



# NEWTON COUNTY *Community Agenda*



*February 19, 2008*



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RESOLUTION  
R021908a

ADOPTION OF 2008 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
AND UPDATED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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 Comprehensive Plan for Newton County, Georgia, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures;

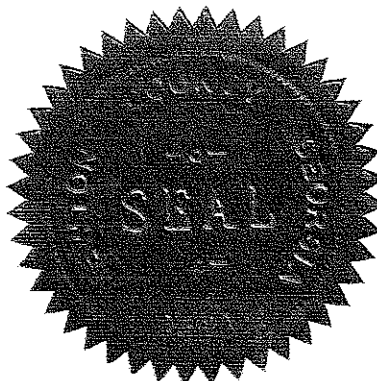
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Newton County that the Community Agenda for the Newton County Comprehensive Plan dated May 15, 2007 (as approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs) and the Future Land Use Map dated March 13, 2007, along with the changes outlined in the Errata Sheet dated February 19, 2008, are hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

Adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2008.

Newton County Board of Commissioners

  
Aaron Varner, Chairman

  
Jackie B. Smith, Clerk







# Newton County 2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Agenda

February 19, 2008





## Executive Summary

- This Comprehensive Plan is the product of over a two year planning effort that involved an extensive public outreach effort and numerous public workshops.
- The foundation of the Plan is a vision for the future that is described in Chapter III and calls for preservation of County's natural resources and rural character while still accommodating balanced growth that provides "opportunities for citizens to life, work, shop and play in a safe connected and fiscally responsible community."
- Based on the results of the public outreach efforts, this plan calls for promoting a village pattern of development or activity centers in order to preserve open space and accommodate anticipated growth. Three types activity centers are identified:
  - Development Nodes – must be a part of a BOC adopted Master Plan, such as Stanton Springs or Brick Store.
  - Village Centers - An activity center that contains most of the elements of a small town, civic, commercial, and residential uses all linked by a pedestrian friendly transportation network. The Center should offer housing, employment, commercial and recreational opportunities.
  - Community Crossroads - an activity center focused around a small neighborhood scale commercial center.

These activity centers should be the focus of new public facilities such as road improvements, sewer, schools, and parks and recreational facilities to encourage private investment.

- The draft Comprehensive Plan offers two tools to help guide future land use and capital investment decisions:
  - Future Development Map – defines the county in terms of 24 character areas;
  - Future Land Use Plan – a parcel specific map that designates each parcel in terms of a future land use classification.
- Both maps are based on the community's vision for the future developed through public outreach process, and are intended to reflect the built environment in 20 years.
- The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in 2005, and the Future Land Use Plan is a requirement of the Newton County Zoning Ordinance.
- The maps were designed to accommodate a target population of 228,200 in 2028 and target employment figure of 86,238. These figures were based on the current projections used in calculating the county's impact fees and that are reported in the County's Capital Improvements Element.
- Each of the 24 character areas is identified on the Future Development Map and is described in the text in terms of its existing character, the drivers of change, a vision for its future, and recommended policy themes.
- This plan includes a discussion of the issues and opportunities that the community will face over the next 20 years (see Chapter V- Translating the Vision into the Plan), as well as Implementation Program to address each one, which are described in Chapter VII.
- The last chapter of the Plan is a Short-term Work Program that outlines a five action plan for the county to realize it vision.





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## I. Introduction

### **Purpose**

The Community Agenda is the most important part of the Newton County (County) Comprehensive Plan. Based on the findings of the Community Assessment completed earlier in the planning process, and on input gathered from the public involvement process outlined in the Public Participation Program, this document provides a vision for the community's future and a plan to implement that vision. It also identifies key issues and opportunities that the community wishes to address during the next 20 years, a list of policies to be followed in making day-to-day decisions, and a detailed Short-term Work Program that outlines what actions the community will focus on over the next 5 years.

