @ Winkler Drive	58) Windermere Parkway @ Front Nine Drive
28) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Faircroft Drive	59) Windermere Parkway @ Melody Mizer Lane
29) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Johns Creek Parkway	60) Windermere Parkway @ Old Atlanta Road
30) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Shakerag Farms	61) Windermere Parkway @ Preston Pointe Way
31) McGinnis Ferry Road @ Kohl's	62) Windermere Parkway @ South Forsyth Middle School

*City of Johns Creek*

- McGinnis Ferry Road @ Brookwood Road
- McGinnis Ferry Road @ West John's Crossing
- McGinnis Ferry Road @ Douglas Road
- McGinnis Ferry Road @ Seven Oaks Subdivision

*City of Cumming*

- Market Place Boulevard at Kohls/Target Drive
- Market Place Boulevard at Wal-Mart/Lowes
- Tribble Gap Road @ Elm Street
- Tribble Gap Road @ Cumming Elementary Drive

*City of Alpharetta*

- McGinnis Ferry Road @ Windward Parkway

*GDOT*

- Shakerag @ Blackstock
- Old Atlanta Road @ Bell Road
- New Boyd Road
- Johns Creek Parkway
- Pet Smart/LA Fitness
- Sargent Road

The need for additional signals in Forsyth County is determined by GDOT for state routes and the Forsyth County Engineering Department for county roadways. There are no major issues with the conditions of existing traffic signals in Forsyth County. The county traffic operations specialist is in charge of maintaining the county controlled traffic signals as needed.

**Signage**

A signage program is currently being implemented by the Forsyth County Engineering Department under which signs are inventoried, erected, replaced and repaired when necessary. Signs on state routes are maintained by GDOT.

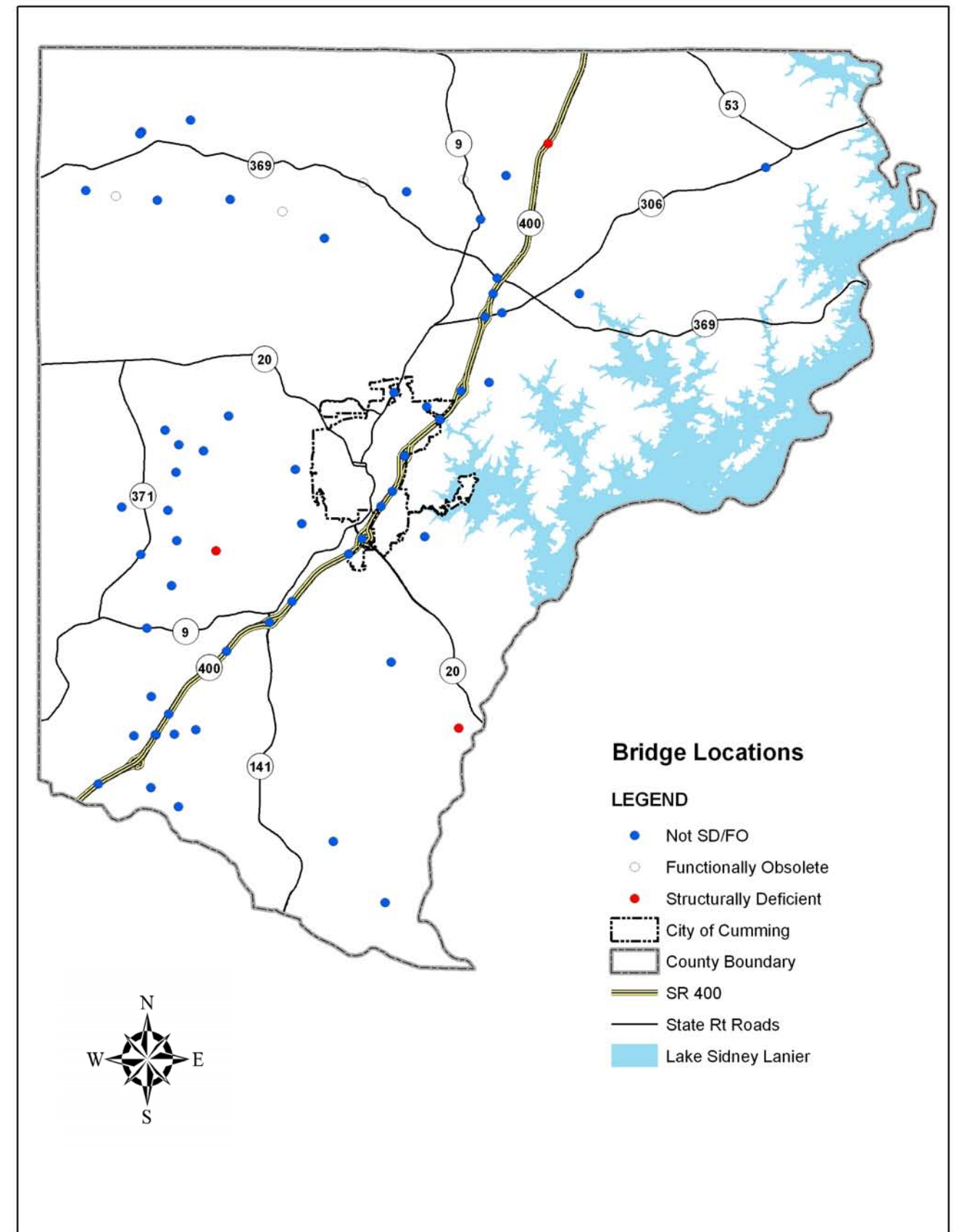
**Bridges**

An inventory of the county's bridges, including their location and condition, is presented in Figure 4. There are 73 existing bridge structures, divided almost equally between bridges and culverts. The GDOT Bridge Maintenance Office prepares a bridge conditions report every two years; the determination as to whether a bridge is structurally deficient is made by this agency. The county owns 12 of the 36 bridges and 24 of the 37 culverts with GDOT possessing the rest except for one culvert owned by the City of Cumming. In regards to evacuation routes in cases of natural disaster, many transport paths are provided throughout the county so the county's bridge system is not significant for this purpose.

**State Transportation Improvement Program and Envision 6**

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was developed under guidelines provid-

FIGURE 4: BRIDGE LOCATIONS WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY





ed by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), passed by Congress in 1998. TEA-21 continued the initiatives started under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The STIP includes proposed highway, bridge, bicycle, pedestrian, transportation enhancement activities and transit projects involving federal funds and non-federally financed regionally significant projects over a three year period.

In June of 2004, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) adopted a new Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary that encompasses 18 metropolitan Atlanta counties, including Forsyth County. The MPO is a federally designated area for regional transportation planning whose objective is to meet air quality standards and program projects per an adopted regional plan. Envision 6 is the current long-range regional transportation plan (RTP) for this MPO; RTPs are adopted by ARC every four years. A six year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is developed from the RTP and is adopted annually, which covers priority transportation projects in the short-term planning period. TIPs are included in the STIP by reference once it is approved by the MPO and the governor. The TIP and the STIP are required to be fiscally balanced so included projects must have funding available or have a reasonable expectation of obtaining funds. Envision 6 specifically focused on roadway congestion as a main concern along with compliance with federal air quality requirements. ARC is in the process of revising Envision 6, entitled Plan 2040, and should be completed by the summer of 2011 with a theme of sustainability through transit solutions and programs that support compact development around multi-modal options.

**Bike and Pedestrian Pathways**

The Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was approved by the state transportation board in the late 1990s, which outlined a network of bicycle routes throughout Georgia. One of the proposed routes, SBR 70 – Northern Crescent, would run through Forsyth County along McGinnis Ferry Road towards the City of Suwanee. Although this route has yet to be approved as an official state bike route, improvements made as part of the road widening process from two to four lanes include sidewalk construction on both sides of the roadway with an installed curb and gutter. The Forsyth County Bicycle and Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan identifies that a 10’ multi-use path along McGinnis Ferry Road will replace the sidewalk on the Forsyth County side once funds are available.

ARC updated their 2002 Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan in 2007. A primary objective of this plan is to provide “safe and convenient bicycling throughout the region.” The region encompasses the 18 counties located within the regional transportation MPO, including Forsyth County and the plan extends through the long-range planning period of 2030. See Table 2 for prioritized projects identified in the plan that pertain to Forsyth County.

TABLE 2: ARC BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

Road Name	From	To	Facility Need	Priority Tier
McGinnis Ferry Road	Fulton County	Johns Creek Parkway	Add Paved Shoulders	I
SR 20	Gwinnett County	Atlanta Road	Add Paved Shoulders	I
SR 9	Fulton County	North Old Atlanta Road	Add Paved Shoulders	II

TABLE 2: ARC BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECT PRIORITIZATION continued

Road Name	From	To	Facility Need	Priority Tier
McGinnis Ferry Road	Johns Creek Parkway	Sargent Road	Detailed Corridor Study Needed	III
SR 20	Buford Highway	Downtown Cumming	Detailed Corridor Study Needed	IV
SR 9	North Old Atlanta Road	SR 20	Detailed Corridor Study Needed	IV

