

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009-2029

COMMUNITY AGENDA

for

THE TOWN OF NEWBORN

October 2009

Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
Planning Department



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The Community Agenda represents the heart of the community's Comprehensive Plan, providing a road map to help the community achieve its desired future. The document is based on the findings of the Community Assessment, information gathered at public meetings, and analysis and review by planners at the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center.

The Community Agenda outlines the community's vision, identifies the key issues and opportunities facing the community, sets forth a set of supportive policies to help guide local decision makers, and defines a short-term work program outlining the actions through which the community will begin achieving its goals over the next five years.

1.2 Scope

The Community Agenda was prepared under the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1 - Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (effective May 1, 2005), specifically Chapter 110-12-1-.05 - Community Agenda.

The Community Agenda includes the following three components:

- Community Vision that includes a vision statement and a description of future development patterns
- Community Issues and Opportunities that define and prioritize concerns and areas for improvement facing the community
- Implementation Program that defines the community's supportive policies and outlines a five-year action plan within the Short-Term Work Program

Local elected and appointed officials will use the Community Agenda as a reference in making land use, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, housing, and capital investment decisions. The Future Development Map provides a representation of the community's vision and illustrates the general location of desired land uses. The goals and policies also help guide rezoning decisions and represent the basic essence of the plan.

It is important to understand that the plan is a living document and intended to be updated regularly (at minimum, five-year intervals as mandated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs) to reflect changes in local conditions.

2. COMMUNITY VISION

The community vision element of the Community Agenda reflects the Town’s long-term goals and desired future with respect to future development. The vision paints a picture of what the community desires to become and describes favored development types and patterns.

2.1 Vision Statement

The Town of Newborn references its unique history while looking forward. We envision a vibrant, thriving “Main Street” district that serves as a focal point for economic and social activity, complemented by neighborhoods and connections that promote transportation choices. We recognize the rural nature of our community and see this as an opportunity for preservation while seeking more employment options for residents.

2.2 Community Character Areas

Community character areas attempt to address the overall pattern of development within an area rather than focusing on the specific use of individual parcels. Areas are defined in terms of desired development characteristics and appropriate types of land uses. The purpose of the community character area is to:

- Link the Town’s vision, goals, policies, and regulations
- Define the mixing and integration of appropriate and complimentary uses
- Provide guidance to developers and policymakers regarding the qualitative aspects of desired development patterns
- Provide land use compatibility and transition standards
- Coordinate the goals and policies of all other components of the Comprehensive Plan with land use decisions

The Future Development Map outlines the general intent for accommodating growth while maintaining a positive relationship between the natural and built environments, past, present, and future. As a whole, the map illustrates the relationship of land use to special attention areas, supportive infrastructure, and community facilities into the future. The arrangement of land development patterns indicates long-term strategies for controlling growth and preserving environmental, cultural, and historical resources.

The various Character Areas represent the Town’s desired development patterns on the Future Development Map. The map reflects the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and policies as well as current development patterns and expected trends. Each of the map designations illustrates the predominant types of land uses proposed within the general areas. The map, along with the supportive goals and policies should be considered together as a guide for land use, transportation, economic development, housing, community facilities, and other government decisions.

The following table provides an overview of each of the character areas. Important to note is that entries in the Zoning Compatibility column are based on a broad range of land types and locations, and that not all zoning classifications will necessarily be appropriate in all places within a character area.

| Character Area | Description of Character Area | Zoning Compatibility | Appropriate Land Uses |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Historic Newborn | Original town areas. Residences of varying sizes and styles, historic town center, public-use facilities, and commercial and light industrial space. New development should complement existing historic character. | CN, RE-2 | Residential, Public, Commercial, Office, Mixed-use, Recreation |
| Town Neighborhood | Traditional residential development with civic space scattered throughout. Low-impact, neighborhood-level commercial also encouraged. | CN, RE-2 | Residential, Commercial, Public, Recreation |
| Estate/Rural Neighborhood | Low-density areas, typically on the periphery of the Town, that feature little divergence from the prevailing residential character. | RE-1, AR | Residential, Agriculture, Public, Recreation |
| Rural | Primarily undeveloped or developed at extremely low densities, this area is typically wooded or agricultural. | A | Agriculture, Public, Recreation |
| Major Corridor | (Includes area outside Historic Newborn.) Serves as gateway into Newborn and provides space for stand-alone commercial, and office activity. | CN, RE-2 | Commercial, Office, Residential, Public |

*Newborn's zoning ordinance refers to AR (Agricultural Residential) as "Primarily large acreage or larger lot subdivisions of relatively low density development," yet defines this classification in its "Development Standards for Residential Zoning Districts Table" as its highest-density residential area. The table above refers to the AR zone's intended low-density character, not the apparent higher-density minimum lot acreage exhibited in the code's standards table. (The Short Term Work Program section of this document recommends revisiting and reevaluating the tabulated section of the Town's zoning code for consistency with its intended descriptions.)

HISTORIC NEWBORN



Description of Character

The overall character of the area is intended to present the historic center of Newborn. Much of the community's vision for this area focuses on preserving existing historic buildings and developing in a low-impact, context-sensitive manner. Residents would like to focus on encouraging stores and other small town-appropriate elements such as doctors' offices and live-work, up-and-down mixed-use development. While a variety of architectural styles may be appropriate, the intent is that new construction is scaled and massed similarly to what exists currently.

