

Community Assessment and Participation Program
Hart County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2030



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Written by
Jon Caime, Hart County Administrator
and the
Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center

Community Assessment and Participation Program *Hart County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2030*

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Executive Summary

Hart County is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan, the document that collects facts, information and public perspectives of the community, defines a Vision of what the people want the community to be, then establishes guidelines for making that Vision a reality.

Without participating in this process it's already clear Hart County, Georgia, is a scenic community beside the shores of Lake Hartwell. Updating the Comprehensive Plan, however, has revealed Hart County can also be described as the nexus where several converging cultures meet:

- Straddling the state line Hart County is where people pass to and from Georgia and South Carolina;
- At the edge of the piedmont and coastal plateau Hart County is the gateway to and from Appalachia;
- Tucked between three growing metropolitan areas Hart County is exurban buffer between Atlanta and Athens, GA, and Anderson, SC;
- At the end of an industrial era, Hart County is the embodiment of economic change, growing from rural and agrarian characteristics to those more suburban and service oriented.

With the 21st Century now several years old, Hart County is poised to experience some of the most dynamic change it's ever known. This change can be positive, negative, or neither, but change is happening and much of it is the result of forces originating from outside the county.

This document, the Community Assessment of the Hart County Comprehensive Plan, seeks to identify and study those forces and their affects on the county. It outlines the nature of how things are now and *could* be in the future. It then sets the table for the County, the citizens and all interested stakeholders to define how things *should* be. Ultimately the Comprehensive Plan's final section, the Regional Agenda, will clarify that vision of what should be and identify the measures that will be taken to make that vision a reality.

The issues and opportunities identified herein cover topics such as housing quality, economic development and natural resource protection. In accordance with the minimum requirements established for Georgia, and with the help of the Georgia Mountains regional Development Center, these issues and opportunities were identified as part of a critical assessment of facts and information about the county. Some present formidable challenges, others merely build upon what's already in place. All of them, however, represent something that should be considered in developing the best plan for Hart County.

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Purpose

The Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program are the first two of three documents comprising the local comprehensive plan in Georgia. Enclosed herein are the Community Assessment, the Community Participation Program and all necessary supporting material for Hart County, for the planning period between 2007 and 2030. This material will support the development of the third, and most important, element of the comprehensive plan: The Community Agenda.

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

The Community Assessment presents a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the comprehensive plan is built. Preparation of the Community Assessment is largely a staff or professional function of collecting and analyzing data and information about the community and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format, such as an executive summary, for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda.

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

Profile of Hart County

What is now Hart County was part of the Cherokee Nation until the Cherokee relinquished their lands to the state through various treaties in the late 1700's. Early settlements were made adjacent to major waterways such as the Savannah and Tugaloo Rivers to take advantage of the rich bottomland most suitable area for farming. Tobacco began as the main staple but was quickly abandoned in the early 1800s. Over time the farm economy diversified until cotton began to dominate the antebellum period around 1850.

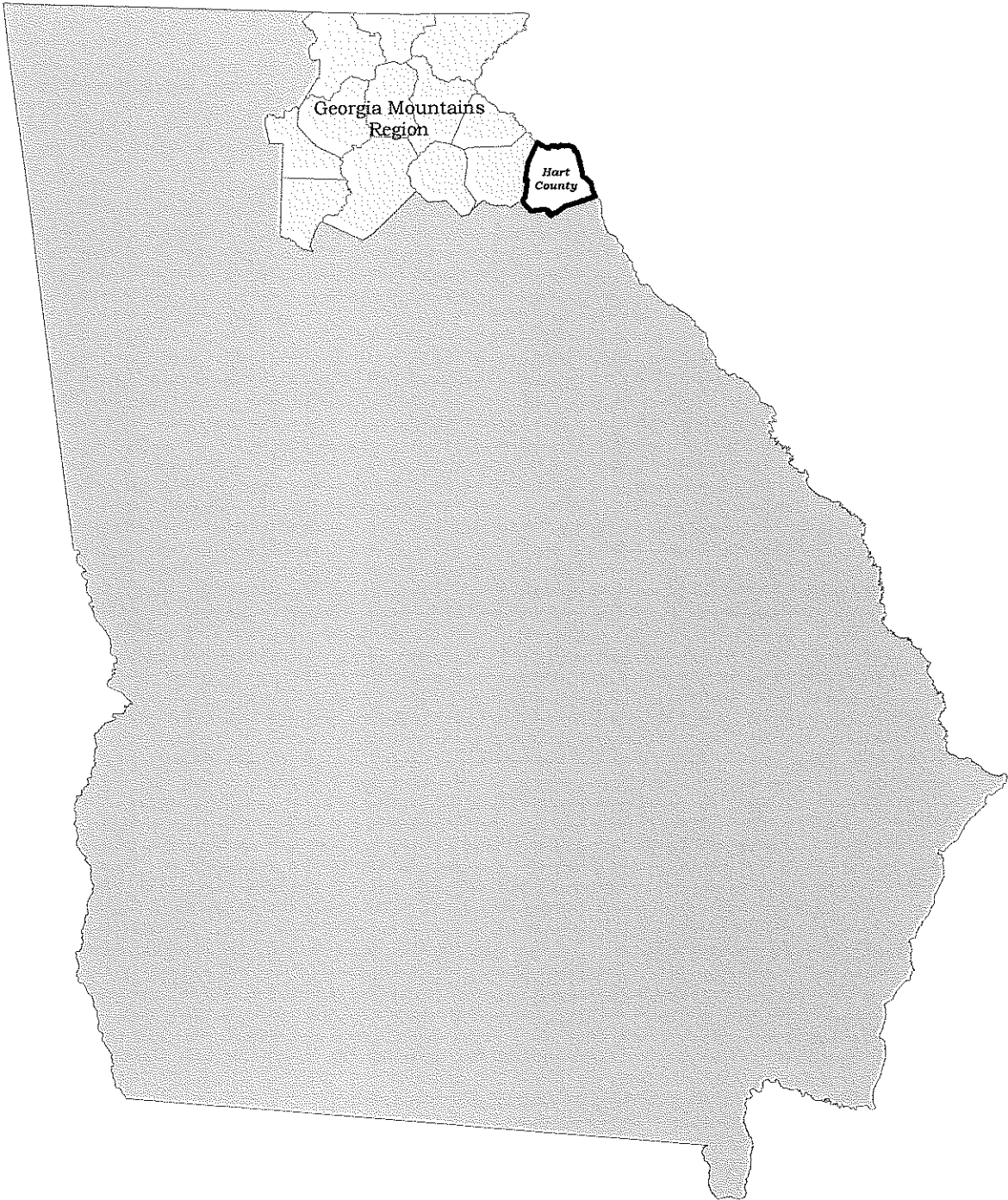
In late 1853 Hart County was created from portions of Franklin and Elbert Counties. The County was named for Revolutionary War heroine Nancy Hart, and lies on the eastern edge of Georgia, along the Savannah River/Lake Hartwell boundary between Georgia and South Carolina.

By the time of the Great Depression in 1929 the cotton industry in Hart County began to fade. A series of government supported efforts would slowly aid the development of industry in and around Hart County while farming began to recover. In 1950 the United State Congress authorized the construction of Hartwell Dam. By 1961, Lake Hartwell was completed and full. and with it began the second decline of agriculture. This time, however, the changes were not due to economic woes but by as a byproduct of growth in manufacturing related industries.

Today, Hart County is noted for its location immediately south of Interstate 85 near Lavonia, situated within one of the fastest growing areas of the United States, surrounded by rapidly expanding metropolitan areas; Atlanta, Gainesville and Athens, Georgia, and the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson metropolitan area of South Carolina.

There are two incorporated cities within Hart County. Hartwell is the county seat and the largest of the two at just over 4,200 residents. It is located in the center of the county close to Lake Hartwell. The other city is Bowersville, a small community in northwestern Hart County with approximately 340 people. Combined the county was estimated to have 24,036 residents in 2005.

Location Map Hart County



Map Prepared By:
Georgia Mountains Regional
Development Center
FDJ, June, 2007

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Copy of Signed Transmittal Resolution

ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

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

EXISTING LAND USE

Classification of Land Uses

The following categories are used for discussion during this chapter and coordination between the existing land use map and tables:

Agriculture/Forestry – This category includes all farms and existing land devoted to growth of field crops or plants, vegetation, and trees, the raising of livestock, poultry houses, and other similar operations. Small plots for gardens were not included in this category because such gardens are considered accessory to the residential uses of the property. Lands were also classified as agricultural if they a) contained fencing along the property line, b) if the land was substantially cleared for pasture, or c) the land was clearly in active forest production.

Residential - This category includes all detached single-family dwellings, along with their customary accessory structures and uses. It also includes single-wide and double-wide mobile and manufactured homes on individual lots, or mobile home parks.

Public/Institutional - The public/institutional land use category consists of all lands used for government purposes such as schools and fire stations, plus churches, cemeteries, and clubs, private/public colleges, schools, training facilities, hospitals, and sanitary landfills.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities (TCU) - This category includes such uses as power generation plants (such as the 600 acre "Hartwell Energy Limited Partnership" Power Plant), radio towers, communications towers, electricity, telephone and other transmission substations, telephone switching stations, airports and landing strips, and similar uses.

Commercial - This land use category includes all property of retail business and trade, consumer services such as motels, restaurants, banks, commercial and professional services, and wholesale activities; as well as accessory use areas such as parking and storage. Small-scale retail sales or personal service establishments operated within (or in conjunction with) a residence on the same lot were considered accessory to residential use (a home occupation) and were not included in the commercial classification.

Industrial - The industrial category includes land occupied for the purpose of extracting, fabricating, assembling, and/or refining raw or semi-finished materials.

Undeveloped - This category is for land that is vacant, and not developed for a specific use. This category consists of nonagricultural and non-forested lands.

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Hart County as a whole is predominantly rural, with large amounts of land in a natural, undeveloped state. Much of this is land around large residential estates, preserved for conservation use (such as Army Corps of Engineers property) or former agricultural land that has not yet been converted to another use.

Most of the remaining land has an active use but is rural in character because of the sparse development. Large lot residential properties abound, some forestry operations also remain and many small to mid-size farms throughout the county. Most of the suburban/urban forms of development are concentrated around Hartwell and the Lavonia/Interstate 85 area.