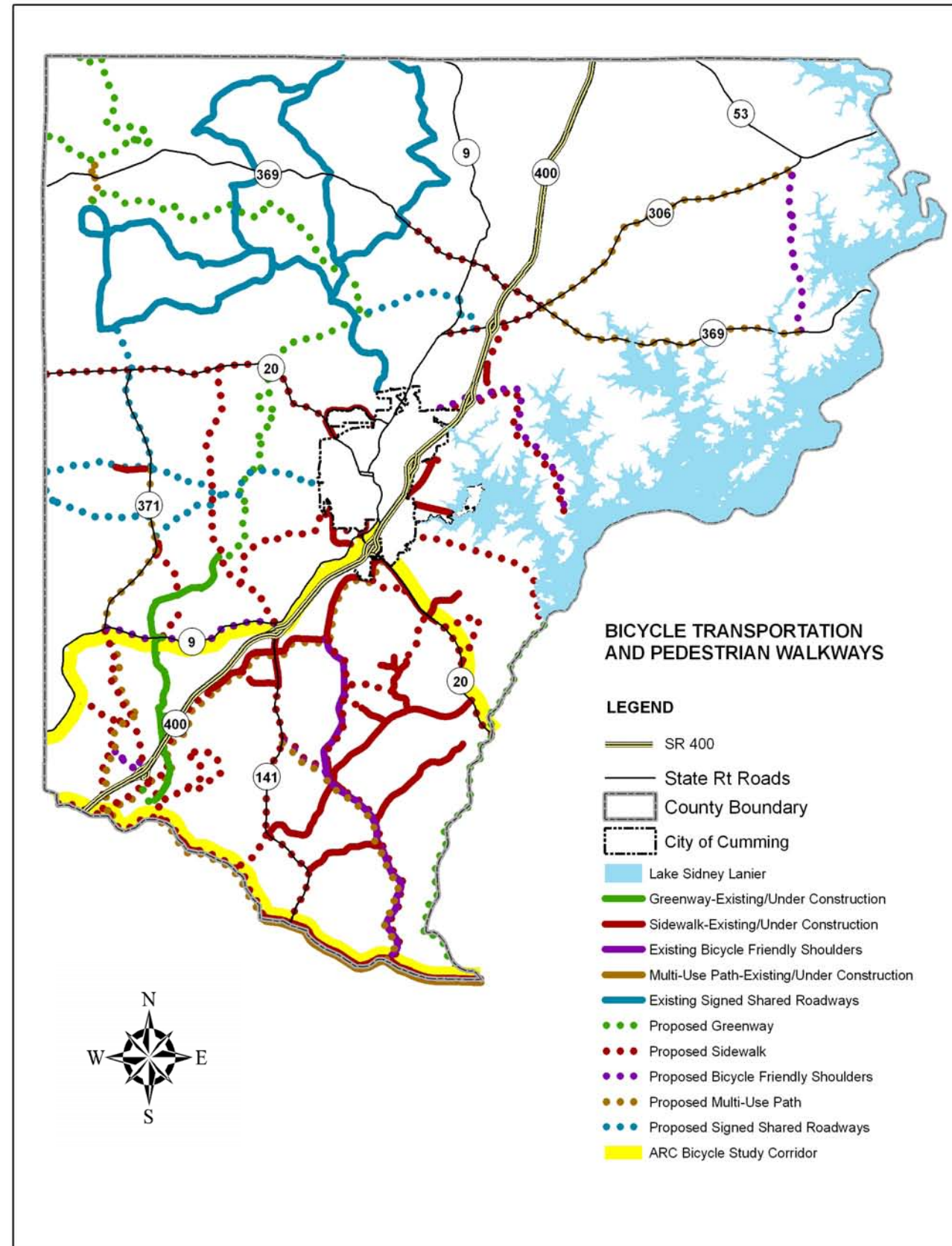
The county adopted a Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan in April of 2002, which was updated in June 2008. This plan seeks to provide a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that will connect destination points thereby expanding transportation options for area residents. Plan objectives include the encouragement of sidewalk construction within, and adjacent to, proposed developments in order to link multiple land uses as well as identifying areas that could feasibly join surrounding jurisdictions’ bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Projects for the short, mid and long-range planning periods are outlined as funding is made available through federal, state and local options. The existing and proposed projects identified in the plan are shown in Figure 5.

**Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)**

This program was created by SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation bill, whose goal is to increase bicycling and walking to school for children in grades K-8. Federal funding is available for activities related to awareness, safety and planning as well as infrastructure projects. These funds do not require matching amounts and may be used towards sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and crossing enhancements, on-and off-street bike or pedestrian facilities and traffic diversion improvements. Applications are accepted biannually and awards that go up to \$500,000 per application per funding cycle are available on a competitive basis. In order to qualify, a project must be located within a two mile radius of a public or private school and be inside the public right-of-way. The school needs to be actively involved in the planning or educational processes related to the SRTS program and must be enrolled in the Georgia SRTS Resource Center. Projects that benefit more than a single school are encouraged in the application process.

There are currently six schools within the county that have enrolled in the Georgia SRTS Resource Center: Haw Creek Elementary, Mashburn Elementary, Sharon Elementary, Vickery Creek Elementary, Vickery Creek Middle and Lakeside Middle. Recent educational activities include school sponsorship of a national SRTS course and a Georgia Walk to School day event. In terms of projects, SPLOST funds have contributed to a sidewalk installation on the west side of James Burgess Road, which connects with Sharon Elementary and future funding will go towards a sidewalk project on Melody Mizer Lane that will tie in with Daves Creek Elementary. In May 2010, GDOT announced that Vickery Creek Elementary and Middle shall receive a SRTS grant just under a half million dollars for the design and construction of sidewalks and footpaths for both facilities.

FIGURE 5: EXISTING AND PROPOSED BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PATHS AND PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



### Significant Parking Facilities

The park and ride lot on Old Atlanta Road in the City of Cumming is the terminus for a Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) commuter express bus that travels to the City of Atlanta, offering transportation alternatives including the use of the lot for carpools. See Figure 6 for parking area locations currently within the county.

### Public Transportation

There is a public commuter choice within Forsyth County, the Xpress 400 bus, which offers service between the City of Cumming and the North Springs MARTA rail station near Perimeter Center as well as direct service to downtown Atlanta; there is also a reverse commute option between the City of Cumming and North Springs. This service is available during the week and is provided through a partnership with GRTA that works in cooperation with twelve metropolitan Atlanta counties to supply an alternative to single occupancy vehicle transportation. The Xpress service plan was adopted as a component of GRTA's 2003 Regional Transit Action Plan. The route within Forsyth County was added during the summer of 2004. Operational funding is provided by the state and participating counties. The advantage to this regional service is not only a measure towards air quality improvement, but the increase of quality of life for residents within the metropolitan area. The service affords passengers luxury coaches and individuals may enroll in the Guaranteed Ride Home program if they must return home due to illness, mandatory and unscheduled overtime or other unavoidable situations that cannot be accommodated by the usual bus schedule. In addition, passengers may bring their bike aboard.

As an option to traditional public transportation, the county has created a Dial-A-Ride program to meet the needs of county residents. The Dial-A-Ride program operates five vans that are equipped with wheelchair lifts. The program does not have predetermined routes; rather, passengers make appointments for rides up to thirty days in advance. Dial-A-Ride is operated by the Forsyth County Department of Fleet Services and is funded by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, GDOT and passenger fees.

### Other Modes of Transportation

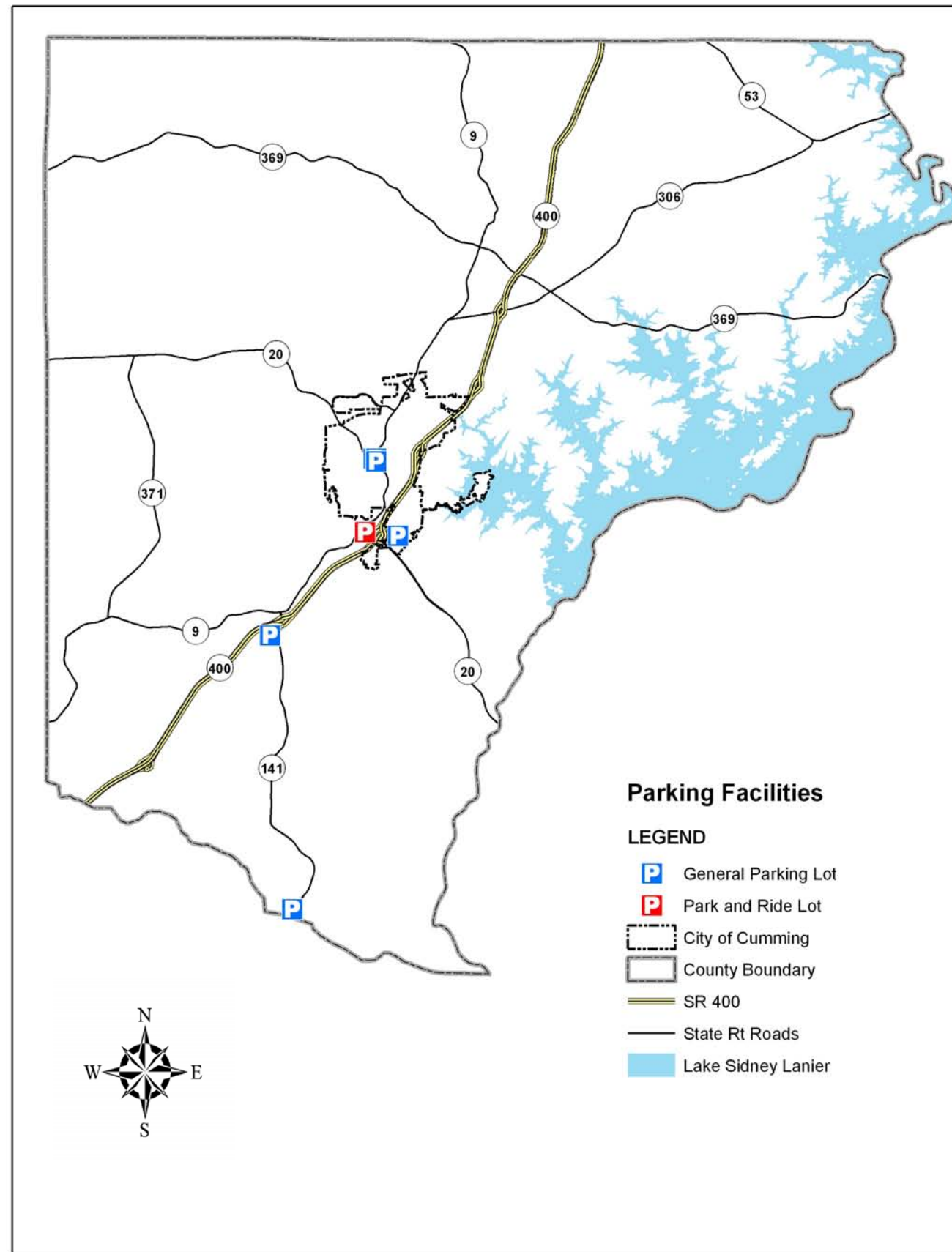
There are no freight or passenger rail lines in Forsyth County. There are currently three private airfields in the southern portion of the county, which are not included in GDOT's Georgia Airport System Plan. These private facilities as listed in Table 3 can accommodate small aircraft. Based on existing land use patterns, the expansion of these facilities is unlikely.

TABLE 3: AIRPORTS WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

Name	Location	Runway
Mathis Airport	South of Cumming	1800' Paved Runway
Ebenezer Airport	South of SR 369 in eastern portion of county	1400' Grass Runway
Stoney Point Airfield	5 miles Southwest of Cumming	2500' Grass Runway

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

FIGURE 6: SIGNIFICANT PARKING AREAS OF FORSYTH COUNTY



Forsyth County has a state and locally designated freight truck transportation network as outlined in the county's truck ordinance. This ordinance specifies that motor vehicles in excess of 36,000 pounds in gross weight or having an overall length over thirty feet, except vehicles designed to carry passengers or those with more than six wheels, are prohibited from using roadways except designated truck routes apart from when the terminal, parking lot, repair garage, headquarters or place of pickup or delivery of the restricted motor vehicle is on a non-designated roadway. The ordinance identifies nine state truck routes and nine county routes as shown in Table 4 and Figure 7.