Modifications and development in Historic Newborn must be mindful of potential effects on both the historic nature and the future experience. While a mixture of uses within the Historic Newborn area is appropriate, land use patterns, streetscapes, and natural environments should remain largely unaltered. Preservation of the district's architectural and civic history must be paramount, as must be the situation of buildings and investment in public infrastructure to encourage walking, bicycling, and other transportation choices.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Residential - moderate-to-high densities, blending with and complementing historic character
- Public and institutional
- Offices - small-scale, low number of employees
- Commercial - retail and services, small-scale, low number of employees
- Mixed-Use (commercial or office with residential)
- Recreational facilities

Compatible Zoning Categories

- **RE-2** – Rural Estate
- **CN** – Commercial Neighborhood

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Historic Newborn area:

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

- **Heritage Preservation:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- **Open Space Preservation:** 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.
- **Transportation Alternatives:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle lanes and routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of non-automobile transportation should be encouraged.
- **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.

Implementation Strategies

| Goal | Implementation Measures |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residential Infill Development – Ensure that new infill development is compatible with its neighborhood (DCA model code available). |
| Natural and Cultural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek National Register of Historic Places status for historic structures where appropriate. ● Require infill and material changes to historic properties or districts to follow design standards to maintain historic integrity and significance. ● Provide information to interested property owners regarding available state and federal incentives for the rehabilitation of historic structures. ● Provide information on funding opportunities for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources. ● Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trails networks. ● Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers. ● Protect tree canopy. ● Pocket Parks – Establish open spaces owned and managed by local people, providing free, open access to greenspace and protecting wildlife and landscape. |
| Community Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate, maintain, and repair municipal utility systems (as needed). ● Site schools at locations convenient to residential areas and to encourage safe and active transportation. |
| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation Enhancements Program – Seek funding for transportation choices projects, including sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use trails, and streetscape improvements. ● Create a network of trails and greenways to positively impact the community by providing transportation, recreation, and educational opportunities. ● Traffic Calming – Develop physical improvements to decrease traffic speeds and volumes in residential areas, increasing bicycle- and pedestrian-friendliness. |
| Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require appropriate buffers and landscaping between incompatible uses. ● Sign Regulations – Control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertizing signs (DCA model code available). ● Design Standards – Ensure that new development and improvements to existing properties is compatible with the existing/historic character. ● Consider form-based concerns when reviewing new development to ensure compatibility. ● Direct growth to suitable locations while preserving sensitive or otherwise critical areas through transfer of development rights. |

TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



Description of Character

The prevailing feature of this character area will be similar to Newborn's existing neighborhood developments with moderate residential density, pedestrian orientation, and street connectivity. The Town Neighborhood areas maximize infrastructure efficiency and offer relatively concentrated development to allow preservation or lower densities in more sensitive and rural spaces.

While the current zoning ordinance prohibits residential development at densities that appear already to exist in several areas of Newborn, the Town's leadership may wish to consider whether the traditional neighborhood model of Newborn's earlier days is one to emulate (this would likely require a code amendment). Dwelling densities will vary based on current and future zoning. Neighborhood-appropriate public-institutional activity is also encouraged to facilitate walking, bicycling, and community interaction, provided it is developed within the character and context of the neighborhood. Recreation, education, public administration, healthcare, or other similar uses will support the character of this area.

Small, neighborhood-scale parks and networks of greenways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and extensive sidewalks will be important to this classification. Street connectivity should be incorporated within and between developments.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Residential - varying densities
- Commercial - retail and services, small-scale, low number of employees
- Public and institutional
- Recreational facilities

Compatible Zoning Categories

- **RE-2** – Rural Estate
- **CN** – Commercial Neighborhood

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Neighborhood Residential area:

- **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, to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.
- **Appropriate Business:** 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.
- **Employment Opportunities:** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

- **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.
- **Heritage Preservation:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- **Open Space Preservation:** 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 greenbelt/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.
- **Transportation Alternatives:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle lanes and routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of non-automobile transportation should be encouraged.
- **Traditional Neighborhoods:** Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

Implementation Strategies

| Goal | Implementation Measures |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residential Infill Development – Ensure that new infill development is compatible with its neighborhood (DCA model code available). |
| Natural and Cultural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek National Register of Historic Places status for historic structures where appropriate. ● Require infill and material changes to historic properties or districts to follow design standards to maintain historic integrity and significance. ● Provide information to interested property owners regarding available state and federal incentives for the rehabilitation of historic structures. ● Provide information on funding opportunities for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources. ● Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trails networks. ● Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers. ● Protect tree canopy. ● Pocket Parks – Establish open spaces owned and managed by local people, providing free, open access to greenspace and protecting wildlife and landscape. |
| Community Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate, maintain, and repair municipal utility systems (as needed). ● Site schools at locations convenient to residential areas and to encourage safe and active transportation. |
| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation Enhancements Program – Seek funding for transportation choices projects, including sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use trails, and streetscape improvements. ● Create a network of trails and greenways to positively impact the community by providing transportation, recreation, and educational opportunities. ● Traffic Calming – Develop physical improvements to decrease traffic speeds and volumes in residential areas, increasing bicycle- and pedestrian-friendliness. |
| Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require appropriate buffers and landscaping between incompatible uses. ● Sign Regulations – Control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertizing signs (DCA model code available). ● Design Standards – Ensure that new development and improvements to existing properties is compatible with the existing/historic character. ● Consider form-based concerns when reviewing new development to ensure compatibility. ● Direct growth to suitable locations while preserving sensitive or otherwise critical areas through transfer of development rights. |

ESTATE/RURAL RESIDENTIAL



Description of Character

Preserving rural character while accommodating limited residential growth is the predominant theme of this area. The aim is to encourage preservation of land currently used at lower intensities and/or environmentally critical areas, and to discourage incompatible uses. This area will feature large residential lots with limited infrastructure access (sewerage is typically not available and water access varies).