### **Scope**

This document was prepared following the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Chapter 1110-12-1-.05, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," effective May 1, 2005. It includes the three basic requirements for a Community Agenda:

- (1) A Community Vision that is comprised of a vision statement and Future Development Map;
- (2) A list of the Issues and Opportunities that the community intends to address over the next 20 years (see Chapter V, "Translating the Vision into the Plan"); and
- (3) An implementation program for achieving that vision, the heart of which is a Short-term Work Program that identifies specific actions the community will take over the next 5 years.

This document also includes some background information that is not required of a Community Agenda, but does describe the context within which the community is planning for its future. The chapter entitled "Context for Change" provides a high-level overview of the demographic trends that will influence the community's future, and the chapter entitled "The Community's Vision for the Future" describes the extensive public involvement effort that was undertaken to craft the community vision statement and the Future Development Map. In some respects, these additional elements are summaries of the other two components of the Comprehensive Plan, the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program*, completed earlier.

### **Use of the Plan**

Newton County staff, the Board of Commissioners, and local community leaders should use this Community Agenda, or plan, in three ways. First, the Future Development Map should be referenced in making rezoning and capital investment decisions. It provides a representation of the community's vision and indicates character areas where various types of land uses should be permitted. It takes into consideration the land use patterns illustrated in the County's Existing Land Use Map, the current zoning map, topographic characteristics, natural resource sensitivity,

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the availability of existing and proposed infrastructure, and the needs of anticipated population and employment growth.

Second, the plan provides policies that will help guide day-to-day decisions. These policies are a reflection of community values and are in keeping with the basic goals of the plan. They, too, will be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions.

Third, the plan includes an Implementation Plan that will help direct public investment and private initiative. Plan implementation is carried out through the application of regulations such as zoning and development codes and through projects and programs outlined in the Short-term Work Program. This plan outlines recommended changes in land use regulations and codes to be consistent with the community's vision; and, after plan adoption, it will be up to County staff and the Board of Commissioners to consider these code changes and revise if necessary. It should be noted that a Comprehensive Plan is a living document. In accordance with the DCA Local Planning Requirements, it should be updated regularly to reflect changing conditions and shifts in public policy.

## II. Context of Change

Over the coming decades, Newton County will face ever-increasing growth pressures as metropolitan Atlanta continues to sprawl outwards. Proper planning requires a careful consideration of basic assumptions concerning anticipated population growth, expected employment patterns, and likely household size trends.

### **Population**

For nearly half a century, Newton County's population has consistently grown at a faster pace than the rest of the state. While Newton County has enjoyed steady growth for many decades, the pace of growth has jumped significantly over the past 15 years. During the 1990s, for example, Newton County grew at an average annual rate of 4 percent. Since 2000, the average annual rate of growth in Newton County has remained a remarkable 7 percent.

Undoubtedly, Newton County will continue to grow over the coming years. As population increases will be decided by a series of complex and dynamic factors, however, the exact degree of future growth remains unknown. A suite of studies have prepared projections for Newton County over the recent past. These are compiled in **Figure II-1** below and illustrated in the following chart, **Figure II-2**.



*New Housing in Orchard Park*

The preferred population forecast for the County is based on numbers prepared for the County Capital Improvements Element, which projects a County population in 2028 of 228,200. This is nearly a four-fold increase from its Census 2000 level and represents an average annual growth rate of 9.6 percent.

The 2028 forecasts included in the **Figure II-1** range from a high of 236,700 to a low of 124,000. The table also includes two straight-line extrapolations of historic Census figures, which project populations below 124,000.

Some of the critical factors affecting population growth and local quality of life include:

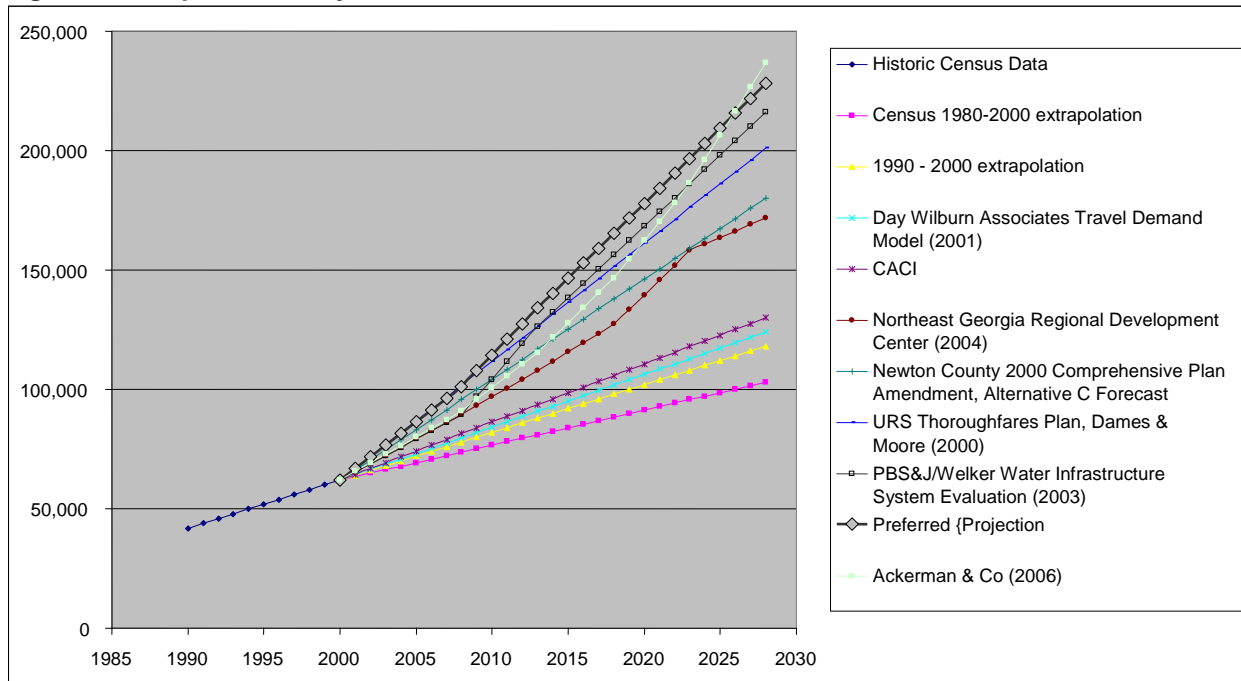
- **Local Schools:** both their quality and capacity are critical drivers in future growth trends.
- **Annexation:** City annexation policies also play a key role in where new residential and employment areas are located, and how dense those areas are.
- **Public Facilities:** Water and sewer infrastructure and capacity are major determinants in when and where growth occurs.

- Growth Management: County rural preservation policies may also lead to lower densities in the eastern portion of the County with the clustering of new growth in nodes, villages, or centers.

**Figure II-1: Summary of Recent Population Projections**

	1990	2000	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028
<b>Preferred Projection (CIE based)</b>	<b>41,808</b>	<b>62,001</b>	<b>101,300</b>	<b>134,100</b>	<b>165,400</b>	<b>196,800</b>	<b>228,200</b>
Census 1980-2000 extrapolation	41,808	62,001	73,700	81,000	88,400	95,700	103,000
1990 - 2000 extrapolation	41,808	62,001	78,000	88,000	98,000	108,000	118,000
Day Wilburn Associates Travel Demand Model (2001)	41,808	62,001	79,700	90,800	101,900	112,900	124,000
CACI	41,808	62,001	81,400	93,600	105,700	117,900	130,000
Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (2004)	41,808	62,001	89,500	107,900	127,300	158,200	171,700
Newton County 2000 Comp Plan Amendment, Alt C Forecast	41,808	62,001	95,700	116,800	137,900	158,900	180,000
URS Thoroughfares Plan, Dames & Moore (2000)	41,808	62,001	101,700	126,500	151,400	176,200	201,000
PBS&J/Welker Water Infrastructure System Evaluation (2003)	41,808	62,001	89,500	126,500	156,400	186,200	216,000
Ackerman & Co (2006)	41,808	62,001	90,900	115,500	146,700	186,300	236,700