Hart County Existing Land Use, 2006

Undeveloped	61,100	44.5%
Agricultural	36,746	26.8%
Residential	29,984	21.8%
Forestry	4,459	3.2%
Industrial	2,406	1.8%
Commercial	1,643	1.2%
Public	796	0.6%
TCU	112	0.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>137,247</i>	

Source: GMRDC, 2006

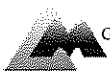
Hart County

Generalized Existing Land Use 2007



0 03 06 12 18 24 Miles

Legend		Generalized Existing Land Use	
	GDOT 2005 Roads		County Boundary
	Railroad		Municipalities
	Rivers & Streams		Residential
	Lakes & Ponds		Commercial
			Agricultural
			Industrial
			E??
			P??
			Vacant
			No Data



Map Prepared By:
Georgia Mountains Regional
Development Center
FDJ, June, 2007

General Land Use Descriptions

Northwestern Hart County (Census Tract 9602)

The northwest portion of the County, is bordered by Interstate 85 and Lake Hartwell to the north and Franklin County to the west. S.R. 77 runs east-west through the area, and crosses Shoal Creek, whose course runs from Lake Hartwell south to the City of Bowersville. The Town of Bowersville is located in the southwest corner of the division, along with a portion of the City of Canon. This Division has been partitioned into two areas for land use discussion purposes; the Lake Area, and the Shoal Creek Area.

Lake Area - NW:

The lake area in the northern portion of this division is characterized by subdivisions that border the lake. Primarily single-family residences on small lots occupy this land, with a small number of mobile homes scattered along the lake. Some of the subdivisions include Arrowhead, Tugaloo Bay, Knox Bridge Crossing, Parkertown Heights, and Tugaloo Heights. For the most part, lots fronting the lake are occupied by such residences, while many interior lots remain vacant.

Construction of new residences has increased in recent years. The Tugaloo Bay subdivision had numerous undeveloped interior lots that have recently had entry level homes constructed on them. Additionally, several older homes surrounding lake Hartwell have been remodeled, rebuilt or removed due to the increased demand for lake property. A new marina has been constructed on the end of Knox Bridge Crossing road.

The undeveloped land, in general, is heavily wooded. Agricultural land does exist in the lake area, but is limited and is mostly pasture type agriculture. Public and commercial uses in the lake area include churches and cemeteries, the Clem's Music Park facility on S.R. 77 near the Parkertown intersection, and Harbor Light Marina located in the northwest and the new marina described above.

The only other commercial developments in the lake area are a gas stations and a restaurant. Moreover, the I-85 exit contains a vacant commercial spot, gas stations, and a convenience store/restaurant. TCU uses are limited to a power substation in the Parkertown Heights subdivision. The County has recently developed the Gateway Industrial park on I-85 adjacent to the 177 interchange. This 150 acre industrial park has all utilities in place. TI automotive, a large high tech automotive manufacturer has recently been constructed and is slated to start operations.

The installation of sewer and water infrastructure to this area has poised the County for tremendous growth over the planning period. Several larger private tracts of undeveloped land are now being marketed as industrial/commercial property. Commercial development is expected around the interstate interchange and along the major State highways (77 and 59) as well as other tracts adjacent to I-85 between I-85 and Knox Bridge Crossing.

Commercial and industrial development on the north side of I-85 is expected to be limited during the planning period unless sewer and water is expanded to the other side of I-85 (northern side). However this would most likely be a costly endeavor and make not take place during this

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planning period. There also exists a large tract of land on Lake Hartwell north of the interstate. This undeveloped tract is very valuable and may see some type of mixed use development over the planning period.

Shoal Creek Area:

The Shoal Creek Area encompasses the remaining portion of the land in this division. It extends south of the lake area down to the southern portion of the Canon city limits. The majority of land in this area is agricultural, with many large open fields. A large area of forested land is located south of the lake area and west of S.R. 77. Poultry farms are prevalent, and seem to be concentrated primarily just north of the Town of Bowersville. Dairy farms exist east of Bowersville, and an orchard is located between Bowersville and Canon on S.R. 51. Undeveloped land occurs in patches throughout the division.

Residential uses consist of conventional single-family and mobile homes that are located on large agricultural tracts. Housing is fairly dispersed but is more concentrated around several major intersections. Commercial and public uses are also concentrated at these areas. These intersections are known locally as the Shoal Creek, Cross Roads, Maretts, and Airline communities.

The Shoal Creek community, located at the intersection of S.R. 77 and Shoal Creek Road, is primarily residential, with a large number of mobile homes. The community is characterized by Providence Church and a fire station. The Cross Roads community is located at the intersections of S.R. 77, Lou Gurley Road, Will Bailey Rd., and Airline School Road. The Cross Roads and Union Hill Church are also located in this area. The Maretts community is located along the border of the division, at the intersection of County Route 503, Walt Wilson Road, and S.R. 77 Connector. This community has a small grocery and an auto repair shop. Single-family residences comprise the primary land use along these roads.

The Airline Community, which is the most densely developed community in this division, is located east of Bowersville, along S.R. 51 and the Southern Rail Line. Commercial uses in this community include a convenience store and a gas station. The former Airline Elementary School is also located here. Several TCU uses include a rail lookout tower, Hart County Telephone switching station, and two electric substations. Residential development, in the form of single-family dwellings, is dense along S.R. 51.

Commercial uses outside of these communities include the Lavonia Speedway, on S.R. 77, an auto repair shop and used car lot, a feed store, gas stations, a van conversion business, an electric company, and a small junk yard.

Industrial uses consist of Misty Mills on S.R. 77 just east of Lavonia. One other small industrial facility is located just north of the Town of Bowersville. Public uses in the Shoal Creek Area are comprised primarily of churches and cemeteries. TCU land uses include a radio antenna. Scenic views of rolling fields exist in the Shoal Creek Area just north of the Airline Community, off Martin Dairy Rd., and near the Cross Roads community seen from Will Bailey Rd.

A new elementary school has been constructed in this area on State 77 a few miles north of

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Hartwell. The Airline School was closed and is now vacant. The North Hart Elementary School may also be a magnet for increased residential growth in this area.

Northeastern Hart County (Census Tract 9601)

The northeast portion of the County, is bordered by Lake Hartwell to the north, east, and southeast, by Lightwood Log Creek to the south, and by Census Tract 9602 to the west. This tract saw the second largest percent population growth rate at 22% change in the 1990 decade.

This section of the County has been divided into the Lake Area (which includes all of the land fronting the lake to the north, east, and south), and the non lake area "Reed Creek" for purposes of description.

Lake Area - NE:

The lake area in this division is characterized by subdivisions that border the lake. This area is heavily developed with conventional single-family residences, located primarily in subdivisions, many of which are only strips of land immediately adjacent to the lake and only one lot deep. There are a few subdivisions with interior lots but these are primarily newer subdivisions.

Similar to northwestern lake area, the waterfront property is in high demand. Most vacant lots have been developed in recent years or are slated for development soon. There are few interior lots in these subdivisions especially the older lakefront subdivisions where the prior farmland was kept and only the lakefront property sold one lot deep from the lakefront.

There exists numerous forested undeveloped areas owned by the Corp of Engineers in reserved lands directly on the lake mostly on lower lying points or pieces of land that have low lying land connecting them to the rest of the County. In addition to these reserved lands, Corp of Engineers parks noted in this area include a boat ramp, located far east along the lake in the Hatton Ford Road area, a campground and boat ramp facility near the Paradise Point subdivision, and New Prospect Park boat ramp. Other recreational areas include the Lake Hartwell Yacht Club in the southern portion of the lake area off Yacht Club Drive.

Located near Hatton Ford Road is a small, private airfield, accessible from Mustang Drive. Another private airstrip is located in the southern lake area where County Route 503 meets S.R. 51. Public uses include several churches located along the main roads. No industrial uses are present in the lake area. Scenic views of the lake are abundant.

Reed Creek Area:

The remaining area of this tract is primarily referred to as the "Reed Creek Area". This area was primarily agricultural and forested lands but has been developing more residential uses. This area is characterized by several small communities, each located at the intersections of two or more roads. These include the Reed Creek community, located in the northeastern portion of the Division, at Country Route 301 and S.R. 51; and the Mount Olivet community at the intersection of County Route 503, Beacon Light Road, and Morris Road. Poultry farming is present, but is not particularly concentrated in this division. Vacant, undeveloped land is dispersed throughout.

Residential development consists mostly of conventional single-family homes, with mobile

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homes dispersed throughout. The residences usually front large agricultural tracts of land. While subdivisions predominate in the lake area, the remaining residential land use within this division is mostly linear in nature, located along the roadways.

There are exceptions to the linear residential development and more traditional developments have been developed in recent years. There has been increased development adjacent to Mt. Olivet Road and adjacent to Will Bailey Road. There are also mobile homes and mobile home parks located near a private air landing strip off of County Route 503 just before it crosses S.R. 51 over the lake.

Commercial developments at the Reed Creek intersection consist of a gas station, restaurant and gift shop. Along S.R. 51 as it approaches the Hartwell City limits, are garage, gas station, and auto sales establishments. Other commercial uses in the Reed Creek Area include auto repair, a veterinary facility with kennels, gas stations/convenience stores, two private boat storage facilities, a nursery, a gas tank sales business, and several other single unit commercial structures.

Limited industrial exists including Turner Concrete and private recycling are located on S.R. 51 near the Hartwell City limits. Public uses in the Reed Creek Area include a generous scattering of churches and cemeteries. In addition, the former Mount Olivet Elementary School (now closed and consolidated with the North Hart Elementary School) is located at the Mount Olivet intersection, and a fire station is located in the Reed Creek community. Park and recreational areas not directly located along the lake include ball fields near Mount Olivet Elementary School on Beacon Light Road.

Transportation, communication and utilities land uses are limited to a radio/cell tower, telephone switching stations, and power substations.

Southeastern Hart County (Census Tracts 9604 & 9605)

The southeastern portion of the county is bounded by Lightwood Log Creek to the north, and Elbert County to the south. The eastern boundary is Lake Hartwell and the Savannah River. The western border is primarily Eagle Grove School Road. The City of Hartwell is included in this division, but has been excluded from this land use description except the influence on the unincorporated sections of the county adjacent to the City. These tracts have seen the slowest population growth rates at about 11% over the 1990s decade.