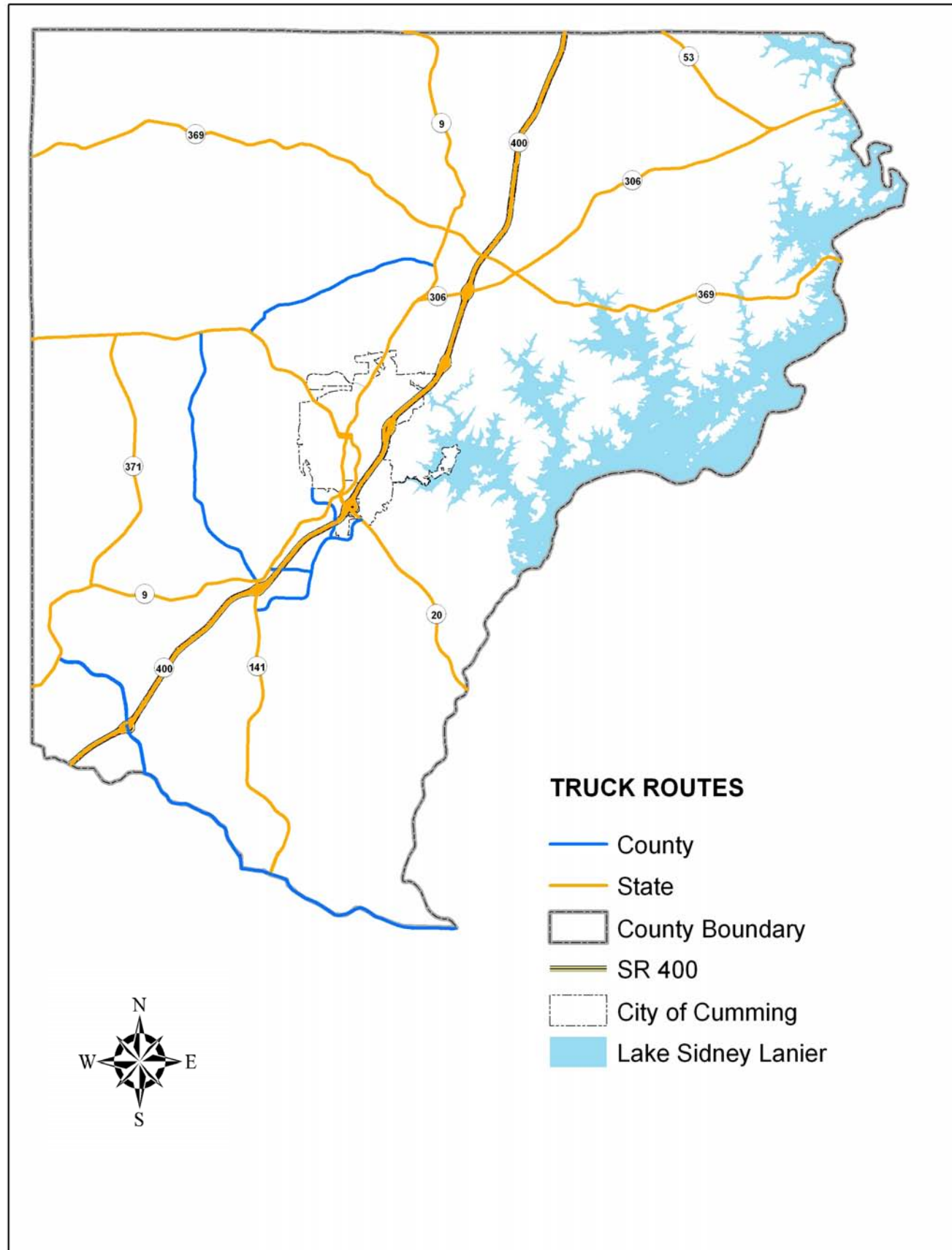
TABLE 4: TRUCK ROUTES WITHIN FORSYTH COUNTY

State Truck Routes		
Route	From	To
SR 9	Fulton County	Dawson County
SR 20*	Gwinnett County	Cherokee County
SR 53	Hall County	Dawson County
SR 141	Fulton County	SR 9
SR 306	SR 9	SR 53
SR 306	SR 20	SR 9
SR 369	Hall County	Cherokee County
SR 371	SR 9	SR 20
SR 400**	Fulton County	Dawson County
County Truck Routes		
Route	From	To
Dr. Bramblett Road	Spot Road	Spot Road Connector
McGinnis Ferry Road	Gwinnett County	McFarland Road
McFarland Road	McGinnis Ferry Road	SR 9
North Old Atlanta Road	Hutchinson Road	Ronald Reagan Boulevard
Memorial Boulevard	SR 9	SR 20
Pendley Road	SR 9	Ronald Reagan Boulevard
Ronald Reagan Boulevard	SR 141	SR 20
Spot Road	SR 9	Dr. Bramblett Road
Spot Road Connector	Dr. Bramblett Road	SR 20

\*Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) Network Route

\*\*National Network (NN) Truck Route

FIGURE 7: TRUCK ROUTES OF FORSYTH COUNTY



ARC completed a regional freight mobility plan in 2008 and the second phase is currently in progress and should be completed in 2010. The development of a regional truck route network entitled the Atlanta Strategic Truck Route Master Plan (ASTRoMaP) is the core component of this additional phase. The purpose is to ensure inter-jurisdictional routes provide continuous means to move freight throughout the metropolitan Atlanta region given the area's prominence as an inland distribution center.

#### Evacuation Routes

Evacuation routes and procedures are established by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). The primary route within Forsyth County is SR 400 with other state routes, SR 9, SR 20, SR 306, SR 369 and SR 141, being appropriate to serve the same function in cases of emergency pertaining to severe weather, hazardous material leaks and other exceptional circumstances.

#### Assessment

Roadway segments and intersections are designed to carry a specific number of vehicles within an explicit time period under prevailing conditions. This is referred to as the design capacity for a given roadway segment or intersection. Once the roadway or intersection capacity is calculated and the actual number of vehicles using a roadway segment or intersection is determined, it is possible to develop a measure of efficiency for the segment or intersection. This measure is expressed as the roadway Level of Service (LOS). The LOS is a concept to evaluate the operation of a roadway or intersection using a range of values, from "A" as the best to "F" as the worst.

#### Levels of Service (LOS)

LOS is defined as a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream, and their perception by motorists and/or passengers.

Level of Service A represents free flow conditions. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream. Freedom to select desired speeds and to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely high.

Level of Service B is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream from LOS "A."

Level of Service C is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream.

Level of Service D represents high density, but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience.

Level of Service E represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult. Comfort and convenience levels are

extremely poor, and driver frustration is generally high.

Level of Service F is used to define forced or breakdown flows. This condition exists when the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can traverse the point.

Often, a community will “adopt” a level of service to represent a policy goal with respect to the operation of its roadway facilities. Essentially, the adopted level of service expresses, in general terms, how well a community wants its roadway system to function.

**LOS Analysis Methodology**

To account for the difference in functional classification and location and character of the roadway, which affects capacity, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) assumed volume-to-capacity ranges for LOS determination. Using traffic data from the ARC regional travel demand model and Forsyth County’s travel demand model as well as GDOT count stations, volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios were calculated. Once the v/c ratios were calculated for the existing roadway segments, they were compared to the ARC approved v/c ranges for level of service. Using this method, roadway segments having capacity deficiencies, defined as v/c ratios exceeding 1.00, were identified.

Table 5 provides a description of service volumes that were used in the major transportation plan update. It should be noted that the given service volumes are appropriate for planning level analysis. For more detailed operational analysis, these volumes should be adjusted depending on such conditions as variable lateral clearances, horizontal and vertical deficiencies, intersection delay and many other factors.

TABLE 5: LEVEL OF SERVICE VOLUMES

Facility Type	LOS A	LOS B	LOS C	LOS D	LOS E
<b>Freeway</b>					
4 lanes	20,900	32,800	49,200	62,600	74,500
6 lanes	32,100	50,400	75,600	96,200	114,500
8 lanes	43,800	68,800	103,200	131,300	156,300
10 lanes	54,700	86,000	129,000	164,200	195,400
<b>Major Arterials</b>					
2 undivided	—	10,800	15,600	16,600	16,600
4 divided	—	23,500	33,200	35,000	35,000
6 divided	—	35,800	49,900	52,500	52,500
<b>Minor Arterials</b>					
2 undivided	—	—	9,900	14,900	16,200
4 divided	—	—	22,900	32,500	34,300
6 divided	—	—	35,500	48,900	51,700
<b>Collectors</b>					
2 undivided	—	—	8,600	14,600	16,000
4 divided	—	—	19,800	31,700	33,900
6 divided	—	—	30,800	47,800	51,000

TABLE 5: LEVEL OF SERVICE VOLUMES continued

Facility Type	LOS A	LOS B	LOS C	LOS D	LOS E
<b>Local Streets</b>					
2 undivided	—	—	4,800	10,900	11,900
4 divided	—	—	11,600	23,800	25,400

Note: Blank lines indicate that the level of service cannot be obtained on a corridor basis

The major transportation plan recommends the use of LOS “D” or better as the desirable LOS for Forsyth County’s road network. This LOS is more realistic and therefore affordable compared to LOS “C” used in jurisdictions outside the metropolitan Atlanta region and is consistent with other urban communities. Most counties with high rates of growth in traffic like Forsyth County have adopted LOS “D” as the threshold level of service when evaluating roadway segments. LOS “D” reflects stable flow and traffic volumes under capacity, but recognizes the financial realities of infrastructure investment in growth areas. The last update to the county transportation plan attempted to provide a LOS “D” or better on every roadway segment throughout Forsyth County for both present and future conditions. The plan recommendations include the improvement of major and minor arterials with a LOS of “E” or lower as a first priority, followed by collector roads at LOS “E”, then other local roads. Table 6 and 7 below identify deficient road segments with a LOS of “E” or “F” for 2010 and 2030 respectively.