**Figure II-2: Population Projections**



## **Employment**

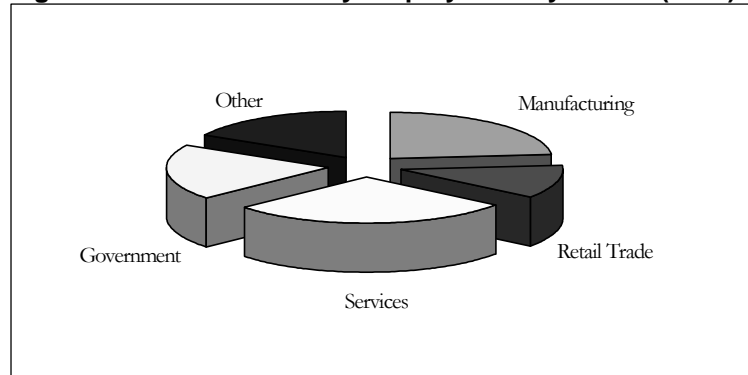
Newton County’s explosive population growth has outpaced the creation of local jobs in recent years, testifying to the fact that Newton County has become a bedroom community of metropolitan Atlanta. In 2005, the County had an estimated total employment of 25,635. This is forecasted to increase to somewhere between 30,350 and 51,261 by 2028.

Looking ahead, Newton County must adopt a strategic economic development plan; both the City of Covington and Newton currently lack an economic development office. A consistent, pro-active approach to business marketing will act to compliment an anticipated increase in local employment opportunities.

A jobs-housing balance reflects a geographic equilibrium between housing and jobs. The underlying theory is that as jobs and housing are more evenly distributed and mixed, people will be able to live closer to their jobs, and traffic congestion and vehicular traffic will be reduced. A balanced community generally has a jobs-housing ratio of 1.25 to 1.75, with 1.5 considered ideal. Newton County had a low jobs-housing ratio of 0.64, as of 2003. This ratio has fallen from 0.73 in 1990, which indicates that the County serves as a bedroom community more than a balanced community. The projections for 2030 incorporate a strong economic development program, resulting in a future jobs-housing balance near 1.0, still well behind “balanced” but a significant improvement over present levels.

Services, retail trade, government, and manufacturing will continue to remain the primary sectors of Newton County's economy.

**Figure II-3: Newton County Employment by Sector (2003)**



- Services:** Since 2000, the service sector has grown at an astounding average annual rate of 16 percent, making it the fastest growing sector in the County. Buoyed by Newton Health Systems, one of the largest employers in the County with 545 employees, healthcare accounts for nearly a third of all service jobs in Newton County. Other significant services include administration, accommodations, and food services.
- Retail Trade:** Despite the presence of 21 shopping centers featuring a total of 1.4 million square feet of retail space, Newton County remains underserved by retail outlets. While the metropolitan Atlanta area possesses an average of 36.6 square feet of retail space per capita, Newton County has just 16.8 square feet of retail space per capita. Additionally, less than 20 percent of Newton County's existing shopping centers have been built in the past 15 years. As retail construction has stagnated, the percentage of Newton County residents working in retail has declined steadily. In 1990, for example, 20 percent of County residents worked in the retail sector. By 2003, the retail sector employed less than 12 percent of County residents. In a sign of future retail expansion, however, both Wal-Mart and Home Depot have announced plans for stores near I-20 and Georgia 142. Employment in the retail sector can be expected to increase concurrent with the construction of additional retail outlets.
- Manufacturing:** Newton County's three primary industrial parks are home to some of the County's largest employers, including Bridgestone, General Mills, and Bard Urological. Historically, the textile industry comprised the bulk of Newton County's industrial base. In recent years, however, Newton County has developed a more diversified industrial economy featuring manufacturers of plastics, cereal, and metal products. A new industrial park, Stanton Springs, will facilitate industrial growth and employment in the future.

## Households

The number of households is a primary indicator of the demand for housing in a community, particularly in areas in which the percentage of family households is in decline. In 2004, there were an estimated 28,940 households in Newton County and it is forecasted that there will be 85,346 in 2028.