City of Hartwell Area:

The Hartwell Area is comprised of land located in the vicinity of the Hartwell City limits. It contains little agricultural land as many other land uses are present. Undeveloped forested land is abundant in the vicinity of Lightwood Log Creek. Dense single-family residential areas and subdivisions are concentrated near the city limit along U.S. 29, and along S.R. 172.

Commercial uses are more prevalent near the Hartwell City limit and consist of gas stations/convenience stores, restaurants, car sales and repair, and other retail establishments. The commercial growth corridor has been moving down Highway 29 towards the dam, although most of the commercial establishments on this corridor have annexed into the City.

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Industrial uses are also abundant, and include the Hart Industrial Park (containing Springs and others), Monroe Manufacturing, Milliken and other Industrial establishments. A large strip mine operation is located off of S.R. 172.

Public uses consist of several churches and cemeteries, and a youth center located on U.S. 29. The Hartwell Sewage Plant is located off of S.R. 77 near the city limit. Other TCU land uses include a Georgia Power office and an adjacent electrical transmission tower on Zion Church Rd., as well as a water tower near the Hart Industrial Park. Park and recreational uses in this area include the Hartwell Golf Club off of U.S. 29, and the Hart Memorial Park Cemetery also on U.S. 29 near the city limit. The Cherokee Memorial is found at U.S. 29 and Zion Church Road which a memorial dedicating what was believed to be the location of the center of the Cherokee Nation (called "center of the world"). The highest point in Hart County is located in this tract on Blackmon Road near State 51.

Cateechee golf course and conference center is located on Elberton highway south of the City of Hartwell. A few small tracts of vacant land surrounding this golf course have recently been developed into residential subdivisions. The remaining vacant land around the golf course especially on the east side is expected to undergo high end residential development over the planning period.

Bio Area:

The Bio Area is less densely developed than the other areas in this division. Agricultural and undeveloped forested land are prevalent. Residential development is mostly single-family fronting large agricultural tracts. Few single-family subdivisions exist in this area. Mobile homes are scattered, although there are concentrations at the intersection of Thornton Road and Liberty Church Road and on Allen and Orsley Roads.

The main commercial use in this area is the Hartwell Speedway. Other commercial businesses include gas stations, auto sales, a junk yard, and farm equipment sales. No industrial uses exist in this area. Public uses include several churches and the Bio Fire Department on Bio Church Road. TCU use includes a natural gas station. There are no designated park/recreational lands in the Bio Area. 7.2.5. The County public works facility and closed landfill is located in this area and the State of Georgia Whitworth Detention center is located adjacent to the County Public Works.

Lake Area - SE:

The lake area in this division includes two primary "peninsulas" on Ridge Road and Old 29 highway. There is also development along Highway 29 from the City of Hartwell towards the Hartwell Dam. There is also a large section of lakefront near the dam that is redzone and has limited or no development. Hartwell Energy Limited Partnership power plant is located here.

There is a great amount of forested land, particularly near the City of Hartwell along U.S. 29, and in the vicinity of Hartwell Dam. There is also a substantial amount of forested lakefront land reserved by the Corp of Engineers in this area.

Commercial uses along the lake are also mostly located on U.S. 29. They include a boat storage

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facility, the Budget Inn, Jameson Inn, supermarkets, several mobile home sales businesses, a few retail stores, and a realty. In and near the Hartwell City limits are a Wal-Mart commercial retailer, gas stations, and other retail establishments. An industrial site is also located near the Hartwell City limit.

Public uses along the lake are limited to a few churches, and an office building near Hartwell. In addition, towards the dam are the Hartwell Lake Reservoir Management Offices and the Land Management Offices. TCU uses consist of a radio tower, gas line station and a transmission station across the street from the Hartwell Lake Management Offices, as well as a power substation located where Lake Hartwell meets the Savannah River (by the dam).

Parks and recreation facilities are prevalent in this area, with the Hartwell Marina located where North Forest Avenue ends at the lake and Hart State Park at Ridge Road. In addition, in the Hartwell Dam area, a recreational park lies adjacent to the Hartwell Lake Management Offices, as well as the park surrounding Hartwell Dam.

Scenic views in this area include views of Lake Hartwell from U.S. 29. The park at Hartwell Dam is particularly scenic as a long paved walkway extends from a parking area, along the lake, to the dam.

Savannah River Area:

The area below the dam on the Savannah river is heavily forested and remote. This area has limited development although several large tracts of land have recently been sold. This area is very scenic with river vistas overlooking shoals. Smith McGee Highway has a park area that is accessible to the public. Otherwise this area remains relatively undeveloped.

Wildlife Management Area:

The Wildlife Management Area (980 acres) is located in the southeast portion of the division. It includes land extending south of U.S. 29, west of the Savannah River, north of the County line, and east from the Hart County Wildlife Management Area. In general, this area is more heavily wooded than any other section in the county. Several of the roads in the easternmost portion are blocked and impassible. Agricultural land exists mostly closer to U.S. 29, and to the south of the Hart County Wildlife Management Area, which is itself virtually all forested.

Commercial uses are limited to auto related businesses. There are no industrial uses in this area. Public uses include several churches. Residential development is concentrated primarily south of the dam near S.R. 181.

Housing is also more concentrated both north and south of the Hart County Wildlife Management Area, mostly with single-family residences. There are several views overlooking pasture lands.

The Nancy Hart Area:

The Nancy Hart Area includes all land in this division west of the Hart County Wildlife Management Area and south of U.S. 29 and the Hartwell City limits. The division boundary crosses the community of Nuberg where Coldwater Creek Road intersects S.R. 77 in the

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southern portion of the county. The Nancy Hart Area is developed areas with some residential development. There is also a good deal of agricultural land including poultry farming, dairy farming, and row crops.

The majority of the residential development is conventional single-family homes, located along most of the roadways. A particularly heavy concentration of conventional single-family residences occurs near the Hartwell City limit where S.R. 77 splits. Several concentrations of mobile homes are located where Liberty Hill Church Road forks with Page Road, and to the north and south of the landfill off S.R. 172.

Commercial uses in the Nancy Hart Area consist of a restaurant, auto repair and sales, junk yard, outdoor equipment sales, boat equipment sales, gas stations, and several other single unit businesses. Significant residential and commercial growth of the area not near the City of Hartwell is not expected to take place.

Public uses are also more prevalent in this area. In addition to the various churches, there are two schools. One is an old school house located across from Flat Rock Church on Flat Rock Road, and the other is the Nancy Hart School which has been converted into a special school with the opening and consolidation of the South Hart Elementary school. The Nancy Hart Volunteer Fire Department is located along the S.R. 77 Spur near Flat Rock Road.

The corridors leaving the City of Hartwell will expect new growth over the planning period. The Highway 29 corridor towards the Hartwell dam is expected to have continued commercial growth including a high probability of large retailers (big box type). Residential growth is expected in this same area including single family non-lake and intensive lake front development such as condominiums.

The Elberton highway corridor includes a new recreation park constructed by the County and the Catechee Golf Course. This area is expected to grow over the planning period. Residential growth is expected to continue in this area especially higher priced residential development around the golf course. It is also expected that commercial growth will take place in this area.

Southwestern Hart County (Census Tract 9603)

The southwestern portion includes the area near the City of Royston, Vanna area, and all land located to the west of North Beaverdam Creek and south of Carlton Brown Road. Madison and Elbert Counties border this division to the south. This area saw the third highest population growth change in the 1990 decade with 17% change.

Goldmine Area:

The Goldmine Area covers the northern and central portions of the division. This area is characterized primarily by the Goldmine community, located along U.S. 29 at Airline-Goldmine Road, and more concentrated residential, commercial, and industrial development on State Route 29 leading out of the City of Royston.

Commercial land use is prevalent at the intersection of U.S. 29, Airline-Goldmine Road, and Bonds Road. Commercial uses include gas stations, a convenience grocery, restaurants, auto

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repair, a junk yard, a beauty shop and shoe repair, a farm equipment supplier and several other single unit commercial structures.

Industrial uses include a lumber company located just outside Royston on U.S. 29, and another small industrial site at the Goldmine community intersection. Several churches and cemeteries dot the area and Eagle Grove School resides on the border of this division at the intersection of U.S. 29 and Eagle Grove School Rd. A fire station is located at the Goldmine intersection.

The Royston Bypass is between S.R. 17 and S.R. 122. This bypass allows the movement of traffic between the two thoroughfares without entering the Royston City limits. Next to Eagle Grove School is a telephone switching station. Some residential development includes a few subdivisions. Residences in the Goldmine Area are typically conventional single-family units fronting large agricultural fields, with a few well-dispersed mobile homes.

Agricultural land is characterized primarily by large open fields and pastures and poultry farms. In addition, a large commercial nursery is located on Bonds Road, off of U.S. 29. Forested land exists in several areas including commercial forests. Several scenic views in the Goldmine area are of agricultural land.

Vanna Area:

Vanna, lies in the southwestern portion of the county. S.R. 17 and Southern Railway both run through the former Vanna city limits. While the land in this area is largely agricultural, residential population is concentrated where S.R. 17 and the railroad intersect. Residences consist largely of conventional single-family housing with only a few mobile homes in this area. Most of the homes, even in these denser areas, are abutted by agricultural land to the rear. Several small orchards are also located within the denser residential area.

Poultry and dairy farms exist in the outlying areas. There is very little forested or undeveloped land directly in Vanna; however, land to the east of Vanna is largely agricultural and forested. Commercial uses in the Vanna area include several gas stations, an auto repair shop, a small printing company, a poultry equipment business, and a restaurant.

Industrial uses include the former Johnson and Johnson plant located within the Royston city limits and Royston LLC in the unincorporated county.

Public uses include several churches, and a fire station located along the rail tracks. TCU uses are limited to a power generator and substation and the rail line. Scenic views are provided by orchards as well as agricultural lands.

Eagle Grove Area:

The Eagle Grove Area is located in the eastern portion of the division. The area is predominantly agricultural with undeveloped forested areas located along rivers, streams, and other bodies of water. Residential development is mostly conventional single-family, with mobile homes dispersed throughout the area. Subdivisions in this area include undeveloped sites on Eagle Lake at Eagle Lake Road, and the neighboring Eagle Heights subdivision.