TABLE 6: DEFICIENT ROAD SEGMENTS BY THE YEAR 2010  
FORYSTH COUNTY

Name of Road	From/To	Estimated # of Lanes Needed
SR 400	McFarland Parkway/SR 20	2
McGinnis Ferry Road	SR 400/Christopher Robin Road	2
Old Alpharetta Road	McGinnis Ferry Road/SR 141	2
SR 141	McGinnis Ferry Road/Mathis Airport Road	2
Bethelview Road	SR 400/Kelly Mill Road	2
Sharon Road/Old Atlanta Road	SR 141/James Burgess Road	2
James Burgess Road	Old Atlanta Road/Nichols Drive	2

TABLE 6: DEFICIENT ROAD SEGMENTS BY THE YEAR 2010 continued  
FORYSTH COUNTY

Name of Road	From/To	Estimated # of Lanes Needed
SR 371	SR 9/Dressage Way	2
SR 9	McFarland Parkway/SR 371	2
SR 20	Cherokee County Line/Gwinnett County Line	2
Kelly Mill Road	Bethelview Road/SR 9	2
SR 306	SR 53/Hall County Line	2
SR 369	SR 9/Hall County Line	2

TABLE 7: DEFICIENT ROAD SEGMENTS BY THE YEAR 2030  
FORYSTH COUNTY

Name of Road	From/To	Estimated # of Lanes Needed
SR 400	Fulton County Line/Dawson County Line	2
McGinnis Ferry Road	Fulton County Line/Gwinnett County Line	2
SR 141	Fulton County Line/SR 400	2
James Burgess Road	Old Atlanta Road/SR 20	2
SR 20	Cherokee County Line/Gwinnett County Line	2
Sharon Road/Old Atlanta Road	SR 141/James Burgess Road	2
McFarland Parkway	SR 400/SR 9	2
SR 9	McFarland Parkway/SR 371	2
SR 9	Dunn Road/Dawson Forest Road	2

TABLE 7: DEFICIENT ROAD SEGMENTS BY THE YEAR 2030 continued  
FORYSTH COUNTY

Name of Road	From/To	Estimated # of Lanes Needed
Kelly Mill Road/Bald Ridge Marina Road	SR 371/Lake Lanier	2
Old Alpharetta Road	McFarland Parkway/SR 141	2
SR 371	SR 9/Dressage Way	2
SR 369	Cherokee County Line/Old Federal Road	2
SR 369	Dr. Bramblett Road/John Burruss Road	2
SR 369	SR 9/Hall County Line	2
Bannister Road	SR 369/Mockingbird Road	2
SR 53	Dawson County Line/SR 306	2
Pea Ridge Road	SR 53/Jot-Em-Down Rd	2
Jot-Em-Down Road	SR 400/Wallace Wood Road	2
Buford Dam Road	SR 9/Lake Lanier	2
Mary Alice Park Road	SR 400/Lake Lanier	2
Sanders Road	Buford Dam Road/SR 20	2
Bethelview Road	SR 400/Drew Road	2

The Forsyth County transportation system will require improvements to accommodate anticipated population and economic growth over the planning horizon. The county has utilized a travel demand forecasting model to identify specific improvements that will be required in order to provide a safe and efficient transportation network and enhance mobility in the future. The improvements are classified between short term, intermediate and long term. The recommended road improvements for 2030 are shown in Table 8 and Figure 8.

TABLE 8: RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FOR FORYSTH COUNTY

Project Type	Location	Status
<b>Atlanta Regional Commission RTP</b>		
Roadway Operational Upgrades TIP Intersection Improvements	SR 141 (Peachtree Parkway)	Programmed
Bridge Capacity RTP Bridge Improvements	SR 369 (Browns Bridge Road)	Long-Range
Bridge Upgrade TIP Bridge Improvements	SR 369 (Matt Highway)	Programmed
Bridge Capacity RTP Bridge Improvements	SR 369 (Browns Bridge Road)	Long-Range
Roadway Operational Upgrades TIP Intersection Improvements	SR 9 Intersections at Hamby Road, Post/Mullinax Roads, Castleberry Road, Majors/Shiloh Roads, Spot Road, and A.C. Smith Road. SR 20 Intersection with Tribble Road	Under Construction
Roadway Operational Upgrades TIP Intersection Improvements	SR 369 Intersections at Dr. Bramblett Road, Hendrix Road, Holtzclaw Road, Shady Grove/Elrod Roads, Jot-Em-Down/Bethel Roads And Waldrip Road	Under Construction
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 20	Programmed
Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility	Big Creek Greenway Extension: Phase I (FY 2008 Construction Funds to be Transferred To PI #0006586 - Fowler Park From SR 9 to McGinnis Ferry Road - PHASE I)	Completed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 9 (Atlanta Highway): Segment 1	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 9 (Atlanta Highway): Segment 2	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 9 (Atlanta Highway): Segment 3	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 9 (Atlanta Highway): Segment 4	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 9 (Atlanta Road/ Pilgrim Mill Road): Segment 5	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Bethelview Road: SR 9 to Castleberry Road	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Bethelview Road: Castleberry Road to SR 20	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Sharon Road	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Old Atlanta Road	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 400 Flexible Shoulder Lanes	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 400	Long-Range
Studies	Metro Arterial Connector (MAC) Corridor Development Study	Programmed
Managed Lanes (Auto/Bus)	SR 400 HOV Lanes	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 371 (Post Road)	Long-Range
Roadway Operational Upgrades	Kelly Mill Road	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Castleberry Road	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 20 (Canton Highway / Cumming Highway): Segment 1	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 20 (Buford Highway): Segment 4	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 369 (Browns Bridge Road): Segment 1	Programmed

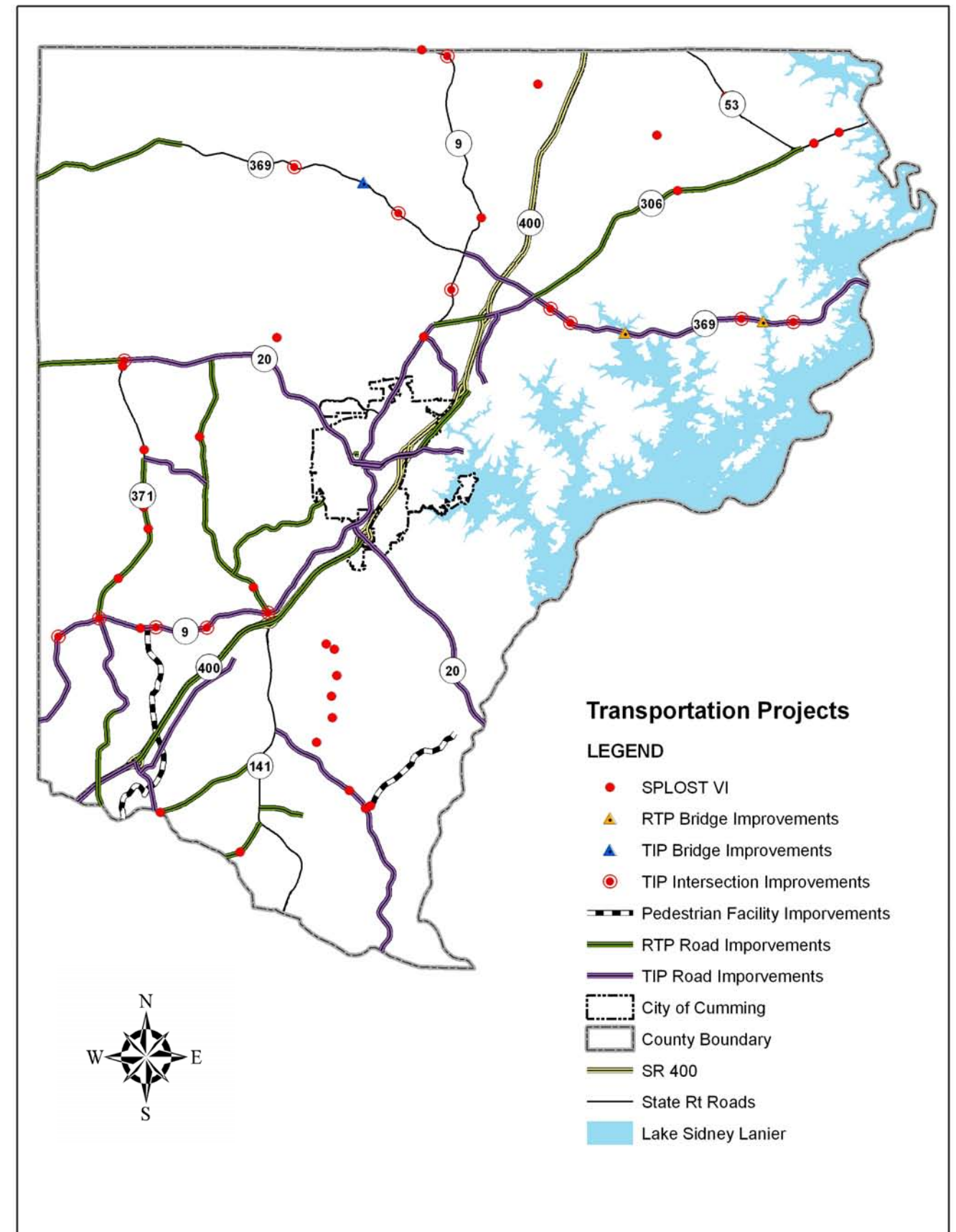
TABLE 8: RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FOR FORYSTH COUNTY  
continued

Project Type	Location	Status
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 369 (Browns Bridge Road): Segment 2	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Union Hill Road: Segment 1	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Union Hill Road / Mullinax Road: Segment 2	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	McFarland Parkway: Segment 1	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Brookwood Road	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Church Street Extension	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Marketplace Boulevard: Segment 2	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Marketplace Boulevard: Segment 3	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Marketplace Boulevard: Segment 2	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Bagley Drive	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	Old Alpharetta Road	Long-Range
Roadway Operational Upgrades	SR 369	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 306 (Keith Bridge Road): Segment 1	Long-Range
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 306 (Keith Bridge Road): Segment 2	Programmed
General Purpose Roadway Capacity	SR 306 (Keith Bridge Road): Segment 3	Long-Range
Pedestrian Facility	James Burgess Road	Under Construction
Roadway Maintenance / Operations	SR 9 (Atlanta Highway) Repaving	Programmed
Roadway Maintenance / Operations	Forsyth County ARRA Resurfacing Program	Programmed
<b>SPLOST VI</b>		
Right/Left turn lanes-Signalization if warranted	Brookwood Road-Intersection/Lakeheath Drive @ Evonvale Glen	2010 Completion
Intersection Improvement	Old Atlanta Road @ Nichols Road	2011 Completion
Intersection Improvement	Old Atlanta Road @ James Burgess Road	2011 Completion
Traffic Signal Installation	Bethelview Road & Bennett Parkway	2010 Completion
Traffic Signal Installation	McFarland Road @ Old Alpharetta Road	Complete
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Dr. Bramblett Road @ Spot Road	2010 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Hopewell Road @ Jot-em-Down Road	2011 Completion
Complete - Right/Left Turn Lanes	James Burgess Road @ Southers Circle	Complete
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Jot-em-Down Road @ Pearidge Road and Mayfield Drive	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Old Atlanta Road @ Brannon Road	2011 Completion
Local - Right/Left Turn Lanes	Old Atlanta Road @ Daves Creek Road	TBD
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Old Atlanta Road @ Gilbert Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Old Atlanta Road @ Ivey Falls Drive	2011 Completion
Complete - Right/Left Turn Lanes	Old Atlanta Road @ Melrose Trace	Complete
Right/Left Turn Lanes	Old Atlanta Road @ Northern Oaks Drive	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 306 @ Mayfield Road	2011 Completion

TABLE 8: RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FOR FORYSTH COUNTY  
continued

Project Type	Location	Status
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 371 @ Bentley Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 371 @ Dickerson Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 371 @ Drew Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 371 @ Evans Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 371 @ Pittman Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 53 @ Chestatee Heights Road	2011 Completion
Left Turn Lane	SR 53 @ Pearidge Road	Complete
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 53 @ Truman Mtn Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 9 @ Antioch Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 9 @ Bannister Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 9 @ Fowler Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	SR 9 @ Hopewell Road	2011 Completion
Right/Left Turn Lanes, Signalization if warranted	Bethelview Road @ Drew Road	2010 Completion

FIGURE 8: RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FOR FORSYTH COUNTY





In addition to expanding existing transportation facilities, the county has also identified specific actions to optimize the utilization of existing transportation infrastructure. Existing plans have identified high occupancy vehicle lanes, intelligent transportation systems and bicycle and pedestrian transportation as potential areas to improve transportation efficiency. The alternatives listed can improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system, but will not provide the needed mobility without system expansions.