Traditionally, Newton County has been home to a large number of family households and a smaller share of single persons living alone and single-mother headed households than the State as a whole. Today, for example, 27 percent of households are occupied by traditional family units, compared to the statewide average of 24 percent.



Despite the large presence of families in Newton County, however, household size has fallen dramatically over the past 35 years. Since 1970, average household size has dropped by 20 percent from 3.38 persons per household in 1970 to 2.75 persons per household in 2005. Ultimately, smaller households cause the number of households to grow at a faster rate than the population itself. For example, while the population of Newton County increased by 112 percent between 1980 and 2000, the number of households increased by 142 percent.

Over the next 25 years, Newton County's average household size is expected to continue its downward trend and stabilize around 2.64 persons per household. Future declines, however, likely will be less severe than those of the past. While the number of families in Newton County is expected to increase during the coming years, the increases will be eclipsed by a swelling elderly population over the next 15 years.

### **Summary**

The preceding projections provide a framework for successfully planning the future of Newton County. By analyzing past and present growth trends, Newton County residents can make knowledgeable decisions to ensure the community's high quality of life. Additionally, it must be noted that the trends described here are far from inevitable; Newton County's dynamic growth precludes simple, static forecast. Indeed, the actions taken by community leaders over the next few years to implement this plan will impact both the nature and scale of growth greatly.

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### III. The Public's Vision for the Future

#### ***Introduction***

This Comprehensive Plan began with a community process of thinking about and visualizing the future. It is based on a collaborative approach to community engagement that created opportunities for citizens to work on the challenges that shape their community. The following Vision Statement is a key product of this effort.

#### **Newton County's Draft Vision Statement**

Newton County is built on citizens who care about education, safety, family, and the preservation of its natural beauty and unique character. For our future, we shall achieve balanced growth with the participation of citizens, private industry, and government. The County will reach its goals by promoting its cultural and natural treasures, sense of place, and family-oriented activities. We shall increase opportunities for citizens to live, work, shop, and play in a safe, connected, and fiscally responsible community.

As described in this section, accomplishing this required political leadership, citizen education, and active involvement.

#### ***Public Outreach***

An aggressive public outreach effort was undertaken to promote public involvement. The campaign included press releases, flyers, emails, newspaper articles and ads, and a project webpage within the County's website. Additionally, several agencies in Newton County further promoted the community notification effort; including Smart Growth Newton, the Leadership Newton County Alumni Association, the Newton-Covington Chamber of Commerce, and The Center. In addition, local schools, staff, committees, and Commissioners promoted the public involvement effort.

Coordination and oversight for this outreach effort were very important parts of the overall work effort supporting the County's Comprehensive Plan update. Besides a Project Management Team made up of key County staff and the consultant team, a Citizen's Roundtable Committee (CRC) was created to help oversee the outreach effort and to comment on the draft plan during its development. Composed of approximately a dozen individuals from throughout the County, the CRC was officially charged with drafting a Countywide Vision Statement, reviewing proposed land use concepts, and examining potential character areas. The CRC met at key times during the process.

The Community Participation Program, prepared when the effort began in the Spring of 2006, served as a guide outlining the specific steps the County undertook to engage its citizens and business owners, and to gain stakeholder involvement in the planning process. These steps and a summary of their results are described in the next section.

## ***Working with the Public***

### **Visioning Workshops**

A series of six Visioning Workshops were held February through April 2006 to discuss current issues and identify opportunities affecting the County's future. Citizens were asked what they would like to preserve, what they would like to change, what they would like to create and how it should be connected over the next 20 years (***full results are available in the Public Involvement Summary Appendix***). The gathered input was summarized and made available for review on the County's website at [www.co.newton.ga.us](http://www.co.newton.ga.us). The information gathered at the visioning workshops was the first step in a public process that would become the framework for the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update.



*Discussion group – visioning workshop*

Multiple meetings and varied locations provided Newton County residents with several opportunities to participate in the visioning process. All meetings were scheduled from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. Altogether, approximately 143 participants attended the various workshops. Input from these meetings ultimately informed the Newton County Comprehensive Plan.