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Commercial uses in the Eagle Grove Area are limited to a few gas stations, a mini-storage business, and auto related businesses. Industrial uses are limited to a few small business scattered in the area.

In addition to churches, cemeteries and garbage disposal sites, other public uses include Eagle Grove School, located at the Eagle Grove community (intersection of U.S. 29 and County Route 505). A telephone switching station at the Eagle Grove intersection and a water tower, located along U.S. 29 near Kesler Road. constitute TCU land uses. In addition, a large power generator station is found on John W. Jordan Road.

The southwestern section of the County has been identified as an opportunity zone due to the census data where two or more adjacent blocks have more than 20% below the poverty level. This fact combined with other factors is expected to poise this section of the County for growth over the planning period as described in more detailed below.

Future Land Use Issues and Analysis

By analyzing the existing land uses, combined with growth pattern, infrastructure, planned infrastructure investments, and other issues that are or could affect growth, the future land uses can be speculated. This is a very important part of the planning process. Through this analysis the County can have a clearer picture of where growth can be expected and where infrastructure investments should take place.

On the other side of the development issue, through analyzing trends and issues of growth as well as future land use speculation the County can attempt to steer the type of growth that is desired and try to discourage the type of growth that is not desirable to the County.

One tool to steer land use is through regulations such as zoning. Zoning regulations were attempted in the late 1990's. Initially a simple land use control ordinance was presented based on the recommendations of a citizen advisory group. However this simple ordinance was redrafted into a much more detailed comprehensive ordinance which was thoroughly rejected by the public.

Hart County is the last Georgia County on the I-85 interstate from Atlanta that does not have zoning. As the Atlanta MSA influence has grown up the I-85 corridor the undesirable growth has been shifting further up the interstate through zoning. This has shifted further and further away from Atlanta and just recently Franklin County has instituted zoning.

The population in Hart County continues to reject zoning. In general the population of the County does not want the local government to tell them what they can do with their own land. However as the County gets more developed, the impact of what a neighbor does on his property is affecting what happens on that persons property. Therefore land use controls such as zoning are not expected to have an influence on growth over the planning period unless the current atmosphere towards land use controls changes over the planning period.

Another avenue for "controlling" growth is through infrastructure investments. Water service, road improvements, and more importantly sewer service can provide services for growth. In

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general the cost of raw land is low enough that wells and septic tanks on one acre or larger lots is not a limiting factor in residential development. The road network is also sufficient to accommodate increase residential development.

However more intensive residential development, commercial and in particular industrial development depends on infrastructure investments. The County is currently in a mode of promoting, rather than controlling, growth, especially for industrial activities.

Northwestern Hart County (Census Tract 9602)

This section of the County witnessed the largest percent population growth in the 1990 decade. This area is poised for continued rapid growth over the planning period especially in the northern section near the interstate. Due to the fact that all other Georgia Counties on I-85 north of Atlanta now have zoning, this area could be most negatively impacted from the lack of land use controls.

The interstate allows rapid access to the metro Atlanta area and metro areas in South Carolina. Land uses that are more tightly controlled in other counties may seek to locate in this section of the County due to the lack of land use controls combined with ease of access to the metro areas. This should be closely monitored over the planning period to address future threats.

Additionally the ease of access to the interstate will increase the demand for residential housing. As adjacent metropolitan areas in South Carolina and Georgia become more crowded and expensive for residential development, individuals may seek this section of the county as a lower cost, slower paced residential area. This may take place over the planning period but is not expected to have a large impact during this planning period.

The ease of interstate access combined with lower cost for land and low taxes has resulted in an increased interest in larger industrial and warehousing facilities to locate in this area. The new industrial park and recent investments in infrastructure will result in a change to the interstate area. Now that sewer and water are available to this area, the rural characteristic is expected to change as more commercial development takes place.

Sewer and water currently are available at the industrial park however more sewer expansion is expected outside the park especially fronting the State highways (77 & 59) and along Knox Bridge Crossing county road.

A 12 inch water line is now in place from the Gateway Industrial park south on State 77 to the City of Hartwell. This will also act as a catalyst for development along this corridor.

The Hart County Water and Sewer Utility Authority (HCWSUA) has a plan for a large water line on highway 51 from Hartwell to Bowersville. Installation of this line could also promote additional growth along the 51 corridor from Hartwell towards Bowersville.

An additional impact to this area is the State's plans to widen State 17. The widening of this highway to a 4-5 lane road will ease access to the interstate and result in increased growth to this area of Hart County.

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Northeastern Hart County (Census Tract 9601)

The northeast portion of the County saw the second largest percent population growth rate at 22% change in the 1990 decade. This area too has ease of interstate access in the Northern section of this tract.

The most significant impact to this area over the planning period is expected to be residential development. The area is too vast for significant investment in sewer and water infrastructure so the development of industrial uses is expected to be non-existent over the planning period.

There are plans for water investments in the southeastern sections of this tract but these multimillion dollar investments may take some time to implement. The highway 77 and highway 51 areas are expected to grow as more sewer and water capacity is extended in these areas especially near the intersection of these two state highways. The City of Hartwell has recently expanded sewer capacity on highway 51/77 and future extensions will occur over the planning period.

It is anticipated that as more residential development occurs in this tract the need for more commercial development will follow. Currently most of the commercial development is occurring in the 29 highway corridor (southeastern section of the County) near the City of Hartwell however the difficulty of ease of access to this area may result in more commercial development in the Northeastern section of the County. Currently to access the commercial areas from the north, northeast and west, requires travel through downtown Hartwell.

Another expected change to this section of the County is the lakefront development. Traditionally, there has been a one house/one lot type of residential development however the limited supply of lakefront land combined with the increased demand for such land is expected to create more intensive lake front development.

A few of the remaining larger tracts have been recently subdivided into larger subdivisions that include lakefront and interior lots. Some of the remaining large tracts that front the lake remain undeveloped. Some smaller tracts that contained a few acres, a house, and lake frontage have been subdivided into several tracts of lakefront property.

Another interesting recent trend is for more intensive lakefront development. As undeveloped lakefront property becomes rarer, developers are seeking alternatives that intensify land use. One recent proposal is to subdivide slightly more than 3 acres into 11 tracts of land with a community dock.

The limiting factor is water and sewer capacity. No public water or sewer is yet in the lake area. Most newer developments are utilizing non-lakefront land for potable water wells. The traditional development more recently has included 0.5 acre lots that have a remote well serving multiple lots and individual septic tanks.

However developers are looking at more intensive developments utilizing larger onsite sewer treatment facilities. The exception to this is the lake area near the City of Hartwell. One section

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of the lake off highway 51/77 North of Hartwell is in this tract. Recently a condominium type complex with lake frontage was constructed and connected to the City of Hartwell's sewer. This type of development will most likely take place on other tracts of land near this site. In addition, intensively lakefront development on vacant land on 29 near the commercial corridor is expected to take place with connections to city sewer.

Other developments that will likely take place more intensely will include lakefront development with interior lots that have "lake access". These interior lots will have lake access through common area and community docks increasing the value and desirability of the interior lots.

During the planning period this section of the county should see continued residential growth both on the lake and off lake. There may be commercial growth on the highway 77 section of this area but there is no evidence of increased commercial growth at this point. There will be more intensive lakefront development other than the traditional one house per acre or half acre and may include group type housing.

In general, the lakefront land area residents desire more land use controls in contrast to the non-lake residents who want no land use controls. An expected challenge over this planning period will be to overcome that difference in the desire for land use controls. If a lake front character area could be established with distinct land use controls then this area could potentially establish the land use controls they desire while not negatively impacting the non-lake character areas.

Without land use controls residential growth in this area is expected to continue to put pressure on the agricultural land uses especially poultry farming. As residential areas become more densely located they will seek to control agricultural uses especially uses that create odors. Land use controls that protect residential properties would also protect those agricultural uses as allowable land uses. Additionally, uncontrolled growth is expected over the planning period including more intensive lake front development.

Southeastern Hart County (CensusTracts 9604 & 9605).

The southeastern portion of the county has seen the slowest population growth rates at about 11% over the 1990s decade. Other than commercial development on the 29 corridor southeast of Hartwell, growth is expected to be primarily residential over the planning period.

Industrial growth in this area of the County is not expected to increase due to the lack of interest on the part of the current City of Hartwell for expanding industrial development. The older industrial sites will hopefully be redeveloped into new uses. Without sewer capacity and an atmosphere of promoting industrial growth from the City of Hartwell, this area will be limited in industrial growth over the planning period. This may change over the planning period if the City has an interest in promoting industrial growth.

The Savannah river area is currently remote and has limited development however the recent selling of large tracts of land may result in more residential development in this area.

Overall the growth of this area is expected to be slow over the planning period and minimal impacts are expected.

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Southwestern Hart County (Census Tract 9603).

The southwestern portion saw the third highest population growth change in the 1990 decade with 17% change. This section of the county is expected to be impacted by growth over the planning period from the Athens area MSA.

The Athens MSA is impacting Madison County now with the current impacts on residential development about 10 minutes from Hart County. Over the planning period this impact is expected to be felt in Hart County. The expected impact is in the residential sector although commercial development may follow the residential development. Commercial development may take place over the planning period depending on the how fast the residential growth occurs.

An additional impact is expected in the industrial sector. This impact will be limited by sewer and water infrastructure however as described in the economic development section of this plan, there is a great potential for industrial growth. Currently the County is working with the City of Royston to put plans in place for expanding water service into Hart County through the HCWSUA.

However, the City of Royston is limited in sewer capacity. If the City of Royston was to plan any sewer capacity upgrades then there may exist the potential for a partnership with Royston for providing sewer capacity to Hart County in this section of the County near Royston. This could provide for expanded industrial growth.

ANALYSIS OF AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

This section provides a brief assessment of select issues and concerns around the county based on geographical reference. This will help each jurisdiction recognize those specific locations in need of special attention through physical investment or change of policy. A map is included to help reference each area.

Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development

- The most notable area of concern is around Lake Hartwell, which is a significant cultural amenity and attracting a great deal of interest as a destination for new development. This is especially true for the area near the City of Hartwell for proximity to shops and other amenities. There is a water supply intake located off the lake to the north of the City of Hartwell, which would be the area most susceptible to pollution concerns from development. The entirety of the lake should be monitored for development pressures, however, to mitigate any imbalance between demands and abilities for public services, as well as maintaining the general integrity of the lake environment. *(Map reference – Rapid Development)*

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

- Lake Hartwell will continue to see pressure as a destination for residential and seasonal development. It is anticipated the extent and pace of development in this area will be dictated by the level of public utilities available. *(Map reference – Rapid Development)*
- The Interstate 85 corridor is receiving attention from all forms of development, particularly from commercial and industrial interests. This area is expected to grow rapidly considering the improvements being made to Ga. Highway 17 and the interchange with I-85. This area is capable of serving as, and is being targeted as, a significant spot for economic development. To the extent possible Hart County is working with Franklin and Stephens County to improve the area and attract employment centers to this corridor. *(Map reference – Rapid Development)*
- The area outside the City of Hartwell is also expected to grow more rapidly than other portions of the County. The availability of public utilities and services, combined with the accessibility of commercial and employment centers, attracts development to and around Hartwell. Particularly along the arterials feeding into the city. *(Map reference – Rapid Development)*

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

- Not applicable in Hart County.

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

- Not applicable in Hart County.

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

- There are some structures near and in the Hart County Industrial Park that are currently vacant and most likely in need of renovation. One of these buildings is suspected of contamination concerns from chemical used on site in previous operations, but it is not known for sure about the possibility of similar conditions with any other properties. *(Map reference – Abandoned sites)*

Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)

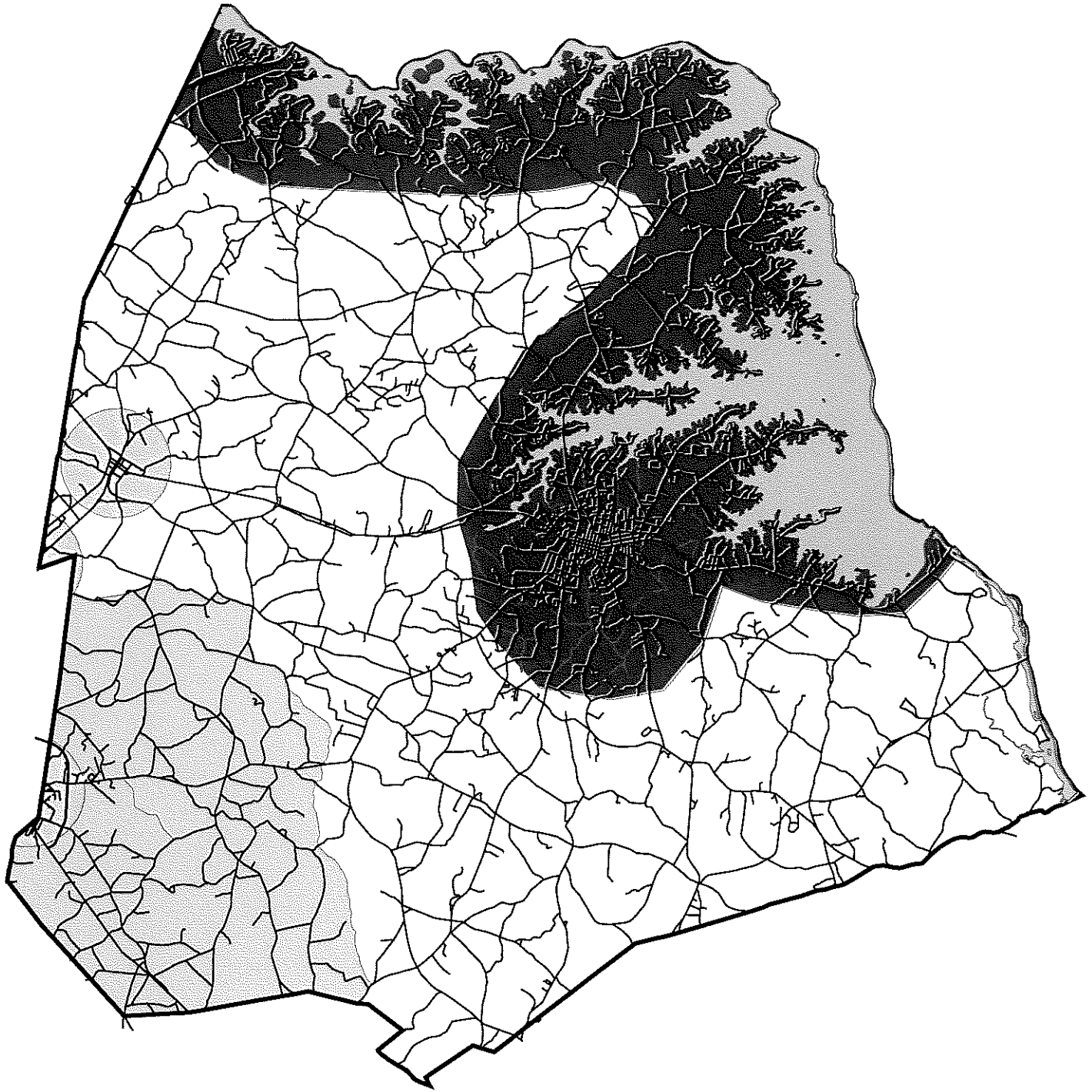
- Not applicable in Hart County

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

- There is a portion of southwestern Hart County adjacent to Franklin County and the City of Royston that does exhibit higher percentages of impoverished households and unemployment. Unemployment in Hart County as a whole is currently at a higher than state average level, but these areas have been the hardest hit from recent job losses in and around Hart County, and their distance from the lake has left them removed from new development and property reinvestment. As a result of these trends several Census tracts within this area have been targeted as Empowerment/ Opportunity Zones in an effort to spur new business growth. *(Map reference – Unemployment)*

Hart County

Areas Requiring Special Attention



0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Legend

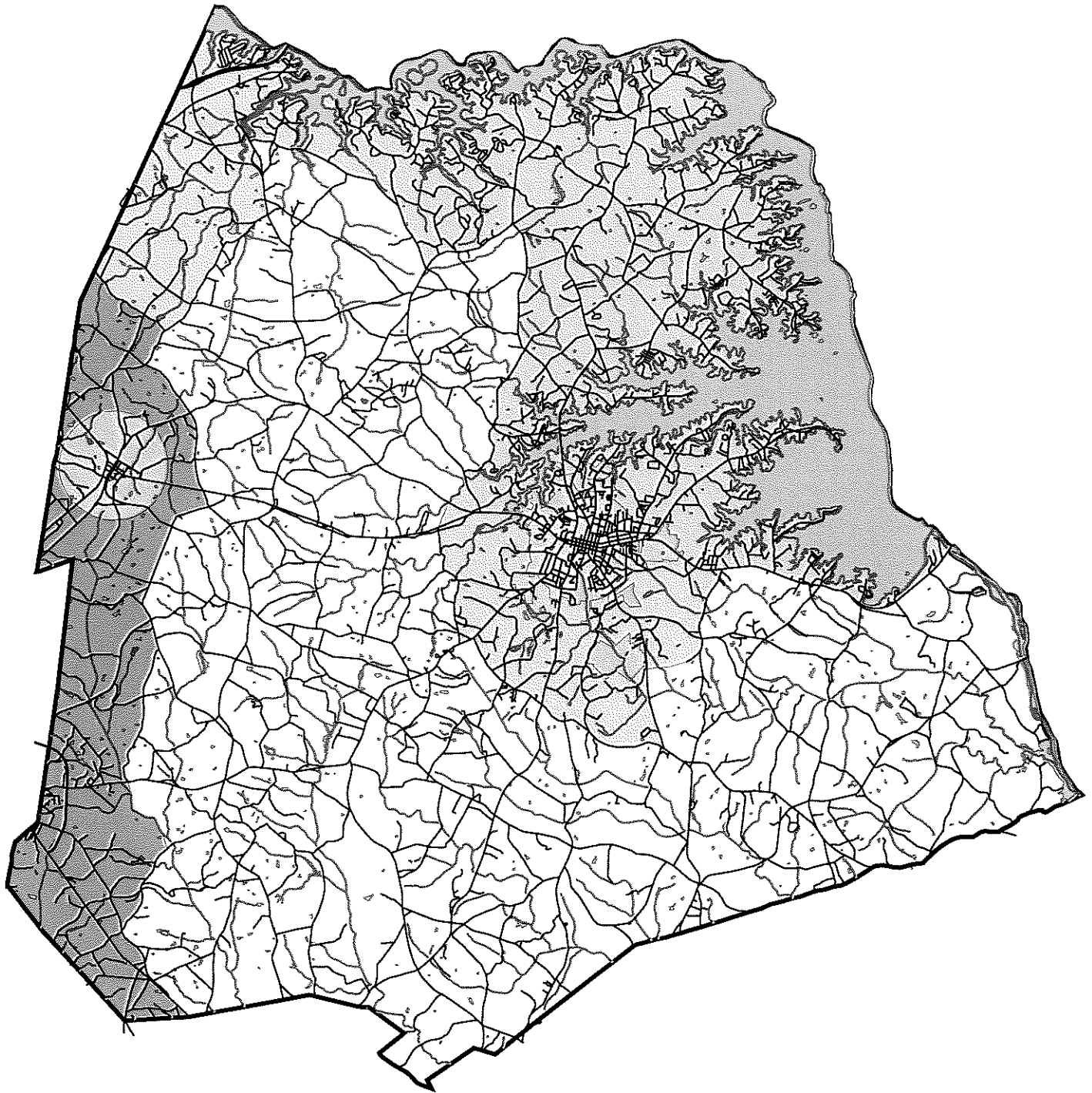
	GDOT 2005 Roads		County Boundary
	Railroad	Areas Requiring Special Attention	
	Hart County Industrial Park		Rapid Development
	Rivers & Streams		Unemployment
	Lakes & Ponds		

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RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS

Character Area - Location	Description
<i>Ga. 17 Corridor</i> – Eastern edge of Hart County and the areas surrounding the cities of Bowersville, Canon and Royston.	Currently a mix of small towns, rural residential and agricultural development, this corridor will be the focus of several improvement efforts in the near future including changes to Ga. 17 and modest utility improvements. The concentration of commercial and civic activity centers will serve as one attraction for new residential development, with each general city area expected to grow outward during the planning period, even if only slightly. The corridor should cater to this trend and foster comparable, small-town development types and keeping the village scale.
<i>Lavonia/ I-85 Area</i> – The northwest portion of the county that includes portions of the City of Lavonia and I-85, bordered to the south and east by Pooles Creek.	Comparable to the Ga. 17 Corridor as an attraction for development, but geared for industrial and heavier commercial growth. Scope will be dictated by available utility capacity, but County should continue to utilize the Interstate as an employment and economic activity center.
<i>Greater Hartwell</i> – The area immediately surrounding Hartwell and reaching south and west in accordance with utility service areas.	Recognized as the civic and commercial center for most of Hart County and the seasonal visitors to Lake Hartwell. The area is shaped by the small-town scale residential uses and mix of local and regional commercial uses. Extent of this area will be largely shaped by extent of water and sewer service, with much of this land considered potential annexation into the City of Hartwell. Development should be fostered that maintains the more suburban, town scale and design, complimenting what exists in Hartwell.
<i>Lake Hartwell Corridor</i> – The area immediately adjacent to the lake and coming inland to the nearest major intersections, including most of the peninsula north of Hartwell.	A mix of seasonal and year-round residential, with some lake-related commercial, conservation and recreation use. This should be maintained in accordance with management plans for the resource and of such scale that permanent structures do not potentially lead to overcrowding the Lake.
<i>Rural Hart County</i> – All the land between the other character areas.	The remaining land remains largely rural, with a mix of agricultural activity, large lot residential, conservation lands, churches and some shops. Lots of landscape in natural settings or cultivated for agricultural uses. Development should be concentrated within the other character areas and this one left as rural as possible in scale and design.

Hart County Character Areas



0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Legend

	GDOT 2005 Roads		County Boundary
	Railroad		Municipalities
	Rivers & Streams	Character Areas	
	Lakes & Ponds		Georgia 17 Corridor
			Greater Hartwell
			Lake Hartwell Corridor
			Lavonia / I-85 Area
			Rural Hart County

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ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

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Development Patterns

Traditional Neighborhoods		
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.		
Statement	Yes	Comments
1. Our zoning code does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.		No zoning
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	Absence of zoning does allow this.
3. We have a street tree ordinance requiring new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.		NA
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas to make walking more comfortable in summer.		NA
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X	Informal
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X	
7. In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if desired.		NA
8. Some children can and do walk to school safely.		NA
9. Some children can and do bike to school safely.		NA
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods.		NA

Unincorporated Hart County does not exhibit the density of development conducive to traditional neighborhood designs, but does work with the Cities of Hartwell, Bowersville and Lavonia with regards to utility and infrastructure improvements that favor keeping higher density development within close proximity of existing urbanized areas.

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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	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	X	Limited
2. We are actively working to promote Brownfield redevelopment.		Potentially
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.		Unknown Concept
4. We have areas that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road.)		NA
5. We allow small lot development (<5000 SF) for some uses.		No

Infill opportunities are limited within unincorporated Hart County. Several farm structures, such as chicken houses and barns, are unoccupied and in disrepair, but there is not a concentration or overabundance of these conditions such that government action is required.

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	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where she was, based on our distinct characteristics.		The type of community would be recognized, one based on rural character with agricultural traditions
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	Delineated – Yes; Protected-Limited
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.		NA
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage.	X	Only on I-85
5. Our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		NA

Discussions to protect rural character have not progressed to protecting active farmland, as overall density remains the crucial issue. Many are accepting of growth and change in Hart County and feel the economy could prosper from incoming development that might improve the overall standard of living.

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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	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.	X	Limited
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		Are encouraging formal subdivisions to connect with paved roads.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.		Not applicable in the County.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.		Not applicable in the County.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible		Not applicable in the County.
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	X	Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X	Not Regulated

Hart County's rural nature restricts opportunities for pedestrian transportation except for encouragement of safe driving that shares roadways with bicyclists. As the Georgia Mountains Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is implemented and updated, and as more development comes to Hart County this issue will be readdressed for new opportunities. The County is willing to work with Cities and developers trying to provide such amenities.

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	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X	
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal)		Desirable
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.		Desirable
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X	Limited – goal is to be more active
6. Our community contributes to, and draws from, the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, education.	X	

Hart County and Hartwell are working to increase opportunities for tourist and cultural activity, including the development of a signature play about the heritage of the area. Both communities are using the attraction of the lake to foster the role of Hart County as a regional economic and cultural center.

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Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation		
The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining local character.		
Statement	Yes	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.		NA
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	X	
3. We want new development to complement historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure that happening.		Considered

Hart County does seem interested in preserving certain historic resources and sites, and there is a preference to retain the rural character and scale. Most of the historic structures within the unincorporated county, however, are churches, privately owned houses or agricultural structures that are not conducive to a district or formal protective measures by the County at this time. New development is encouraged to be compatible with existing architectural styles.

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	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		Considered
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace – either through direct purchase, or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		No.
3. We have a local land conservation program/ work with state or national land conservation programs to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.		There is Army Corps of Engineers' property within the county.
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.		Absence of regulations makes this allowable.

There is no pressure on the County to preserve greenspace at this time, given the sparse development and existing volume of undisturbed land and Army Corps of Engineers property. The County does have minimum buffer and environmental regulations for resource protection.

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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	Comment
1. We have a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	X	Environmental protective regulations as required by State law
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	X	To the extent required of State restrictions
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and have taken steps to protect them.		Comprehensive plan will begin update of this effort
4. Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.	X	
5. Our community has and actively enforces a tree preservation ordinance.		NA
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.		NA
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X	Regulated by State
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.)		Not above and beyond State required environmental criteria

Pace, scale and type of development coming to the unincorporated county has not begun to adversely affect the natural resources. The County will use the comprehensive planning process to encourage new development be directed towards the most sustainable areas.

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	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X	
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		Unknown
3. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X	
4. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth. These areas are based on the natural resources inventory of our community.		NA

Current and past use of population projections has been sporadic and inconsistent across organizations. The County is using this process as a springboard for improving coordination of growth preparedness across governmental organizations.

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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	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	Under development
2. Our ED organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.	X	As Part of other Initiatives
3. We recruit businesses that provide/ create sustainable products.		Not actively
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.	X	Goal for future

The County is using this planning process to improve efforts at coordinating economic development efforts. The County is part of a joint development authority and has become more proactive in business recruitment and retention, but the County has limited resources for these efforts.

Employment Options		
A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.		
Statement	Yes	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X	
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X	
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X	
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X	Limited

To the extent possible, the County has recognized trends and needs with respect to business recruitment and development and worked towards improving education opportunities for the labor pool. Many of these efforts are dependent on growth and outside forces to increase the economies of scale better suited for non-agricultural industries.

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Housing Choices		
A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.		
Statement	Yes	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	X	
2. People who work in our community can afford to live here.	X	
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate, and above-average incomes)		Some need for quality affordable housing.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and recommending smaller setbacks.		NA
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo-traditional" development.		NA
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X	
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X	
8. We support community development corporations building housing for lower-income households.	X	
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		Not currently
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.		No

Hart County has vacant housing units of various types and land for new housing construction. The lake area is receiving attention from new builders and developers but there remain opportunities for more higher-end housing. The County could improve with more quality affordable housing, as most lower end housing in the unincorporated area relies on rental units, the weakest of the rural residential units or older, manufactured housing.

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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	Comments
1. Our community provides work-force training options for our citizens.	X	
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X	
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X	
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.		Desired

Recent efforts within and outside the county have improved facilities and resources for education. Level of employment opportunities has not been so strong as to dictate changes to existing programs.

Governmental Relations

Local Self-determination		
Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.		
Statement	Yes	Comments
1. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	X	Open Government
2. We have processes in place that make it simple for the public to stay informed on land use and zoning decisions, and new development.		For what few regulations exist, this could be improved
3. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X	Will use local media, promotional materials and the internet.
4. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X	
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		No
6. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently and are sure that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.		NA
7. We have a budget for annual training for planning commission members and staff, and we use it.		NA
8. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community	X	

The County's residents have to date resisted efforts to expand the application of land use regulations. Recent improvements in communications technology have aided efforts to communicate government issues and actions in all regards and especially with respect to land use management.

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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	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for Comprehensive Planning purposes		Developing
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies	X	
3. We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services (parks and recreation, E911, Emergency Services, Police or Sheriff's Office, schools, water, sewer, other)	X	

Current levels of coordination with the Cities have been sufficient, but as the governments improve the applications of GIS technology and more detailed planning processes such as this one, there will likely be new opportunities for improved, cooperative planning.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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

- **Population**
- **Community Facilities and Services**
- **Housing**
- **Economic Development**
- **Natural Resources**
- **Historic Resources**
- **Intergovernmental Relations**
- **Land Use**

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Population

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

Issues:

- The county's population is largely shaped by trends from surrounding urban regions: Gainesville-Hall, Athens-Clarke, Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson.
- All three metro regions are growing in size and population, suggesting that Hart County's central location among these MSAs will experience comparable growth.
- Hart County is increasingly becoming a "retirement" community due to the low cost, low crime, warm climate, natural assets, and other quality of life features. Hart County may have to adjust the planning for select community facilities and services to address the needs of more elderly and proportionately fewer school-age children.
- While the smaller number races are expected to increase significantly in size over the planning period, the overall change in ratios will be negligible.
- The County needs to look forward during the next planning period to further this positive trend and help to overcome the higher poverty levels of the Southwestern section of the county by promoting infrastructure investments and economic development opportunities for this region.
- There is a notable volume of households (30%) earning below \$20,000. This suggests a significant portion of the county remains in, or at risk of falling into, poverty. It would be prudent for the community to review education and/or assistance programs for fixed income households under the possibility many residents are in untenable financial situations.
- The need for additional senior citizen services, such as home health care, recreational centers, specialized housing (such as opportunities for independent living), and transportation will have to be met. As the needs of this population are met the needs of the younger generation may suffer. If this were to occur the decline in the younger population may actually accelerate. The County needs to pay particular attention to the projected population trends so that the County can plan appropriately.
- Business patterns will also change because of an increase in the older population. As the population matures, businesses traditionally catering to young consumers will loose

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business. Business meeting the needs and demands of older consumers however could expect new growth and opportunity.

- Projections suggest the population will feature more adults with higher levels of education during the planning period. This will be important in attracting new employers to the County with quality jobs.