High occupancy vehicle lanes can potentially reduce congestion and vehicular demands on roadways by reducing single occupancy vehicle use. Commuters using multiple occupancy means of travel, from carpools and vanpools to commuter buses, are encouraged by the travel time advantages provided. The introduction of high occupancy vehicle lanes should be further examined Xpress bus pick-up and drop-off points. The existing park and ride lot in Forsyth County is heavily used.

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) utilize technology to improve the safety and efficiency of the roadway system without increasing the physical size of roadway facilities. ITS strategies are used to relay information to travelers concerning congestion and incidents, as well as aid emergency vehicles in efficient operation, and provide emergency operational and medical assistance to motorists. Quick detection and better management of incidents minimizes congestion and enhances the overall performance of the network. Currently, the NAVIGATOR and HERO systems within metropolitan Atlanta include SR 400 as far north as Fulton County.

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities serve as an integral element of a multi-modal transportation network. Improved systems for bicycle and pedestrian transportation can also provide a reduction in congestion and vehicular use on roadways. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan identifies approximately 58 miles of roadways that could potentially be converted to sign shared roadways. Sign shared roadways provide an opportunity to provide preferred routes for cyclists, with relatively little financial infusion. The physical improvements to an existing road include bicycle safe drainage grates and bridge expansion joints, smooth pavements, signal timing and detector systems that respond to bicycles, and signage to alert motorists that bicycles are likely to be sharing a travel lane.

#### Land Use

Information on population densities and the location of employment and shopping centers is necessary for effective transportation planning. The identification and study of population densities is important because minimum density thresholds are needed to support selected types of transportation strategies, such as bus transit. Forsyth County is forecast to continue to increase population numbers significantly over the long-range planning period.

Based on an analysis of existing land use classifications, the long-range transportation plan has recommended the continued use and possible expansion of the Forsyth County Dial-A-Ride program. Fixed route bus service was not considered an effective use of funds due to the low population density projected for Forsyth County.

#### Developments of Regional Impact (DRI)

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 sanctioned the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to determine review procedures for large scale development projects that meet identified thresholds so as to assess potential effects on local public infrastructure and services. Since Forsyth County is under the jurisdiction of GRTA, approval of DRIs is required by this agency in consultation with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC). Local governments are not allowed per the state to take any action involving approval regarding an identified DRI project during the review process. After an impact evaluation is performed and comments are received from affected parties, GRTA in conjunction with GMRC, makes a determination as to whether the proposal is in the best interest of the region and notifies the county of its decision. Typically, if a DRI is approved, additional recommendations are forwarded to the county by GRTA. Once this is completed, the county is in the position to ultimately decide whether the project shall be approved, approved with conditions or denied. If the county chooses to move forward with a DRI proposal that has been determined to not be in the best interest of the region, state and federal funds disbursement for programmed transportation projects may be affected.

#### Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)

The Livable Centers Initiative is a program developed by ARC that supports linkages between transportation and land use planning to facilitate sustainable, pedestrian accessible communities. Forsyth County adopted the McFarland - Stoney Point LCI in January 2006. The study area is located in the southwest portion of the county on the east side of SR 400 just north of Fulton County. The goals of the study focus on determining methods to connect multiple land uses while emphasizing pedestrian facilities and improving access to transit choices. In addition, goals to expand housing and commercial venues are identified through the encouragement of mixed use developments and the establishment of activity centers that would be linked through mobility options. Specifically, LCI recommendations include the expansion of pedestrian facilities, identification of an Xpress bus park and ride lot at the McFarland interchange, addition of an interchange at McGinnis Ferry Road and the construction of new roadways as well as transportation improvements on existing corridors. For example, roadway improvements consist of the widening of previously programmed projects such as McGinnis Ferry Road, McFarland Parkway and Union Hill Road plus the inclusion of traffic calming devices along Shiloh Road and Stoney Point Road. The plan relies on the coordination of land use and transportation programming with concurrent policy changes for implementation by means of appropriate funding over a long-range period to realize the vision for this study area.

#### SR 400 Corridor Study

The SR 400 Corridor Study final report, released in March of 2009, was prepared by ARCADIS for GDOT. This study examined SR 400 from SR 306 to SR 60, which encompasses portions of Forsyth, Dawson and Lumpkin Counties. The purpose of the study was to analyze the existing transportation conditions, operations and limited-access potential of the corridor; assess future transportation needs of the corridor; identify and prioritize projects in the study area that address safety and congestion, enhance mobility and promote economic development. The study team relied on measurable objectives related to existing and future traffic conditions, safety, land use, environmental conditions and demographics. The methodology involved assessment of existing

conditions and future travel demands that led to the development of a strategic implementation plan. The process involved input from the public, stakeholders and agencies to assist the study team in identifying and incorporating the issues, needs, concerns and desires of these groups.

Forecasting future transportation needs was a vital part of the study. To identify these needs, economic development, measured in terms of population and employment, was converted into vehicle trips and travel patterns. Population and total employment growth estimates were developed based on recent trends as reported in Georgia Department of Community Affairs' data files. A future year planning horizon of 2030 was used to forecast demographic data and travel patterns. A base year of 2005 became a benchmark to compare the differences between current and future year travel patterns. Forecasted population and employment growth will result in traffic volumes on SR 400 that exceed available capacity with 2030 traffic volumes expected to more than double on SR 400. The number of total daily trips that end in the study area is expected to increase from 1.7 million to 6.2 million, representing an increase of 262 percent. In fact, the future year 2030 no-build analysis indicates that most existing side streets along SR 400 will not have the capacity to handle the projected growth in the study area. Based on future year 2030 traffic volumes, operating conditions through the entire corridor will provide a failing level of service (LOS "F").

Safety is also a vital concern when assessing the transportation needs of the corridor. The study team analyzed historical crash data to compare SR 400 with similar highway facilities in the State of Georgia. According to the data, SR 400 fares worse with regard to total accident rate, but better in terms of crash severity. The portion of the corridor from SR 369 to Settingdown Road in Forsyth County was identified by the study team as the most critical section in the corridor in terms of safety, based on the number of fatal accidents, the severity ratio and the total accident rate. Another important consideration when assessing the safety and future transportation needs of a corridor is the number of at-grade access points. At-grade intersections and driveways increase the number of potential vehicle conflict points, which reduce mobility, capacity and safety in any corridor. Of the 119 access points in the SR 400 corridor, 52 percent are driveways, 47 percent are at-grade intersections and 1 percent is at an interchange. In addition, a cursory aerial review of driveway spacing shows that most driveways on SR 400 are approximately 450 to 475 feet apart, which does not meet GDOT access management requirements. The final determination of the study team is that the number of driveways and cross streets providing access must be limited to enhance corridor operations and improve safety in the study area.

Based on the assessment, the study's long-range recommendation is to upgrade SR 400 to an eight-lane, limited-access freeway with six general-purpose lanes throughout and two managed lanes south of SR 53. The corridor may include frontage roads or local roads as necessary to connect cross streets and provide access to existing developments. The new freeway would extend over the length of the entire study corridor. Access to and from SR 400 would be provided via grade-separated interchanges at key crossroads. The study identified potential locations of four new interchanges connecting to the managed lanes as well as five over- or under-passes. It is also envisioned that parallel roadways may be necessary in certain locations as a means to replace access to existing developments. The total corridor plan is estimated to cost \$1 billion. The key strategies for advancing the project focus on establishing the concept design, purchasing necessary rights-of-way in advance of the project and protecting corridor access.

# Intergovernmental Coordination



## Introduction

Existing intergovernmental coordination with other local jurisdictions can have profound impacts on the success of county planning policy implementation. The purpose of this component is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing organizational processes since multiple governmental entities are involved in local, state and regional planning activities.

## Inventory

### Adjacent Local Governments

Forsyth County is bordered by Gwinnett County, the City of Sugar Hill, Fulton County, the City of Alpharetta and the City of Milton to the south; Cherokee County and the City of Milton to the west; Dawson County to the north; and Hall County to the east. The City of Cumming is located in the center of the county and is the only incorporated area within the county boundary. On-going coordination with surrounding local government entities will be essential to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

### City of Cumming

Coordination with the City of Cumming is outlined in the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). Specific areas covered in the SDS for Forsyth County and the City of Cumming include the following:

- Water and Wastewater
- Land Use Compatibility and Provisions for Dispute Resolution
- Development Permitting and Inspections
- Building Permitting and Inspections
- Soil Erosion Permitting and Enforcement
- Economic Development
- Emergency Management
- Fire Services
- Law Enforcement
- Road and Bridges
- Recreation and Parks
- Municipal Court
- Stormwater Management
- Tax Assessment and Collection
- Garbage Pick-Up
- Housing Authority
- Alcohol Licenses
- Business Licenses
- General Administration and Finance
- Libraries

### City of Alpharetta, City of Johns Creek, City of Milton, Fulton County, Cherokee County and Dawson County

Coordination with the City of Alpharetta, City of Johns Creek, City of Milton, Fulton County,

Cherokee County and Dawson County is vital to comprehensive planning for the county. Through the Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, these local governments actively participate in the review process for any development project that qualifies as a development of regional impact (DRI). Additionally, the Forsyth County Department of Planning and Development will notify adjacent jurisdictions prior to acting on rezoning requests that are bordering another local government. The notification package will include the details of the request and procedures for feedback submission.

### City of Sugar Hill, City of Suwanee, Gwinnett County and Hall County

The Chattahoochee River or Lake Sidney Lanier provides a natural buffer between Forsyth County and the City of Sugar Hill, the City of Suwanee, Gwinnett County and Hall County. However, coordination remains critical for planning processes. Through the Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, these local governments actively participate in the review process for any development project that qualifies as a DRI.