Open space and master-planned developments are encouraged to preserve greenspace and retain the rural characteristics of the land designated as Estate/Rural Residential. These areas may also accommodate recreation and public or institutional uses.

The intent is to provide a lower level of service to the area, in terms of transportation and infrastructure investment, in order to reduce development pressures and retain existing rural qualities. Street connectivity should be incorporated within and between new developments.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Residential - low densities
- Limited agricultural operations
- Public and institutional
- Recreational facilities

Compatible Zoning Categories

- **RE-1** – Rural Estate
- **AR** – Agricultural Residential

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Rural Residential area:

- **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 traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- **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.
- **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. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Implementation Strategies

| Goal | Implementation Measures |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Natural and Cultural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage voluntary resource preservation through conservation easements. ● Protect critical lands by developing conservation subdivisions. ● Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trails networks. ● Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers. ● Protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses by directing all new development to appropriate areas as defined on the Future Development Map. ● Seek National Register of Historic Places status for historic structures where appropriate. ● Provide information to interested property owners regarding available state and federal incentives for the rehabilitation of historic structures. ● Provide information on funding opportunities for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources. ● Protect tree canopy. |
| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design streets to maximize efficiency (minimize pavement width) and safety, and to accommodate all users. |
| Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cluster development to encourage land use efficiency, natural resources protection, and transportation choices. ● Design developments to be context-sensitive. ● Consider form-based concerns when reviewing new development to ensure compatibility. ● Concentrate growth in suitable locations while preserving sensitive or otherwise critical areas through transfer of development rights. |

RURAL



Description of Character

The overall character of the area can be classified as primarily rural, agricultural, or conservation space designated for preservation over the duration of the planning horizon.

Extremely low residential densities may be supported within this area where residential farms exist, but the intent is to deter development while preserving natural and agricultural resources – residential structures should not comprise the main or significant use of any one parcel. Rather, while houses may exist on land that is predominantly set for open space or agriculture, the predominant use will assume a more rural nature.

Parks, greenways and multi-use paths, habitat preservation areas (including conservation easements, which can also be invoked to protect agricultural land), and other civic or private open spaces are encouraged.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Agricultural operations
- Public and institutional
- Recreational facilities

Compatible Zoning Categories

- A – Agricultural

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Rural Residential area:

- **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 traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- **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.
- **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. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Implementation Strategies

| Goal | Implementation Measures |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Natural and Cultural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage voluntary resource preservation through conservation easements. ● Protect critical lands by developing conservation subdivisions. ● Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trails networks. ● Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers. ● Protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses by directing all new development to appropriate areas as defined on the Future Development Map. ● Seek National Register of Historic Places status for historic structures where appropriate. ● Provide information to interested property owners regarding available state and federal incentives for the rehabilitation of historic structures. ● Provide information on funding opportunities for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources. ● Protect tree canopy. |
| Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concentrate growth in suitable locations while preserving sensitive or otherwise critical areas through transfer of development rights. |

MAJOR CORRIDOR



Description of Character

This areas represents the State Route 142 corridor through Newborn (excluding the extent of the Historic Newborn character area), which will serve as the gateway to much of the Town’s traffic and as an activity area for shopping, social life, and recreation. The corridor is approximately one mile in length and is delineated at 150 feet on each side of the road centerline. Current use is mostly residential with limited commercial and public/institutional applications, though the Town envisions this character area as its opportunity to expand its tax base with new retail, restaurants, and offices.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Residential - varying densities
- Commercial - retail and services, small-scale, low number of employees
- Public and institutional
- Recreational facilities