- Meeting #1 - Veterans Memorial Middle School
- Meeting #2 - Heard Mixon Elementary School
- Meeting #3 - East Newton Elementary School
- Meeting #4 - Palmer Stone Elementary School
- Meeting #5 - Wildlife Federation
- Meeting #6 - Turner Lake Complex

#### *Meeting Format:*

Participants began arriving at 6:00 p.m. at the individual meeting locations throughout the County. After signing in, they were instructed to spend the time getting familiar with the display boards around the room and stop by the map to place a dot on where they live (an exercise to show participant distribution).

At 6:30 p.m., the meeting began with an overview of the importance of the visioning process and then the consultant team was introduced. The consultant team, JJG, did a brief overview of what

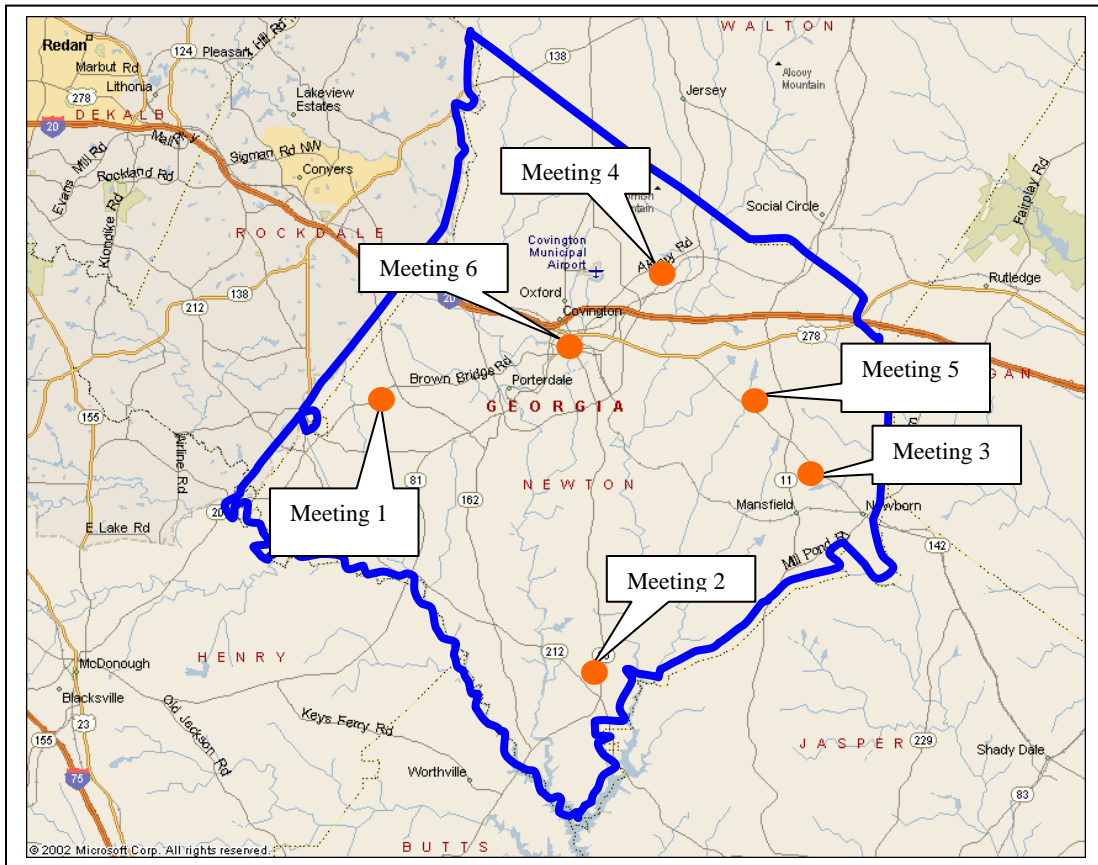
a Comprehensive Plan is and the purpose of the visioning process. The group then was led in a discussion of what Newton County was like 20 years ago.