### School Boards

#### Forsyth County Board of Education

The Forsyth County Board of Education is the governing body of the Forsyth County School System. The Board's key role is the legislation of school system policies, which are implemented under the guidance of the school superintendent. The provision of quality educational opportunities is an indispensable service provided in Forsyth County. Joint planning efforts include Board involvement in the review of all residential rezoning requests that is carried out through the Forsyth County Department of Planning and Development. Continued cooperation with the Board will be maintained as new families with school aged children relocate to the county into the long-range planning period.

### Special Districts and Authorities

#### City of Cumming Water and Sewer Service Area

As identified in the Service Delivery Strategy for Forsyth County and the City of Cumming, the water and sewer district for the City of Cumming extends into unincorporated areas of Forsyth County. The exchange of data on land use and other planning related information provides sufficient coordination between the county and the City of Cumming regarding the water and sewer service area.

#### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Buford, is responsible for the management of Lake Sidney Lanier. The Corps' role in the management of the lake includes a multitude of responsibilities that result in collaborative exchange with Forsyth County concerning this regional reservoir that also operates as an important recreational facility for metropolitan Atlanta. Forsyth County currently leases three Corps properties for public recreational purposes along the lake including one campground.

#### Forsyth County Water and Sewerage Authority

The Forsyth County Water and Sewerage Authority was created in 1996 to construct, remodel

and maintain facilities related to water and sewer services through revenue bonds or other funds. The Authority is composed of six members including the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners and the director of the Forsyth County Water and Sewer Department. Since 1998, the Authority has invested over \$175 million towards water and sewer infrastructure facilities within the county.

### Development Authorities

#### Development Authority of Forsyth County

The Development Authority of Forsyth County is a statutory authority that functions under the regulatory power of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners. This seven member authority facilitates financing new and expanded businesses by issuing industrial revenue bonds.

#### Cumming Downtown Development Authority

The Cumming Downtown Development Authority, composed of seven members, was established in 1972 for the purpose of developing and promoting commerce, industry and employment opportunities for the city.

#### Lanier Joint Development Authority

The Lanier Joint Development Authority is a regional partnership with Forsyth County, Hall County and Cherokee County that offers job tax credits for companies, new or expanding, that hire new employees through a program administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

#### Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is comprised of businesses in the county, professionals, local leaders and other interested individuals who have joined together to promote local economic development by marketing Forsyth County as a successful work-live-play community. Chamber staff also serves as the principal economic development representative for the Development Authority of Forsyth County. Interaction between the Chamber and the county is typically focused on development applications and the provision of county services.

### Federal, State and Regional Organizations

#### Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) is a district created in 1962 under provisions of the Georgia Enabling Law. GMRC includes Forsyth, Dawson, Hall, Lumpkin, Banks, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union and White Counties. It seeks to foster appropriate growth within the Georgia Mountains Region by advocating wise resource management and providing necessary technical assistance in developing local and regional objectives, plans and programs. Work items include both regional and local planning projects, ranging from transportation, recreation, historic preservation, environmental resource assessment, population and economic analysis. In addition, GRMC participates in the evaluation of local comprehensive and regional plans, DRIs and development reviews as authorized by the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA).

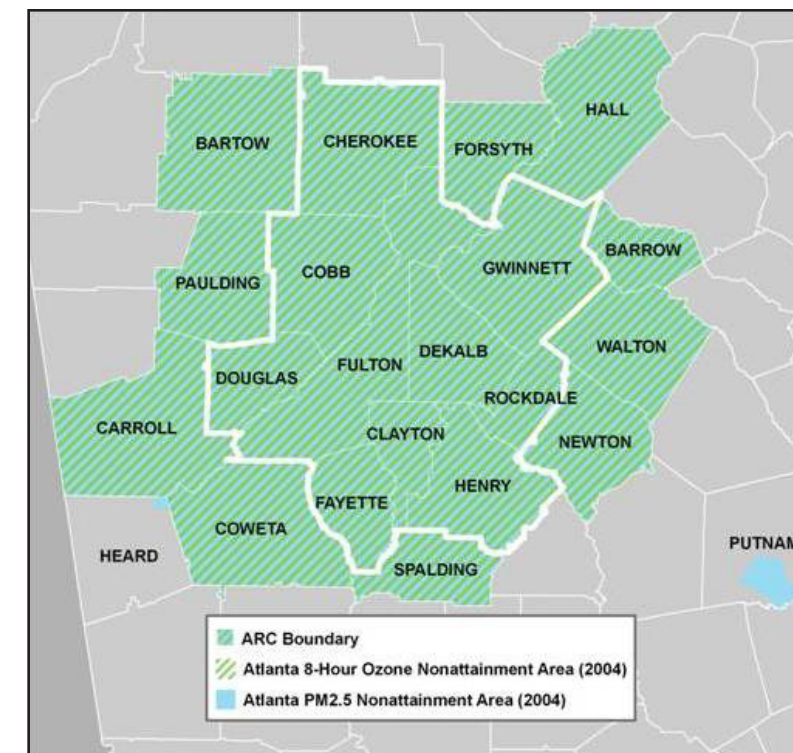
#### Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) performs regional planning and coordination for

the City of Atlanta and ten surrounding counties. The commission is dedicated to unifying the region's collective resources through professional planning initiatives, the provision of research and analytical data concerning the metropolitan area and the involvement of the community in collaborative partnerships. These partnerships are intended to encourage economic development that is compatible with the environment while fostering leadership development that focuses on regional solutions.

While Forsyth County is not a member of the ARC, the county's actions can have significant implications for metropolitan Atlanta. In 1990, due to the passage of the Clean Air Act Amendments, the Governor of Georgia reported to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that thirteen counties within the vicinity of Atlanta would be designated as non-attainment areas for ground level ozone. Forsyth County was one of three non-ARC members included as part of the Atlanta non-attainment area for violating the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone. In 2005, a revised eight-hour vs. one-hour ozone standard was enacted so the non-attainment area was expanded to include a total of twenty counties as illustrated in Figure 1. Additionally, a new fine particulate matter standard was endorsed. These twenty counties must be included when ARC runs its computer-based travel demand model to ensure the regional transportation plan meets federal air quality standards. Forsyth County is therefore part of an eighteen county Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that is federally designated for regional transportation planning. Another collaborative relationship between the county and ARC involves the Transportation and Air Quality Committee (TAQC), which is the transportation policy committee for the ARC Board and represents the MPO; it is composed of 32 members including the chairman from the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.

FIGURE 1: AIR QUALITY NON-ATTAINMENT AREAS OF METROPOLITAN ATLANTA



Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

**Georgia Regional Transportation Authority**

In April of 1999, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) was created as a result of community leadership concern over the withdrawal of federal funds related to metropolitan Atlanta’s failure to meet federal air quality standards. GRTA’s primary role is to plan and implement regional transportation facilities and services. GRTA is responsible for those counties in the State of Georgia that have been designated as non-attainment under the federal Clean Air Act Amendments standards. Currently, there are twenty counties in the metropolitan Atlanta area that carry non-attainment status. Those counties are Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Rockdale, Spaulding and Walton.

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) are major developments likely to have effects outside of the jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish procedures for intergovernmental review of DRIs. These procedures are intended to improve communication between affected governments and to provide assessment of potential impacts before conflicts occur. GRTA’s legislation requires that it review DRIs within its’ jurisdiction. The purpose of GRTA’s review is to approve or object to the use of state and federal funds to establish transportation services and access that may be required as a result of a DRI. The goals of the review are to promote conformity with regional transportation plans and federal air quality standards while allocating resources in a proficient manner.

GRTA’s vision statement includes the following:

- Plan and implement a transportation system that is multi-modal, seamless and accessible to all citizens
- Encourage land use policies that promote efficient use of infrastructure investments
- Operate within a decision making framework that values public participation and connects transportation choices, land use and the overall quality of life
- Serve the best interests of the region by working in cooperation with other agencies and governments that are involved in planning and transportation
- Measure effectiveness in improving air quality, traffic, accessibility and land use

**Georgia Department of Transportation**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) plans, constructs and maintains the state’s roads and bridges. Responsibilities also include the provision of planning and financial support for other transportation means such as mass transit and airports. Close coordination with GDOT is required to implement the county’s transportation plan as well as the Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan. Forsyth County will work cooperatively with GDOT throughout the planning horizon.

**Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

The mission statement of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is “to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia’s natural, historic, and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.” Specifically, the Watershed Protection

Branch is responsible for permitting the discharge of treated wastewater and water withdrawals from surface and ground sources as well as managing stormwater discharges. Forsyth County complies with and enforces state regulations pertaining to local permitting and shall work collaboratively with DNR as the county applies for necessary permits to maintain and expand local infrastructure.

**Georgia Department of Community Affairs**

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is responsible for operating a variety of community enhancement programs, encouraging economic development and promoting housing programs in addition to sustainable development. DCA accomplishes these roles through operating a host of state and federal grant programs; serving as the state’s lead agency in housing finance and development; offering incentives and tools for economic and employment growth assistance; providing comprehensive planning, technical and research support; and functioning as the lead agency for the state’s solid waste reduction efforts. Forsyth County will remain working closely with DCA in order to maintain the county’s qualified local government status.

**Appalachian Regional Commission**

Forsyth County is located within the jurisdiction of the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Appalachian Regional Commission is an economic development agency whose mission is to create opportunities for sustainable development and improved quality of life within Appalachia. The Appalachian Regional Commission was established by Congress in 1965 and is comprised of governors from thirteen states and a federal co-chair. Local governments participate through multi-jurisdictional development authorities. This federal, state and local partnership supports economic and social development in the Appalachian Region through funding assistance.

The Appalachian Regional Commission undertakes projects that address the four goals identified by Appalachian Regional Commission’s strategic plan:

- Increase job opportunities and per capita income
- Strengthen the capacity to compete in the global economy
- Develop and improve infrastructure for economic competitiveness
- Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce isolation

To meet these goals, the Appalachian Regional Commission helps fund projects such as education, workforce training and leadership programs, business development, highway construction, water and sewer system construction and expansion of healthcare resources.

**U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency**

The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides flood insurance rate maps to Forsyth County since the county participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, which allows national flood insurance availability for properties within jurisdictions that partake in the program. The county’s Engineering Department provides FEMA floodplain map information to citizens for verification of floodplain locations based on special flood hazard areas and the zones most at risk. In addition, the county is prepared for emergencies related to flooding through hazard mitigation planning via the Forsyth County Emergency Management Agency; a current hazard mitigation plan is a condition to receive FEMA non-emergency disaster funding assistance.

**University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service**

Forsyth County works jointly with the University of Georgia to bring research information and community assistance in the areas of agriculture, 4-H and youth development as well as family and consumer sciences.