Compatible Zoning Categories

- **RE-2** – Rural Estate
- **CN** – Commercial Neighborhood

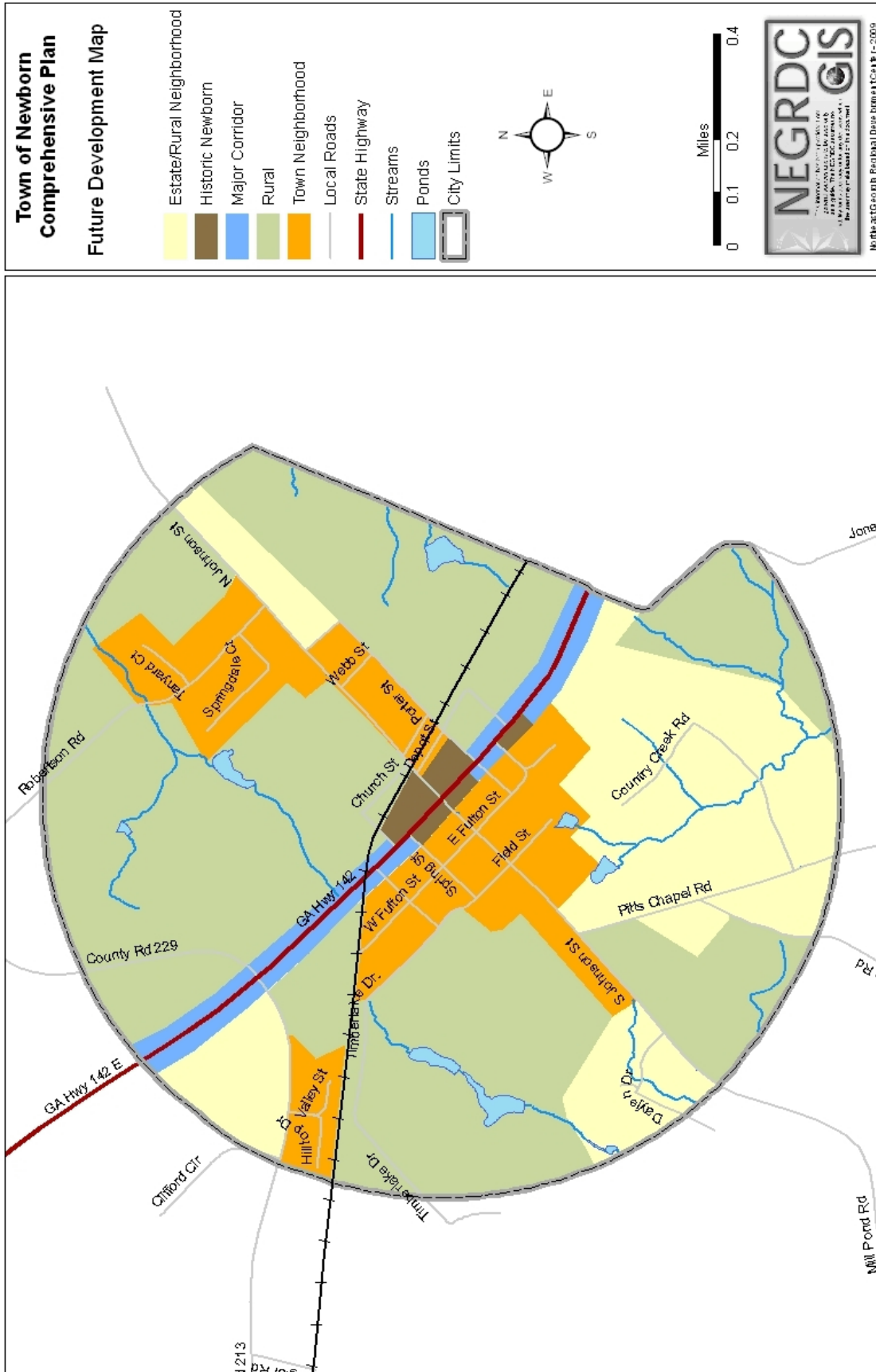
Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Environmentally Sensitive areas:

- **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.
- **Appropriate Business:** 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.
- **Employment Opportunities:** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
- **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.
- **Regional Solutions:** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.
- **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.
- **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, to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.
- **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 greenbelt/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.
- **Transportation Alternatives:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle lanes and routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of non-automobile transportation should be encouraged.
- **Traditional Neighborhoods:** Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

Implementation Strategies

| Goal | Implementation Measures |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Economic Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choose businesses to recruit and support. ● Gather community opinions on economic development. |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residential Infill Development – Ensure that new infill development is compatible with its neighborhood (DCA model code available). |
| Natural and Cultural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek National Register of Historic Places status for historic structures where appropriate. ● Require infill and material changes to historic properties or districts to follow design standards to maintain historic integrity and significance. ● Provide information to interested property owners regarding available state and federal incentives for the rehabilitation of historic structures. ● Provide information on funding opportunities for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources. ● Protect tree canopy. ● Pocket Parks – Establish open spaces owned and managed by local people, providing free, open access to greenspace and protecting wildlife and landscape. |
| Community Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate, maintain, and repair municipal utility systems (as needed). ● Site schools at locations convenient to residential areas and to encourage safe and active transportation. |
| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation Enhancements Program – Seek funding for transportation choices projects, including sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use trails, and streetscape improvements. ● Create a network of trails and greenways to positively impact the community by providing transportation, recreation, and educational opportunities. ● Traffic Calming – Develop physical improvements to decrease traffic speeds and volumes in residential areas, increasing bicycle- and pedestrian-friendliness. |
| Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require appropriate buffers and landscaping between incompatible uses. ● Sign Regulations – Control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertizing signs (DCA model code available). ● Design Standards – Ensure that new development and improvements to existing properties is compatible with the existing/historic character. ● Consider form-based concerns when reviewing new development to ensure compatibility. ● Direct growth to suitable locations while preserving sensitive or otherwise critical areas through transfer of development rights. |



3. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Population

Aging Population – As in many communities in Georgia and across the country, Newborn has seen the greatest population increases in recent years among residents aged 50 to 64 years of age. This trend presents the Town of Newborn with both challenges and opportunities. In order for the town to remain attractive to residents within this demographic as they age, additional housing options, local services, and accessibility considerations will need to be taken into account in future development and infrastructure decisions. This is addressed in the Goals & Policies section of the Implementation Program.

Volunteer Work – Newborn residents have a strong commitment to their community, and have indicated their desire to be included in work that the Town’s leadership undertakes. They will be a valuable resource for implementing this plan and in other areas such as Neighborhood Watch or operation of the Library.