Community Facilities and Services

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

Issues:

- The jail facility does not meet the current needs and additional space will have to be addressed within the planning period. One option being explored is to expand the jail using the space currently occupied by the Sheriffs office administration and deputies.
- At least one fire station, Reed Creek, will need to be replaced with a larger facility over the next 20 years. Additional expansions or replacements of the other fire stations may also be needed over the planning period pending the scope of population growth.
- The long range plans for expansion of water service in the county will be limited by funding. Other funding sources will be needed over the planning period to meet the current projection of \$15-20M for the total proposed water expansions.
- Hart County does not provide any direct sewer service, instead contracting with local municipalities to provide this service in select areas. Expansions of these service areas may be required to accommodate some options of industrial development. Further, the abundance of septic systems in the county may address the short-term needs for treating wastewater but may also create long-term problems if leaking systems pollute local water bodies.
- As the retirement community continues to grow in Hart County additional recreation opportunities for this population may be needed. The current recreation programs focusing on organized sports may need to be expanded to meet the needs of other residents who do not participate in the traditional organized sports of baseball, basketball and football. These needs must be explored over the planning period.
- Three broad goals have been recommended for the Hart County Hospital including increased sensitivity to the healthcare marketplace, continued efforts of physician and staff recruitment as needed, and the improvement of the physical facilities at the hospital. While facilities for physical therapy have recently been renovated, improvements to other

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portions of the hospital are needed, including the emergency room, surgery, outpatient, laboratory, and radiology. Updated facilities for the emergency room and surgery are currently in the planning stages.

- Emergency response times to some areas of the County can be as high as 20 minutes. The County is investigating the potential to decentralize the EMS system and the potential benefits and negative effects that may result from this move.
- While the nursing home facilities are considered adequate in the short-term, local health care/social service professionals indicate that additional personal care home facilities would be well utilized. A market study is needed, however, to determine the exact need for such facilities.
- The library facilities are adequate as far as floor space is concerned, but the quality of those facilities and the collections of books and media are lacking. Currently the library operates out of a temporary facility due to mold contamination within the main facility. This problem will need to be addressed in the near future and will cost several hundred thousands of dollars to correct.
- Based upon these projections, public educational facilities are considered adequate throughout the planning horizon with the exception of the middle school where there is currently a need for additional space.
- Currently no major long-range improvement plans are proposed in Hart County other than the widening of Interstate 85. It is critical that Hart County and its municipalities create a priority of projects for consideration from the GDOT for larger improvement projects. By adopting local priorities Hart County can push the State to pursue local road construction programs, show unified local support that will advance the project and avoid the possibility of State money going to other communities instead.

Opportunities:

- While there are plans for expanding and improving the water system, there is ample water supply for the County over the planning period. This should aid in plans for economic development and the overall growth of the county.
- The general level of service from Hart County's utilities and services is considered very good. Most programs will need only expansions in the future as opposed to major revisions or amendments.
- Land is available for new and expanded facilities, including parks and new fire stations. Proper planning should enable the county to prepare for an increased population and meet future needs more effectively.

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- The potential exists for alternate transportation systems as the county grows. Trails and sidewalks linking popular destinations can be introduced to improve the accessibility of the community, and early planning can maximize the potential of such systems.

Economic Development

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

Issues:

- With the encroachment of several metropolitan areas reaching the area, Hart County's economy is transitioning from a predominantly Manufacturing and Agricultural base to one more Service based. Large-scale textile employers from the region have been closing down, while a majority of recent job growth has come from commercial and professional service industries. Hart County must continue to monitor these trends to ensure the labor force has the skills necessary to retain and attract desired employers.
- The county is considered lacking in Education and Health Service professionals compared to some neighboring communities. This could prove critical as the county grows if the school age or elderly populations assume larger shares of the resident population and alter the demand for local services.
- Hart County has experienced an overall drop in the total wages earned by local employers, with a majority of jobs in 2003 paying below the average wage rate of \$26,684 for the county. This trend implies the county may struggle to afford/maintain the desired high quality of life unless higher paying industries can be attracted to, or developed in, Hart County.
- Hart County's labor force is improving in overall education levels, a trend that should be maintained but will still require monitoring by the County. The overall skills of the labor force are comparable to those expected of the region but remains higher in those categories associated with lower wage Service industries or skilled manufacturing positions that might not be available for much longer. This trend can also be noted in the County's comparably high unemployment rates which have remained above 5.1% since 2000. There must be continued work to both improve the education and training services for the labor force while also fostering business development appropriate for the skills of the existing labor force.

Opportunities:

- Recent investments from Hart and neighboring Counties have improved the quality and extent of public utilities and telecommunications in the region, making the area more

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attractive to new and larger industries. Scheduled utility improvements should accommodate healthy business development throughout the planning period.

- Infrastructure improvements along Hwy 17 and the interchange with I-85, located immediately across the county line in Lavonia, will greatly improve the accessibility of Hart County. The industrial sites along the I-85 corridor have done well and have room for expansion.
- The encroachment of the metropolitan areas from Atlanta, Athens and Anderson, SC, will provide a larger market base for businesses within Hart County. While this will spur Service related positions the most, in time this could support more sustainable growth among Goods Producing and higher-paying Professional Service industries.

Housing

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

Issues:

- As the region grows Hart County will need to ensure an efficient mix of housing types is maintained. There is an increased need for multi-family residential both for transitional, starter housing and as a measure of affordability. Some of this need may be addressed within the city limits of Hartwell or Bowersville, but the overall mix of types and levels of affordability must be monitored for the whole county.
- There will also be a need for more housing for the elderly. The 65+ age-group will see strong growth in Hart County within the planning timeframe. To properly care and house this population group will require special needs housing. This refers to the accessibility of housing design, affordability and the proximity to health care and amenities demanded by seniors.
- Hart County does feature a significant amount of manufactured housing. This fact alone does not imply a problem, but must be noted in the event the County experience problems with housing conditions or notable depressions of property values. Manufactured housing units are considered the most susceptible to lack of investment within the short-term, and can indicate a lack of quality affordable housing and/or lower than desired wage levels among local employment centers.
- Hart County also exhibits some housing with incomplete plumbing and or kitchen facilities. This is a direct indication of the level of impoverished households in the area. While Hart County's levels for these housing units is not considered egregious, the fact that such units remain indicates the market is still working to raise the standard of living above such conditions.

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- There is a significant amount of seasonal housing within Hart County, largely due to Lake Hartwell and wildlife areas used for hunting. Seasonal units are often considered a positive in their ability to generate tax revenue with only marginal demands for public services, but they can also contribute to extreme fluctuations in the economy and make things difficult for employers trying to stabilize businesses and employment. The County should work with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to monitor the impact of such housing.

Opportunities:

- Improvements in technology and investment in the local infrastructure have raised the accessibility of Hart County. More and more households are seeking residence in rural areas with a high quality of life now that telecommunications and other features are making urban-style amenities available in places like Hartwell.
- The Lake and rural character of the county will continue to serve as a draw for new residential development, likely of high quality. This means the County and the Cities of Hartwell and Bowersville will be able to work with the development community with healthy market conditions and continue to improve the overall quality of housing in the area.

Natural Resources

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

Issues:

- Lake Hartwell and several major creeks within Hart County should be monitored for and protected from possible negative impacts from development. Even as new development in the area might employ proper measures for stormwater management and erosion & sedimentation control, the potential exists for development to impact these water bodies. Given the importance of the lake, rivers and creeks as sources of water for public drinking, irrigation and as recreational attractions, it is important for the County to monitor how development is altering stormwater run-off patterns and ensure no contaminants are introduced into the water.
- In addition to the simple value of the surface waters there are a host of environmentally sensitive resources within Hart County, including wetlands, floodplains and water supply watersheds. There are two water supply watersheds within the county, servicing the City of Hartwell and downstream the City of Elberton. The watershed associated with the City of Hartwell intake is considered exempt from one layer of State regulations

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regarding environmental protection, but should still be monitored for impacts from development considering the value of the public water system.

- A large portion of the County is considered prime agricultural land or of statewide importance for agricultural use. This does not imply a requirement for agricultural activity, but does suggest the use should be preserved and promoted where and when possible.
- Given the presence of environmentally sensitive resources within the county it is of some concern that there are only marginal measures for land use management within Hart County. Past public votes have turned down the concept of formal zoning, and the parcel and land cover mapping is in the process of being updated. More accurate information and some progressive measures might be required to protect any of these identified natural resources.
- Increased development within the county may adversely impact some threatened or endangered species of plants and animals, including the Red-cockaded woodpecker and the Southern Bald Eagle. While no immediate action is considered necessary, the County must work with the Department of Natural resources and other organizations to ensure the habitat for these species is maintained as best as possible.

Opportunities:

- The County is working with the Georgia Mountains RDC to update its mapping system and GIS database. This will give the County an improved understanding of where natural resources are in relation to development patterns, and enable the County to be more proactive in preserving its natural resources.
- Improvements in land use management tools and best management practices for development can provide the County more options for educating residents and protecting natural resources. There are additional sources of support and program funding to assist Hart County with the implementation of protective measures, as well.
- The increasing appeal of outdoor and agricultural related tourism in north Georgia provides Hart County with a medium for raising the awareness of protecting natural resources. As these industries gain in financial and popular value it becomes easier and more prudent for Hart County to invest in protection programs and gain support from area residents.

Historic Resources

Historic resources are those man-made sites, structures and resources that contribute to the identity of a community and are considered to have a worth beyond their direct economic value. Historic resources are typically defined as buildings, objects or sites that are listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places because of their associations with certain times and people in history.

Issues:

- County appears to be losing some existing and potential historic structures through demolition or neglect. At the least, a large volume of aging structures within the area might be underutilized or are failing to be considered historically significant due to one of several factors (lack of information about the structure, lack of understanding about possible benefits of recognizing historic significance...)
- Contributing to the impact of historic sites noted above, there is no current, formal inventory of historic and archaeological sites within Hart County. In order for the County to become pro-active with regards to historic resources an inventory must be done to identify such resources and classify their individual needs and potential.