*What is better in the County than 20 years ago?*

*What is worse than it was in the County 20 years ago?*

*What were the major events that made an impact on the County?*

Participants then were broken out into groups. Each group was asked a series of questions about what they would like to preserve, change, create, and connect. On the following page are some of the more frequently expressed issues.



*Workshop Meeting Locations*

## Common views expressed by the public at the Visioning Workshops

### Preserve

- Quality of Life
- History
  - Buildings/Houses/Plantations
  - Downtown Square
  - Heritage
  - Factory Shoals Park
  - FFA Camp
  - Cultural Sites
- Greenspace
  - Trees
  - Scenic Areas/Vistas
  - Farmland
- Small-town feel
- Conservation land use program
- Stream buffers
- Water/streams/rivers
- Wildlife
- Safe/secure community
- Agriculture as a working environment
- Sense of Community

### Create

- High skill jobs
- A Cultural Center
- Economic Development Authority
- Bike - pedestrian - multi-use trails
- Quality design standards for new developments
- Commercial nodes
- Balanced growth
- Infrastructure to support new development
- More opportunities for seniors
- Create two-story schools to conserve land
- Aesthetic Overlays
- Tourist trade – Eco-tourism
- Sign ordinance
- Specialty/higher-end shopping
- Incentives for industry
- Economic base/tax base
- More libraries and parks
- Overlay zoning

### Connect

- Complete bypass
- Connect subdivisions
- Sidewalks in areas of high intensity developments/growth
- School sites with residential development
- Seniors to services
- College to community
- Secondary roads
- Greenspaces to subdivisions
- Commuter rail/local rail
- Parks via multi-use trails
- City-County governments
- Safe connection for pedestrians across busy streets
- Neighborhoods with dedicated greenspace
- Planning efforts

### Change

- Plan better for commercial growth
- Roadway system
- Upgrade all public services to keep up with growth
- Litter
- Liquor Laws
- Lack of Transportation Plan
- Cul-de-sacs
- Redevelop old commercial properties
- Better balance of commercial – industrial – residential growth
- Loss of retail sales taxes to other counties
- Duplication of services needed (recreation – schools – services)
- Traffic movement
- Lack of connectivity

## Community Survey

A community survey was produced to help prioritize issues and opportunities that the County faces in the future. Issues and opportunities encompassed a host of categories; including population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, transportation, quality of life/sense of place, intergovernmental coordination, community facilities and services, and land use. Participants were asked to rank whether an issue was a high priority, medium priority, or low priority. The information gathered on the survey is important in determining priorities that will eventually help determine short-term and long-term planning goals. The following figure shows the results of the survey.