3.2 Economic Development

Economic Development Vision – Newborn does not currently operate within a comprehensive vision for economic development for the community. In order to encourage and attract small businesses and entrepreneurs that would build upon and enhance Newborn’s small-town, historic feel, town officials, in partnership with residents and the business community, would do well to develop such a vision. This could lead to the creation of strategies promoting locally- and regionally-made products and services and the proprietors that offer them.

Commercial Buildings – Community leaders referenced their desire to improve the appearance of commercially-zoned buildings by encouraging facade and parking improvements. This can be done with the help of the County.

Employment – As in many small, rural towns, most workers residing in the Town of Newborn commute to other communities in order to take advantage of employment opportunities. U.S. Census data for Newborn also demonstrate a lower percentage of females in the workforce in general and a higher unemployment rate among those females in the workforce in comparison to Newton County and the State of Georgia. A combination of business recruitment and workforce training programs may help to develop more local employment opportunities for all residents of Newborn. This is in part addressed in the Goals & Policies section of the Implementation Program.

3.3 Housing

Multi-Family Housing – As of April 2008, the town’s zoning ordinance no longer provides for multi-family housing to be developed in Newborn. In the future, town officials could consider allowing some multi-family units to be developed to fit within the existing fabric of the community in order to accommodate this observed demand. Attendees of the public meetings associated with this plan, however, have indicated a desire to continue to avoid building multi-family housing in Newborn.

Single-Family Housing – Newborn’s zoning ordinance does not permit small or moderately-sized single-family homes. With a dearth of multi-family housing, this factor may contribute to the absence of life-cycle housing options for residents across a spectrum of ages and income levels. Again, opinions provided through this planning process’ public meeting note that Newborn residents are comfortable with the Town’s zoning ordinance as it currently exists, although some residents did suggest looking for ways for less fortunate people to have homes in Newborn. Design standards were also discussed as a way to ensure housing is compatible and appropriate.

Deteriorated Housing Conditions – According to town officials, housing units in some residential neighborhoods within the Town of Newborn are showing signs of dilapidation. This decline can be slowed and reversed with the employment of a code enforcement officer to preserve and enhance the existing housing stock where possible.

3.4 Natural & Cultural Resources

Historical, Cultural, and Natural Resources Inventory – Newborn does not currently maintain an inventory or database of all historical, cultural or natural resources in the community, presenting a challenge to those interested in preserving the local heritage. A detailed inventory would provide a base from which educational and tourism programs could develop, providing enrichment for both residents of Newborn and visitors to the town.

Farmland Protection – Newborn does not currently have a policy in place to protect farmland within the community from future development. A farmland protection plan bolsters the economy through continued production of goods, while maintaining and promoting local agricultural heritage.

Land Conservation – The Town of Newborn does not actively engage in the preservation of green space and/or sensitive environmental areas. Conservation of this land improves the quality of life of current and future residents and helps to guide residential and commercial growth into more appropriate areas of town.

Air Quality – Newton County is listed as a non-attainment area by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for Particulate Matter 2.5 and Ozone (8-hour). With its small size and lack of industry, Newborn does not likely contribute significantly to the problem, nor could the Town be expected to ameliorate significantly the situation. However, Newborn officials should work with the County, other municipalities, and state, regional, and federal agencies to better understand local impacts on and from air quality concerns.

3.5 Community Facilities and Services

Parks and Public Space – Insufficient parks, public space, and recreational facilities present challenges to those residents of Newborn seeking outdoor leisure and community interaction opportunities. The closest Newton County Recreation Commission facility is the 10-acre Beaver Park in neighboring Mansfield, comprised of a picnic area, playground, sports facilities, and open space. The 2005-2010 Newton County Recreation Commission Comprehensive Master Plan calls for over 781 acres of new park land to accommodate population growth in the county by 2028. This presents an opportunity to foster a sense of place in Newborn through the development of vibrant public spaces in the future. Residents also would like to see a community center be built in Newborn.

Recycling – County-operated recycling centers are located throughout Newton County, with the closest facilities existing approximately five miles from Newborn. A recycling program coordinated by town officials, residents, and local business owners may provide opportunities for streamlining solid waste management within the town and reducing environmental impacts.

Post Office – The community cited uncertainty over whether the Post Office would remain in Newborn, and should work with USPS to ensure this happens.

Public Infrastructure – Water supply in the Town of Newborn is derived from purchase agreements from the Newton County Water and Sewer Authority and from private septic systems. The town does not have sewer service. Local leaders show uncertainty about the ability of Newborn’s current public infrastructure to support new development and should evaluate whether this is truly the case, then make infrastructure improvements as necessary.

3.6 Intergovernmental Coordination & Impacts

Planning and Public Safety – Town officials express concern about a lack of coordinated planning efforts and plan-sharing between the Town of Newborn and neighboring jurisdictions. With its small population and reliance upon Newton County for police services, the Town of Newborn is perhaps more vulnerable to the effects of decisions made in adjacent communities and at the county level than a larger municipality might be. Another specific area for increased coordination is the opportunity for parks, recreation, and open space planning.

3.7 Transportation

Walking and Bicycling – Newborn has a limited sidewalk network and no designated bicycle lanes or multi-use facilities. There are no ordinances in place requiring new developments to provide sidewalks or connect to existing pedestrian facilities. The Town should work to develop multi-use transportation facilities to this end. This is addressed in part in the Goals & Policies section of the Implementation Program.