**Other Programs and Activities**

**Local Government Service Delivery Strategy Act**

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 efficiently, effectively and responsively; minimize any duplication and competition among local governments and authorities providing local services; and provide a method to resolve disputes among service providers regarding service delivery, funding equity and land use.

The Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) addresses the items below:

- Identification of all services presently provided
- Identification of which local government or authority will be responsible for providing which service in what area of the county in the future
- Identification of funding sources for all services
- Identification of intergovernmental contracts, ordinances, resolutions, etc. to be used in implementing the strategy, including existing contracts
- If a duplication of services is found, an explanation for its existence and a timetable for the elimination of any duplicate services
- Elimination of conflicts in land use plans
- Resolution of land use classification disputes arising over property to be annexed

The SDS manual for the City of Cumming and Forsyth County was adopted on May 4, 1998, with update certifications being executed in late fall of 2003. The manual has provided Forsyth County and the City of Cumming an opportunity to reach agreements concerning service deliveries in a cost efficient manner. The SDS is concurrently being updated with the Comprehensive Plan to fulfill DCA requirements.

The SDS serves an important role in local land use coordination between Forsyth County and the City of Cumming. Specific policies related to annexation, extraterritorial provision of water and sewer and land use compatibility are included in the document.

**Annexation**

The SDS component pertaining to land use compatibility and provisions for dispute resolution between the City of Cumming and Forsyth County provides a method of communication regarding zoning or annexation. This agreement offers a procedural guide to resolve land use classification conflicts that may arise between these governmental entities resulting from proposed rezonings or annexation of those lands that serve as boundaries between the two jurisdictions. The process is comprised of notification via certified mail and a corresponding response of ‘no objection.’ ‘no objection - stipulating certain conditions or objection.’ A response of ‘no objection’ will allow the proposed action to move forward as planned. A response of ‘no objection -

stipulating certain conditions’ or ‘objection’ would result in modifications of the proposed action or an agreement to attend a joint meeting to further discuss the zoning or annexation. If a joint meeting is necessitated, but agreement is still not reached, a series of work sessions not to exceed thirty days shall occur. If an agreement fails to emerge through the work session discussions, both parties would retain the option of litigation.

**Extraterritorial Provision of Water and Sewer**

The planning staffs for Forsyth County and the City of Cumming have completed a process of data sharing to ensure that extraterritorial water and sewer extensions and improvements are coordinated with the “receiving” jurisdiction. Improvements to the geographic information systems at each local entity have helped to streamline this process.

**Service Compatibility**

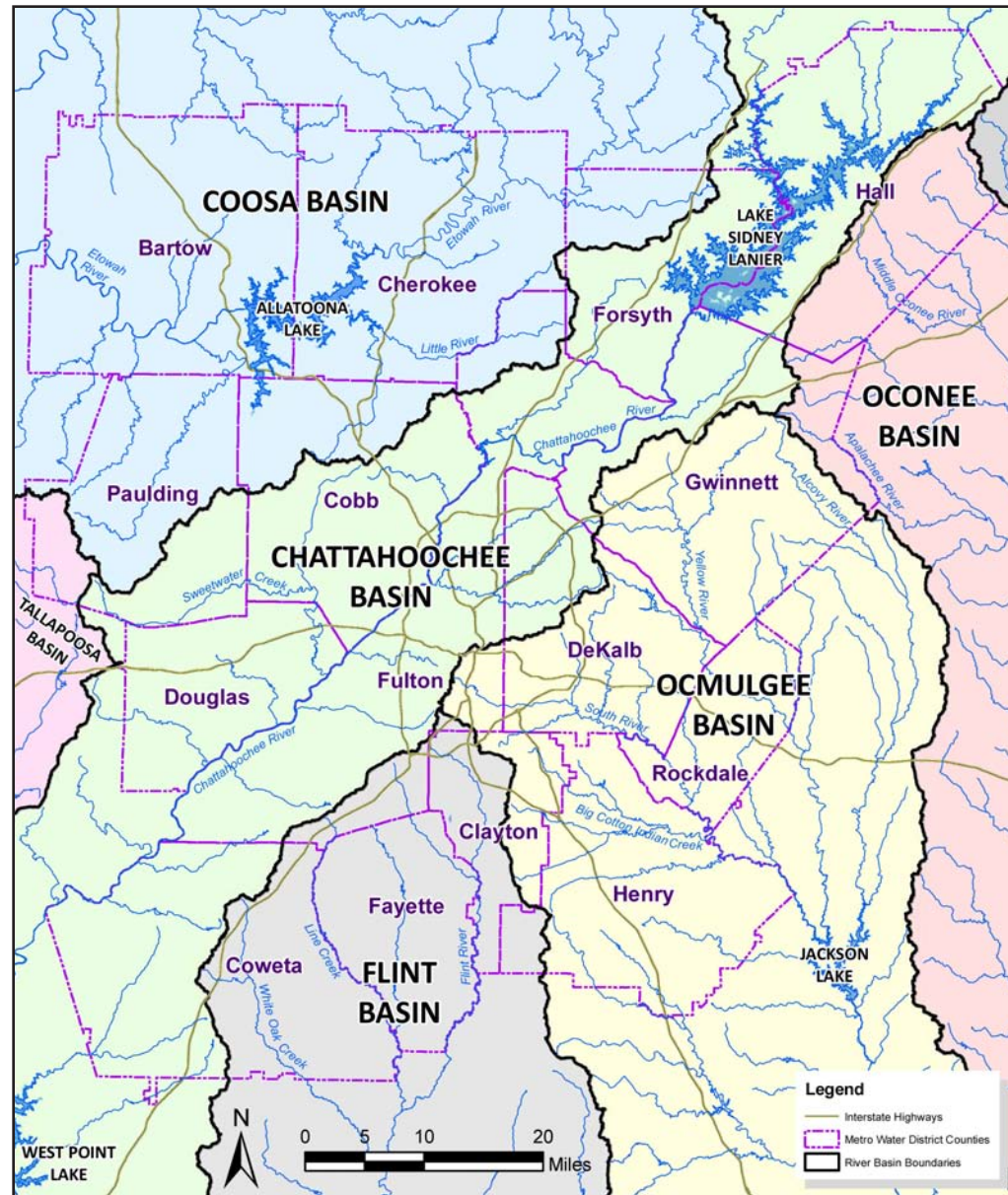
The county services inventoried in the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan do not exceed those identified in the SDS. Additionally, the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan and the SDS are consistent in regards to the delineated service areas of Forsyth County and the City of Cumming.

**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District**

With limited water resources and an estimated population of nearly 5.5 million, metropolitan Atlanta faces increasing challenges in managing its vital water resources. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (the District) was established by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 to address the pressing need for comprehensive water management in the 15-county area of metropolitan Atlanta. The District is a planning entity dedicated to developing comprehensive regional and watershed-specific plans to be implemented by the local governments of Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale Counties. These counties lie within the boundaries of six major river basins including the Chattahoochee (includes the Lake Lanier sub-basin), Coosa (includes the Etowah sub-basin), Flint, Ocmulgee, Oconee and Tallapoosa as shown in Figure 2.

The District is required to prepare three long-term plans: (1) The District-wide Watershed Management Plan; (2) The Long-Term Wastewater Management Plan; and (3) The Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan. The District originally adopted these plans in 2003, which were later updated in 2009. The purpose of these plans is to protect water quality and watershed resources while minimizing consequences that could jeopardize this protection by development activities. To date, Forsyth County has adopted ordinances for post-development stormwater management, floodplain management, stream buffer protection, illicit non-stormwater discharges and litter control. In addition, the county is continuing towards the completion of mapping 100-year future-conditions floodplain to support floodplain management initiatives. These requisites are in compliance with the District’s local management measures. Compliance is required and enforced through the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD); this division is responsible for permitting new or expanded water withdrawals or wastewater discharges and pollutant sources through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Fulfillment of the District’s measures is also necessitated in order to receive any grant or loans through the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority.

FIGURE 2: THE DISTRICT'S MAJOR RIVER BASINS



Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Watershed Management Plan

### Watershed Management Plan

The Watershed Management Plan (WMP) provides strategies and recommendations for successful watershed management, the control of stormwater runoff and the safeguard of water quality; it also delineates tasks and implementation targets for local, state and regional agencies. The overall goal of the WMP is to meet and maintain water quality standards and watershed health within the District. The WMP builds upon existing watershed and stormwater management planning efforts created in response to a variety of federal and state regulations prior to the inception of the WMP.

Responsibilities for implementation of the WMP are divided among the local governments, the

District and the State of Georgia. Local governments are responsible for implementing most of the recommendations due to the direct connection between stormwater management, land use planning decisions, and infrastructure development and maintenance. The updated plan outlines a local government implementation schedule which includes specific tasks across eight functional categories including legal authority, watershed planning, land development, asset management, pollution prevention, watershed conditions assessment, education and public awareness, and resource specific measures. New action items related to construction erosion and sedimentation control, endangered species protection and comprehensive land use planning have been incorporated as part of the implementation requirements.

### The Wastewater Management Plan

The Wastewater Management Plan (WWMP) presents a 25-year plan to address service needs and to balance the uses of water resources. By law, this plan will be reviewed annually by the District and updated at least every five years. Wastewater flows within the District are projected to increase by two-thirds during the planning horizon. To address this level of need, the WWMP anticipates a future of high performance treatment facilities that produce reusable water. The WWMP focuses attention on the management of public wastewater collection systems and privately owned septic systems while including policies and programs to foster coordinated wastewater management decisions among the local governments in the District.

The WWMP is the first comprehensive regional approach to be developed that addresses wastewater management in metropolitan north Georgia. The overall goal is to meet projected wastewater management needs without compromising environmental requisites, thereby aiding EPD, the agency responsible for issuing permits related to wastewater discharges. The WWMP supports the District's companion plans for water supply and conservation as well as watershed management by providing a linked strategy for meeting future water demands while protecting water quality.

While the District is responsible for creating and updating the WWMP, it is implemented by the local jurisdictions that own and operate the wastewater management systems. These local jurisdictions need to integrate the WWMP into their own local sewer system master plans. Following the framework and goals established by the District, all jurisdictions should also use their local wastewater management plan to refine the WWMP. While flexibility is included in the District plan, it is the local jurisdictions' responsibility to evaluate options and to determine their associated benefits and costs. Local jurisdictions should ensure that wastewater services are developed cost effectively, with a long-term regional perspective while providing good customer service. Specific implementation actions for the local level include:

- Participation in the District including coordination with the Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan
- Ownership and operation of local wastewater systems that manage, collect and treat
- Planning and construction of wastewater infrastructure
- Coordination of local comprehensive plans with local wastewater master plans
- Planning for long-term use of septic systems or decentralized systems if the future land use plan indicates growth that is not served by a local wastewater provider



**The Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan**

The Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan (WSP) addresses water service needs and the balance of water uses. By law, the WSP will be reviewed annually by the District with updates every five years. The first update included revisions to three of the conservation measures and the addition of two requirements including the installation of high efficient toilets and urinals in government buildings and the requirement of new car washes to recycle water.