Opportunities:

- The possibility does exist for developing an inventory of historic sites, even at various levels of detail. Improvements in technology and the level of education and resources available to support Hart County make the prospect of such an undertaking more feasible. The Georgia Mountains RDC, the University of Georgia and other organizations are readily available to assist the County with doing an inventory and cataloging the information for improved record keeping and creating the database and mapping necessary to enable area stakeholders to be more proactive in preserving and promoting the value of these sites and structures.
- There is an opportunity for increased tourism and economic growth related to investing in the area's historic sites. Several of the existing and potential sites have direct and notable significance to the history of the region, particularly of the development of the local agricultural industry. The preservation and promotion of these structures could foster an increase awareness of local identity, spur reinvestment in properties (even if not considered historically significant), and contribute to a collection of publicly accessible sites for pure tourism.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Many government services and facilities are managed through cooperative arrangements with other entities and/or neighboring communities. To ensure the local government is maximizing the benefits of these relationships it should inventory and evaluate the structure of such arrangements, keeping them up-to-date and based on informed assessment of local conditions.

Issues:

- *Cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers* – Hart County and the City of Hartwell should encourage the Corps to consider extended summer pool levels for Lake Hartwell to maximize the lake’s use for recreation and tourism. The County should also work with the Corps to assist in efforts to protect water levels in times of drought.
- *Growth management* – The County should continue to work with neighboring communities to monitor and evaluate development trends so as to ensure Hart County is able to address new issues and maintain sustainable land use patterns. The County could improve its review of regional land use and development information.

Opportunities:

- *Existing intergovernmental cooperative actions* – Measures such as the Service Delivery Agreement and the Special Purpose Local Option Tax (SPLOST) provide an existing framework for expanding cooperation and communication between Hart County and adjoining governments. Hart County should work to make sure every multi-jurisdictional program is being utilized to support community development efforts.
- *Joint Development Authority* – The cooperation of Franklin, Hart and Stephens County has greatly assisted with the economic development of the I-85 corridor near Lavonia. This type of partnership has enabled all three counties to reap benefits from the Interstate access and maximize utility service. Hart County should continue to work with the other governments in expanding this effort and exploring additional opportunities for the Joint Development Authority to grow business within the region.

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Land Use

Land use and transportation are the main factors of community development planning. Ensuring the best balance of land uses, levels of accessibility and the overall sustainability of a community requires an understanding of development trends and issues.

Issues:

- *Desire to protect rural character* – Hart County is still largely a rural community that reflects its agricultural history. Most residents wish to retain this sense of character even while pursuing some new growth and industrial expansion. The County should work to maintain the generally low density and rural development patterns as best as possible to preserve this character.
- *Land use balance in growth corridors* – Hart County has fairly well defined areas receiving the majority of new growth and development: I-85, Ga 17 and around Lake Hartwell. Each corridor is experiencing different types and scales of growth pressures and features different priorities (See *Character Areas*). The County and cities should monitor development trends in these areas for possible land use conflicts and to properly gauge their impact on public facilities and services.

Opportunities:

- *Improved land use planning* – Hart County is working with the GMRDC to begin formal application of parcel-level GIS technology and is seeking new aerial imagery. It is anticipated that within a couple years the County should have a much more advanced system and database for monitoring and managing land use.
- *Cooperative land use planning* – Hart County and its cities could improve formal measures to coordinate land use planning. Currently the communities do collaborate on the Service Delivery Strategy and no major land use conflicts have arisen to date, however, as growth pressures escalate and the character of the communities evolves each community may be called upon for new/more levels of formal land use management policies. Given the relatively small scale of existing such policies it would be easier for the communities to lay the groundwork for coordination of land use management measures.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The Community Participation Program outlines the basic public involvement process that will be used to ensure Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan represents the values and desires of the residents. Ensuring the participation of a variety of stakeholder groups in developing the Community Agenda will also improve efforts for implementing the Plan by securing wider public understanding, support and cooperation.

The completion of the Community Assessment provides a baseline of information about the community to assist with the public involvement process, assuring the participants have a better, understanding of the conditions and issues involved. The Community Participation Program will guide how this information is presented to the open public and various stakeholder groups, whose responses will refine the information, prioritize the issues and goals and identify the preferred alternatives for achieving those goals.

Identification of Stakeholders

Public involvement for developing the Community Agenda will be accomplished by directed measures for three sub-groups: 1) The General Public, 2) a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, 3) and Elected Officials and Chief Government Officers. This approach is designed to accommodate the differing levels of understanding of the planning process and to maximize the energy of those involved.

The first sub-group to receive consideration will be the General Public. A variety of open forums, and displays will be used to engage all of the residents, property owners and business owners of Hart County to ensure they've full opportunity to review, comment and direct the planning process. The Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center will assist the County staff in educating the public about the planning process and the Comprehensive Plan document, emphasizing the key elements of the Plan that are driven by and wholly about the general public of Hart County: The Community Vision and the goals and tasks outlined to achieve that vision.

The second sub-group targeted is the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. This committee will feature up to 12 different people from a variety of stakeholder groups, but may be smaller pending the availability of those invited to participate. The role of this committee will be to assist in analyzing the input received from the General Public and to provide for deeper discussion and analysis than may be allowed through the open public forums. Their participation on this committee will provide an additional layer of perspective on the grand dreams and concerns of the general citizenry. Representatives for this committee will be invited from several local key businesses, homeowners associations and other organizations with an active interest in community development issues. The following organizations have been targeted for their involvement due to their critical roles in Hart County:

School Board	US Army Corps of Engineers
Chamber of Commerce	Ga. Department of Natural Resources
Joint Development Authority	Hart County Industrial Building Authority

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The third sub-group to be addressed will be the Elected and Administrative Officers of Hart County. The comprehensive plan process was devised to provide local public discourse and direction about the management of local communities. As the organization principally responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, it is vital that the officials within the Hart County government not only participate in the process but understand the full scope of what's being proposed. They can maximize the opportunity to listen to the public's comments, identify what the government offices can and cannot do and can refine their operations to ensure they match the goals of the residents and business owners.

Public Involvement and Comment

A variety of measures will be employed to secure involvement from each of the three sub-groups. Each measure is designed to provide another layer in the process of identifying and prioritizing the issues, goals and objectives for Hart County.

The primary measure will be direct public involvement through open forums. Several public hearings will be held over a two to three month period to review and refine the Plan material, beginning with a Vision and progressing towards the action items designed to make that Vision a reality. Ideally these forums will be held in close succession (no more than 4 weeks apart) help the public more easily see this progression and maintain their level of energy.

In addition to the open forums the public will have additional opportunities to review material and provide comment. Several displays offering information about the Plan and copies of material developed at each stage will be set up throughout the county in places such as the library, County administrative offices and elsewhere. Citizens will be encouraged to review these items and provide comment to the County at any time during the process. They will also have the opportunity to track the process online via the GMRDC and/or another local web site and to submit comments via email. All comments received will be recorded for the process.

During the public forums GMRDC staff will lead discussion through prioritization of the issues and objectives for Hart County and through reviews of the Character Area maps to try and facilitate small area planning. Some survey methods may be used for prioritizing the issues and objectives, both one-time surveys featured at the events and extended period surveys available for completion for up to 2 weeks. Some fashion of extended period surveys will be used to allow for participation by those people unable to attend events and allow others to fully review material at home before responding.

Advertising for the process and public events will be handled through several means. The local newspaper will be used for general advertising and will be contacted directly to provide notice of key events and offer cooperation for the development of any feature articles about the process. Copies of select material will be provided to the press directly and in electronic form for ease of reproduction. In addition to working through the newspaper, flyers advertising the process will be set up in several key public locations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the library. Businesses will be recruited for assistance as well in hopes of placing flyers in their establishments. These flyers will be designed such that they provide information about the next

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public event as well as the locations for finding copies of Plan materials at the public displays or online. To assist with recognition and build the brand of the planning process in the public eye, the flyers will be consistent in design and placed in the same locations throughout the process, using different color pages to signify updated information.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will be called upon to provide more direct and detailed levels of participation in this process. Members will be given full copies of the Community Assessment to review and will be contacted directly by the GMRDC and/or County staff about Committee meetings, surveys and public forums. The Committee will meet at least three times: Once to confirm the issues and opportunities identified within the Community Assessment and establish a preliminary vision and objectives, a second time to refine the vision and objectives and review comments from the General Public, and a third time to prioritize the objectives and develop the draft Community Agenda.

The Elected and Administrative Officers of Hart County receive attention and direct contact same as that afforded the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee with an emphasis on matching the objectives of the Plan to the effective operations of the County government. There will be at least two meetings held during the process exclusively for this sub-group, with additional follow up of individual staff as needed.

Development of the Community Agenda

The overall process for devising the Community Agenda will focus on using the information generated in the Community Assessment for confirming and prioritizing issues and opportunities, developing the Vision and then crafting the goals and objectives that will address the issues and advance Hart County towards the stated Vision. The general timeframe for the process will be approximately 8-10 weeks (given the County's due date for QLG status), seeking to capitalize on a high-energy campaign for public involvement but allowing for evolving conditions. The GMRDC staff will work with the Advisory Committee and County staff to develop the actual document throughout the process, allowing everyone to see and understand that the work is contributing to a very tangible product that will be accessible in the near future.

It should be noted, Hart County and the GMRDC will continue to solicit public review and comment on the Comprehensive Plan even after it's approval. Public participation in this issue has been marginal at best and barring significant changes in this trend the County recognizes that it will take time to educate and communicate with residents about the scope and nature of the Comprehensive Plan.

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Proposed Community Agenda Development Process

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
<i>Identify and invite members for Plan Advisory Committee</i>	Week 1
<i>Begin Displays and Promotion</i> Create promotional material, make copies of Plan material available, establish locations for distribution of promotional material	Week 1
<i>Open Forums & Committee meetings - Initial</i> Review Community Assessment, confirm Issues and Opportunities, discuss Vision	Week 2-3
<i>Update Displays/ Communicate with Committee</i> Distribute updated information about draft Vision statement, key issues and goals for Hart County	Week 3-4
<i>Open Forums & Committee Meetings – Follow Up</i> Confirm Vision for Hart County, prioritize issues and goals, update Character Area maps and begin crafting Future Development Scenarios	Week 4-5
<i>Update Displays/ Communicate with Committee</i> Create draft Community Agenda and distribute for review	Week 5-6
<i>Open Forums and Draft Agenda Reviews</i>	Week 6-7
<i>County Hearing and Approval of Community Agenda</i>	Week 8+