Streetscape/Gateway – The Town’s gateway corridors lack significant improvements to signal the arrival in Newborn, and should be upgraded with landscaping, signage, etc. Additionally, “Main Street” areas require streetscaping; plantings and sidewalk installation will beautify them and increase safety.

Public Transportation – Newborn and Newton County do not currently have a public transportation system available to all citizens. The communities should consider the possibility of Section 5311 rural transit services for those residents incapable of driving, such as seniors, people with disabilities, or those without personal vehicles, or for residents who prefer not to drive. This is addressed in the Goals & Policies section of the Implementation Program. Another transportation option is the organized coordination of carpools through a public forum or central liaison. According to the 2000 Census, Newborn has a higher percentage of workers carpooling to their places of employment than in Newton County and Georgia, demonstrating potential on the part of residents to combine transportation resources for greater efficiency. Residents expressed great interest in a shuttle into Covington at public meetings associated with this plan.

3.8 Land Use, Planning, & Development

Standards and Management – Town officials cite opposition to zoning and land use regulations as a barrier to smart growth in Newborn. The town does not engage in planning for nodal or small-lot development, and the community has not supported the integration of innovative or higher-density developments in the past. Leaders, throughout the Community Agenda public involvement process, recognized the need to enforce zoning standards thoroughly and perform regular reviews and evaluations of the code.

Annexation – Leaders would like to pursue annexation of areas surrounding the Town to increase the tax base, and should do so with consideration for both potential positive and negative effects.

Brownfields – Newborn does not currently promote brownfield redevelopment, as no parcels within the community have been officially designated as brownfields. Grants are available through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the purpose of compiling a listing, characterization, assessment, and planning for clean-up of potential brownfields within the community. Smart Growth Newton County, a local non-profit organization, may be a good resource for Newborn officials in the development of these types of initiatives. This is addressed in the Goals & Policies section of the Implementation Program.

Communication – Citizens and potential developers should easily be able to acquire information about community meetings and development processes in Newborn. An effective communications strategy organizes this information into various outlets, including print and online media, in order to reach as many different people as possible. One example of this type of undertaking is a voluntary email update program sponsored by the Town government that notifies residents and other interested parties of planning and zoning issues, road closings, utility work, opportunities for public comment, and agenda items at government meetings. Free online resources, such as Google Groups, can make this process affordable, user-friendly, and efficient. (Email and other internet-based communication should not be seen as all-encompassing communication methods unless all interested parties are able to conduct online activities, either at home or at a library, community center, or other communal resource.)

4. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

4.1 Goals and Policies

Population

Goal: Account for all residents' needs in local decision-making.

Supportive Policy:

- Accommodate a continually aging population in future development and infrastructure decisions.

Economic Development

Goal: Increase employment opportunities for residents while maintaining Newborn's small-town atmosphere, historic sense of place, and natural beauty.

Supportive Policies:

- Limit the development of strip malls, dollar stores, and large chains.
- Ensure that new businesses maintain a historic look with materials and design.
- Ensure that new development opportunities fit the skill sets of the town's labor force.
- Support workforce training by working with Newton County and the Chamber of Commerce.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Goal: Preserve and enhance existing resources (both natural and cultural) for future generations.

Supportive Policy:

- Actively engage in conservation and preservation of greenspace and sensitive environmental areas by directing new residential and commercial development into appropriate areas of town.

Land Use

Goal: Ensure that zoning and development standards meet the Town's vision for the future and that they are enforced consistently.

Policies:

- Enforce (and create, where appropriate) design standards for new housing and major renovations.
- Educate town residents about smart growth principles through community forums, presentation, and newsletters for the purpose of increasing support for innovative new developments in appropriate areas of the community.

Transportation

Goal: Provide a safe, comprehensive, efficient, and effective transportation system that integrates a variety of transportation modes, increasing mobility options for all residents.

Supportive Policies:

- Continually pursue development of multi-use transportation facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Identify public parking opportunities connected to existing and future pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure.
- Determine whether Section 5311 (Rural Public Transportation) services would be appropriate and attainable in Newborn. This could potentially serve as a way to implement the stated desire (in Issues and Opportunities) to connect via shuttle to Covington.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal: Coordinate planning, economic development, transportation, recreation, and administrative efforts between the Town of Newborn, Newton County, and the County's other municipalities, and state and regional offices.

Supportive Policies:

- Share mutually beneficial services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Pursue the expansion of the Town's library, with eventual designation as a regional branch.
- Work with Newton County, Jasper County, and Morgan County where appropriate.