The WSP anticipates a future of intensive management of water demands and growing reliance upon recycled water. A program of aggressive water conservation is paramount as well as continued development of small reservoirs and sharing of supplies. The WSP includes new policies and programs to foster coordinated water supply and conservation decisions among the local governments in the District. The WSP outlines a balanced, long-term water management strategy for meeting future water needs while protecting water quality through 2035 and preserving water resources in all five major river basins.

The WSP is dependent on the following five strategies to meet water demands over the next three decades, and to provide a small amount of supply in excess of demand to allow for contingencies that may arise over the planning period.

- Intensification of water conservation efforts
- Construction of three water supply reservoirs that are in the planning stages plus the continued investigation of three additional water supply reservoirs
- Construction of two new storage facilities to drought proof and extend existing supply sources
- Construction of six new water treatment plants and expansion of twenty-eight existing water treatment plants through a phased approach
- Return of reclaimed water to Lake Sidney Lanier and Lake Allatoona for future indirect potable reuse

The following describes the local government actions required to implement the recommendations of the WSP:

- Own and operate local water systems that manage water supply, treatment, distribution and water conservation programs
- Plan and construct water supply infrastructure for water supply
- Participate in the District including coordination with the Wastewater Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan
- Implement programs to improve water system interconnections

**Community Watershed Assessment and Watershed Management Plan**

In 2000, a watershed assessment and management plan was produced as part of an inter-governmental agreement between Forsyth County, Hall County and the City of Gainesville. The purpose of the document was to evaluate the environmental health of streams and to develop a management plan to control pollution in selected watersheds. This collaborative approach was designed to promote consistency in the water quality and biological data, the pollutant runoff and loading estimates, water quality modeling and ultimate watershed management strategies.

EPD requires municipalities to conduct watershed assessments as part of the permitting process for new wastewater discharges and surface water withdrawals. To obtain a new permit, the county or municipality is required to develop a management plan that addresses nonpoint source pollution within the service area of the water or wastewater treatment plants. The four main components of a watershed assessment are:

- **Characterization:** Evaluate the current conditions within the watershed by collecting water quality and biological data to determine the health of the streams
- **Modeling:** Develop a predictive water quality model that is used to evaluate the management scenarios developed for the watershed management plan
- **Watershed Management:** Evaluate a set of management scenarios (combinations of land use and best management practices [BMPs]) and recommend the best scenario for managing water resources within the watershed
- **Public Involvement:** Gather input from the public and use the information to shape the development of the management plan

The plan summarizes the findings for all four components as they pertain to Forsyth County’s surface water resources and addresses impacts from both point sources, such as water pollution control plants and industrial discharges, and nonpoint sources such as stormwater runoff from urbanization.

**Transportation Requirements for Non-Attainment Areas**

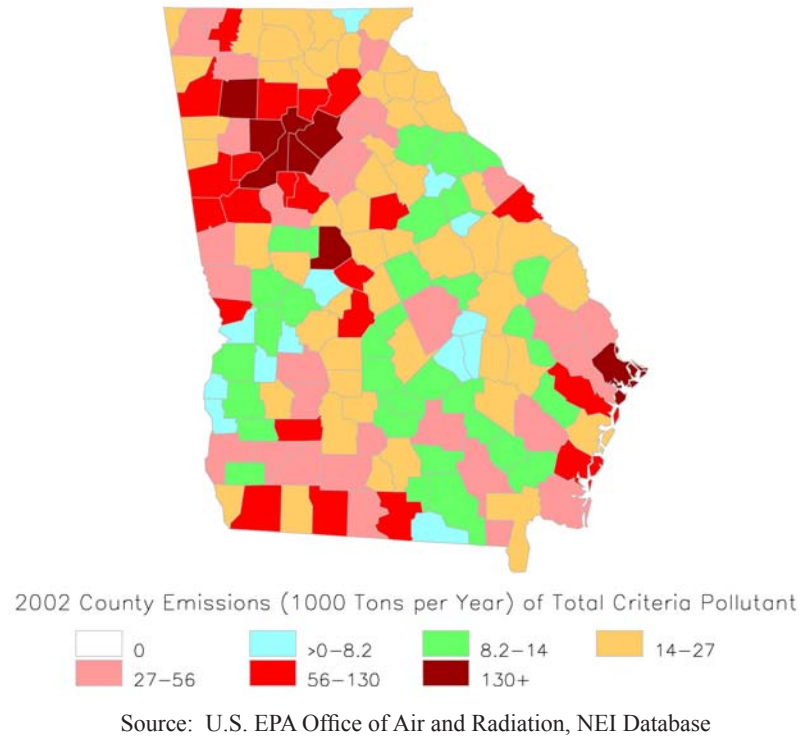
The State of Georgia is located in Region 4 of the air quality control regions established by the Clean Air Act. EPD determined the thirteen county metropolitan Atlanta area exceeded the acceptable ambient air levels for ozone (O3) in 1999 and placed these counties in the ‘serious’ class for non-attainment. This classification was upgraded to ‘severe’ in September of 2003. Forsyth County was one of the thirteen counties falling under this non-attainment status. In 2005, a revised eight-hour versus one-hour ozone standard was enacted so the non-attainment area was expanded to include a total of twenty counties as illustrated in Figure 1. Additionally, a new fine particulate matter standard became part of air quality assessment measures.

Ozone is a chemical reaction between intense sunlight, NOx (nitrous oxides) and VOC (volatile organic compounds), more commonly known as smog. NOx comes from a variety of sources, a major one being the combustion engine such as those found in automobiles, lawnmowers and boats. Automobiles are a significant contributor to NOx emissions and a moderate contributor to VOC emissions. While other sources contribute to NOx and VOC emissions, a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on a day-to-day basis would help in reducing the O3 levels in Forsyth County. Forsyth County confirmed the importance of the reduction of VMT in the major transportation plan update in 2006. In this plan, Forsyth County states it will measure its progress toward attainment of air quality by examining the change in VMT. The logical inference, therefore, is a reduction in VMT will result in a reduction of O3 levels. See Figure 3 for an emissions level comparison between counties within the state.

To reduce O3 levels, the county will adhere to state and federal mandates, but there are many policies and programs Forsyth County can implement to lower O3 levels through a reduction in VMT by county residents. These policies and programs involve a mix of long-range land use

planning, intergovernmental and interagency cooperation and collaboration between developers, residents and county officials.

FIGURE 3: COUNTY EMISSIONS MAP 2002  
STATE OF GEORGIA



The first method to consider is mass transit, both inter- and intra-county. It is unlikely the county will ever be able to sustain a fixed route bus transit service due to the density level needed to support this type of transit service. Though an intra-county fixed route bus service is unlikely, the regional express bus system is a successful rapid transit option that has been in place in the county since 2004. By participating in an inter-county bus service program, the county can reduce the number of VMT per day by offering commuters an option other than personal vehicles.

In conjunction with mass transit, Forsyth County works with developers and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to set aside land for transportation alternatives or factor in multi-modal alternatives during project design. By continuing to address transportation issues at the earliest possible stage of development, the county, developers, citizens and outside agencies can work together to ensure development plans include methods of reducing VMT.

Another method the county utilizes to reduce VOC and NOx emissions, is the land use planning process. In a properly designed mixed use development, a developer can integrate commercial, residential, recreational and institutional uses to limit VMT. If the county and developers work together, projects can be designed to enable residents to walk or bike to retail areas and institutional uses such as schools and churches. Through connecting different land uses, it is anti-

ipated the VMT will be reduced as compared to VMT when diverse uses are separated per zoning requirements.

The county may also reduce O3 levels through its working relationship with GRTA. Any project qualifying as a development of regional impact (DRI) must go through a GRTA review. GRTA's recommendations and conditions for project approval help the county identify transportation and design improvements that can reduce the VMT for new projects being developed.

Finally, to further reduce VMT, the county needs to expand its pedestrian and bicycle circulation system through the implementation of the Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan, updated in 2008.

#### Lanier Technical College

An intergovernmental agreement is one of the most common methods for neighboring or overlapping jurisdictions to cooperate and achieve mutual goals, such as securing the resources necessary to provide facilities. These agreements take a variety of forms, although most commonly involve a formal contract for services between two jurisdictions under which one government agrees to provide a service to another government for an agreed price, such as the agreement between Forsyth County and Lanier Technical College regarding the Lanier Technical College & Forsyth Conference Center. As the result of this agreement, Forsyth County gains the use of a 14,000 square foot civic auditorium for a \$1 million payment for 25 years. The conference facility groundbreaking occurred in 2008 on Lanier's Forsyth campus and should open in the latter part of 2010.

In July 2010, the Board of Commissioners approved an amendment to the intergovernmental agreement to change the name of the facility from the Lanier Technical Economic Development Facility & Forsyth Civic Auditorium to the Lanier Technical College & Forsyth Conference Center. The intergovernmental agreement was previously amended so that use of the facility takes place on a sliding scale for 25 years. During the first 15 years, the county can use it for three days per month. For the next five years, it drops to two days per month and in the final five years of the agreement, the county receives the right to use the facility for twelve days per year.

Forsyth County's \$1 million contribution was provided by SPLOST funds established by a referendum, which was approved by county voters. Use of the facility is on a first-come, first-served basis and the county can make reservations up to two years in advance for public meetings or other functions. The civic auditorium is also expected to be rented by organizations such as the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber of Commerce and other groups involved with the facilitation of economic development and adult education activities.

**RESOLUTION OF SUBMITTAL  
BY  
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF  
FORSYTH COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**WHEREAS,** Forsyth County, Georgia, has completed the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program associated with the pending full Comprehensive Plan Update; and

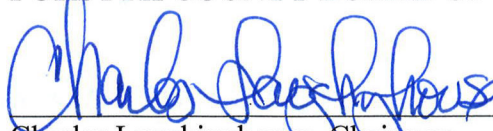
**WHEREAS,** this Community Assessment and Community Participation Program was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and


**WHEREAS,** a public hearing was held on September 2, 2010, before the County Board of Commissioners; and

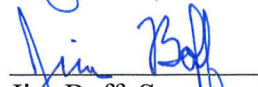
**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED,** that the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners does hereby submit the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for regional review, as per the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

This 2nd day of September, 2010.

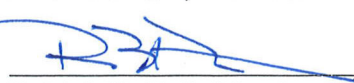
**FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Laughinghouse, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Harrell, Vice Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Boff, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian R. Tam, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick B. Bell, Member



ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk to the Board