4.2 Report of Accomplishments

| NEWBORN, GEORGIA SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM - REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2008-2013 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Project No. | Plan Element | Project Description | Completion Year | Cost Estimate | Responsible Party | Funding Sources | Project Status | Explanation (If Abandoned) or Estimated Completion Date (If Postponed) |
| 001 | CF | Study feasibility and institute night and/or weekend security patrols. | 1998 | 10000 | CITY | LOCAL | 2 | 2009 |
| 002 | LU | Consider enacting architectural review ordinance. | 1999 | Included in cost with item 006 | CITY | LOCAL | 1 | |
| 003 | CF | Contract with a private contractor to provide curbside solid waste and recycling collection. | 1998 | 500 | CITY | LOCAL | 2 | 2010 |
| 004 | CF | Study feasibility of establishing a branch library in the Childs Building. | 1998 | 1000 | CITY, COUNTY | LOCAL | 1 | |
| 005 | NR | Plan for potential uses of Childs Building. | 1998 | 4000 | CITY | LOCAL, PRIVATE | 1 | |
| 006 | LU | Draft and adopt zoning ordinance. | 1998 | 2500 | CITY | LOCAL | 1 | |
| 007 | LU | Investigate adopting nuisance ordinance. | 1998 | | CITY | | 1 | |
| 008 | NR | Adopt and implement Department of Natural Resources wetlands protection criteria. | 1998 | 250 | CITY, GA RDC | LOCAL | 1 | |
| 009 | LU | Establish committee to determine needs for Main Street revitalization. | 1999 | | CITY | | 2 | 2009 |
| 010 | NR | Map historic resources identified in 1989 Department of Natural Resources intensive survey. | 1999 | 200 | CITY, GA RDC, CONSULTANT | LOCAL | 2 | 2009 |

NEWBORN, GEORGIA
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM - REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS
2008-2013

| Project No. | Plan Element | Project Description | Completion Year | Cost Estimate | Responsible Party | Funding Sources | Project Status | Explanation (If Abandoned) or Estimated Completion Date (If Postponed) |
|--------------------|---------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 011 | NR | Rehabilitate Childs Building. | 1999 | 100000 | CITY, PRIVATE, GA OTH | GA DNR HPF, LOCAL, PRIVATE | 2 | 2018 |
| 012 | LU | Codify town ordinances. | 1999 | 1500 | CITY | LOCAL | 1 | |
| 013 | NR | Develop and adopt ordinance to provide for open space/conservation design development. | 2000 | 2500 | CITY, GA RDC | LOCAL | 2 | 2010 |
| 014 | NR | Produce and provide educational materials about historic preservation. | 2001 | 100 | CITY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOE, GA RDC | US OTH, GA DNR HPF, GA RDC, LOCAL | 4 | Insufficient organizational resources |
| 015 | NR | Consider adopting preservation ordinance. | 2001 | | CITY, PRIVATE | | 3 | 2009 Still considering |
| 016 | LU | Incorporate Comprehensive Plan into planning review. | 2002 | | CITY | LOCAL | 2 | 2009 |
| 017 | NR | Identify and document cemeteries. | 2003 | 500 | CITY | GA DNR HPF, LOCAL, PRIVATE | 2 | 2009 |
| 018 | LU | Implement committee recommendations for Main Street revitalization. | 2000 | | CITY, GA DOT, COUNTY | | 3 | 2018 Currently reevaluating strategies |
| 019 | CF | Work with county and Friends of Newborn to establish a basic skills and technical school in area. | ONGOING | 10000 | CITY, PRIVATE | LOCAL, PRIVATE | 4 | GA Perimeter College in close proximity to Newborn |

NEWBORN, GEORGIA
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM - REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS
2008-2013

| Project No. | Plan Element | Project Description | Completion Year | Cost Estimate | Responsible Party | Funding Sources | Project Status | Explanation (If Abandoned) or Estimated Completion Date (If Postponed) |
|--------------------|---------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 020 | CF | Improve neighborhood watch program by sending letters to residents about the program and putting up more signs. | ONGOING | 2500 | CITY | LOCAL | 3 | 2018 Procedural implementation and organization needed |

Status codes for report:

1 - has been completed;

2 - is currently underway—including project completion date;

3 - has been postponed, with an explanation of the reason and an estimated completion date; or

4 - has not been accomplished and will no longer be undertaken or pursued by the local government, with an explanation of the reason.

4.3 Short-Term Work Program

| Town of Newborn Short-Term Work Program 2009 - 2013 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Project Description | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | Estimated Cost | Funding Source | Responsible Party | Notes/Resources |
| Economic Development | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop economic development vision & recruitment strategy | X | X | | | | 0 (in-house) | NA | Town, Chamber | Newton County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee |
| Seek out new locally-owned businesses to locate in town | | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, Chamber | Newton County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee |
| Encourage individual property owners with non-compliant signs to comply with the town sign ordinance | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, County | |
| Facilitate improvements to commercial buildings (façades, parking, etc.) | X | X | X | X | X | Varies by project | Grants, Community Improvement District | Town, County | |
| Seek participation for town representative on Newton County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Roundtable | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, Chamber | Invitation from Chair required |
| Housing | | | | | | | | | |
| Hire Code Enforcement Officer to address violations and safety issues | | X | X | X | X | \$15,000 per year (Part-time) | Town | Town | |
| Develop design standards for new housing (by zoning or character area) | | X | X | | | \$3,000 | Town | Town | |

| Town of Newborn Short-Term Work Program 2009 - 2013 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Project Description | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | Estimated Cost | Funding Source | Responsible Party | Notes/Resources |
| Natural & Cultural Resources | | | | | | | | | |
| Compile a comprehensive digital inventory of all historic, cultural, and natural resources | | X | | | | \$1,000 | Town | Town, DNR, DCA, RDC | The Center at Covington, local volunteers, student intern(s) |
| Work with the County and other municipalities to understand local impacts on and from air quality concern | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, County, other municipalities, EPA, EPD | |
| Develop a Historic Ordinance for the designated historic district | | | X | | | \$2,000 | Town | Town | |
| Develop a farmland protection strategy | | | | X | | 0 | NA | Town | |
| Plan events to celebrate town history and culture | X | X | X | X | X | Varies by project | Local business sponsorships | Town, Chamber, volunteers | Agricultural/scenic and historic tours, e.g. |
| Community Facilities & Services | | | | | | | | | |
| Evaluate sites for potential future acquisition and park development | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, County | Newton County Recreation Commission |
| Evaluate suitability of infrastructure to support new development; make necessary improvements | | X | X | | | Varies by project | Varies by project | Town, County Water and Sewer Authority | |
| Work with the USPS to ensure the post office remains in Newborn | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, USPS | Identification of appropriate space for expansion; Member of Congress may be a helpful advocate |
| Evaluate potential of acquiring the J.W. Pitts building for community use | | X | X | | | 0 | NA | Town, DCA | Determine value of building/site, meet with current owner to learn of future plans |

| Town of Newborn Short-Term Work Program 2009 - 2013 | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Project Description | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | Estimated Cost | Funding Source | Responsible Party | Notes/Resources |
| Develop town recycling program | | X | X | | | Unknown | Community Improvement District | Town, County, local business owners, residents | Centralized and signed drop-off sites in town, scheduled transport of items to nearest recycling center (Keep Covington/Newton Beautiful) |
| Intergovernmental Coordination | | | | | | | | | |
| Coordinate public safety efforts and community programming in partnership with Newton County sheriff's office in Newborn | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, Newton County Sheriff | |
| Participate in the Newton County Leadership Collaborative to facilitate cooperative planning | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town | Designate two representatives to actively participate in and attend meetings of the Leadership Collaborative at The Center at Covington |
| Transportation | | | | | | | | | |
| Facilitate streetscape improvements | X | X | X | X | X | Varies by project | Transportation Enhancement grant(s) | Town, RDC | Georgia Department of Transportation |
| Enhance Newborn community identification through gateway improvements at main entry points | X | X | X | X | X | Varies by project | Grants | Town, DCA, RDC | Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Catalog of State Financial Assistance Programs |
| Organize carpools for town residents through a public forum | X | X | X | X | X | 0 | NA | Town, volunteers | Internet-based ridesharing resources are available |
| Determine feasibility of developing a rail-trail to Covington | | X | | | | 0 | NA | Town, RDC | Meetings/conversations with Newton County, Newton Trails, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, RDC |

| Town of Newborn Short-Term Work Program 2009 - 2013 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Project Description | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | Estimated Cost | Funding Source | Responsible Party | Notes/Resources |
| Develop connective trails between local park and Mansfield | | | | X | X | Varies (material, length) | Grants, Town | Town, County | Newton Trails, FHWA/DNR Recreational Trails, NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, Transportation Enhancements |
| Land Use, Planning, and Development | | | | | | | | | |
| Pursue annexation of areas surrounding town limits to increase tax base | X | X | X | X | X | \$5000 (legal fees) | Town | Town | |
| Evaluate future public infrastructure needs | | | X | | | 0 | NA | Town, County | |
| Determine potential existence of and plan for clean-up of brownfields | | | X | X | X | Varies by site | Environmental Protection Agency grant | Town | Smart Growth Newton County, EPD, EPA |
| Develop a multi-faceted communications strategy with residents | X | | | | | \$1000 per year | Town | Town, volunteers | Town website, voluntary email update program, regular town newsletters |
| Amend zoning code to reflect community vision | X | X | | | | \$1500-\$3000 | Town | Town | |
| Initiate voluntary email update program for notification of town news | X | X | | | | 0 | NA | Town | Google Groups; Yahoo Groups |
| Evaluate interest in a town web-log (blog) | X | X | | | | 0 | NA | Town | Blogger; Wordpress |
| Amend zoning code to correct acreage in AR classification | X | | | | | \$1500-\$3000 | Town | Town | |
| Send town representative(s) to relevant training workshops, forums, and conferences | X | X | X | X | X | Varies by program / event | Town | Town | Department of Community Affairs, Department of Transportation, Georgia Municipal Association, Georgia Planning Association, e.g. Ensure that attendees relay information from educational programs back to town council members. |

RESOLUTION

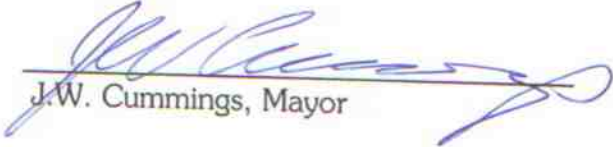
BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Newborn hereby resolves to forward the Community Agenda component of the Comprehensive Plan update for the Town of Newborn, Georgia to the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review, comment, and recommendation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Newborn does hereby certify that the minimum public participation requirements of the Comprehensive Plan update met with the holding of a public hearing on March 31, 2009 and May 19, 2009.

In order to coordinate the review process, the Town of Newborn further resolves that this Community Agenda component of the Comprehensive Plan update will be submitted to the Northeast Georgia RDC for review and comment on or before July 7, 2009.

Adopted the 6 day of July, 2009.

Town of Newborn


J.W. Cummings, Mayor


Clerk

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the 1989 Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 215, the Georgia Planning Act, requiring all local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Community Agenda for The Town of Newborn's Comprehensive Plan, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by The Town of Newborn that the Community Agenda for the Town of Newborn, Georgia dated June 2009, as approved by the Georgia Department Community Affairs is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

Adopted this 5th day of October, 2009.

Town of Newborn


J.W. Cummings, Mayor


Elisa Rowe, Clerk, Town of Newborn