### Community Survey Results

	High Priority	Percent	Medium Priority	Percent	Low Priority	Percent	Total Votes
<b>Population</b>							
Rapid Population Growth	63	70.79%	19	21.35%	7	7.87%	89
Increase in Senior Population	29	42.03%	18	26.09%	22	31.88%	69
Increase in Children (impact on schools, rec. etc.)	60	68.18%	24	27.27%	4	4.55%	88
<b>Economic Development</b>							
Slower Job Growth than Population Growth	50	58.82%	30	35.29%	5	5.88%	85
Lack of a Strategic Economic Development Plan	41	47.13%	36	41.38%	10	11.49%	87
Inadequate Infrastructure to Support Future Economic Development	61	69.32%	23	26.14%	4	4.55%	88
Growing Economic Base	42	49.41%	35	41.18%	8	9.41%	85
Diversified Economy	30	34.09%	42	47.73%	16	18.18%	88
Geographic Advantages	24	27.91%	34	39.53%	28	32.56%	86
Strong Education System	62	72.94%	20	23.53%	3	3.53%	85
<b>Housing</b>							
Demographic Changes Affect Housing Demand	31	38.27%	31	38.27%	19	23.46%	81
Need for Workforce Housing	17	20.00%	36	42.35%	32	37.65%	85
Jobs-Housing Balance	29	34.52%	37	44.05%	18	21.43%	84
Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Developments	36	52.94%	11	16.18%	21	30.88%	68
<b>Natural &amp; Cultural Resources</b>							
Declining Water Quality (4 streams do not meet standards)	27	51.92%	19	36.54%	6	11.54%	52
Poor Air Quality (in non-attainment designation area)	53	60.92%	23	26.44%	11	12.64%	87
Preservation of Prime Agricultural & Open Space Conservation	22	42.31%	20	38.46%	10	19.23%	52
Preservation of Historic Resources	20	33.90%	26	44.07%	13	22.03%	59
<b>Community Facilities and Services</b>							
Meeting the Service Demands of Explosive Population Growth	51	57.95%	34	38.64%	3	3.41%	88
Anticipated Failure of Individual Septic Tank Systems	31	36.47%	29	34.12%	25	29.41%	85
Diminishing Supply of Regional Water	58	59.79%	31	31.96%	8	8.25%	97
Expanding Sewer Capacity	41	46.07%	32	35.96%	16	17.98%	89
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>							
Regional Transportation Planning	33	38.37%	36	41.86%	17	19.77%	86
Land Use Conflicts that Result from Annexation	36	50.70%	29	40.85%	6	8.45%	71
County-Municipal Coordination	26	40.00%	31	47.69%	8	12.31%	65
Shared City-County Services	39	45.88%	30	35.29%	16	18.82%	85
Funding of Public Services	44	54.32%	26	32.10%	11	13.58%	81
<b>Transportation</b>							
No County Transit System	23	26.74%	23	26.74%	40	46.51%	86
Lack of Adequate Traffic Signals	44	51.76%	32	37.65%	9	10.59%	85
Mitigating Increasing Traffic Congestion	54	61.36%	30	34.09%	4	4.55%	88
Poorly Connected or Incomplete Pedestrian Network	25	31.25%	34	42.50%	21	26.25%	80
Improving Street Connectivity	35	42.68%	36	43.90%	11	13.41%	82
More Mixed-use Developments	37	54.41%	27	39.71%	4	5.88%	68
Access to Greenway & Bicycle Facilities	28	34.57%	32	39.51%	21	25.93%	81
<b>Land Use</b>							
Suburban Sprawl	34	38.64%	27	30.68%	27	30.68%	88
Strip Commercial Development	26	36.11%	29	40.28%	17	23.61%	72
Reserve Land for Industrial & Commercial Growth	30	41.10%	32	43.84%	11	15.07%	73
Interstate Gateways	30	37.04%	34	41.98%	17	20.99%	81
Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Developments	32	40.00%	32	40.00%	16	20.00%	80
Protect Natural Resources within Developments	54	66.67%	22	27.16%	5	6.17%	81

### ***What was learned from the Community Survey...?***

*Population* – The County needs to plan accordingly for the predicted population growth over the next 20 years. With the expected rise in population, there will be an impact on schools. Citizens were very concerned about maintaining the quality of the school system.

*Economic Development* – Participants identified that a strong educational system was a high priority in the economic development of the County. They also prioritized that economic development and an increase in job growth is very important for the future of the County.

*Housing* – Encouraging Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs); walkable, community-oriented developments was deemed as a priority for participants.

*Natural and Cultural Resources* – Participants identified air and water quality as very important and put both as a top priority for the County.

*Community Facilities* – As population growth occurs, participants felt that meeting service needs is critical, as well as dealing with the diminishing regional water supply.

*Intergovernmental Coordination* – The top issue for participants was for the County to find funding for public services and with issues facing the County and Cities dealing with land use conflicts that result from annexations.

*Transportation* – A large percentage of those that took the survey stated that the top issue was mitigating increasing traffic congestion.

*Land Use* – Participants identified that protecting the natural environment within developments was a high priority.

Additional written comments also were included with many of the survey forms. These comments can be found in the **Appendix**.

The flyer is titled "Envision Newton County's Future" and "Visioning Workshops". It lists six dates and locations for workshops: February 16, 2006 at Veteran's Memorial Middle School; March 2, 2006 at Heard Mixon Elementary School; March 9, 2006 at East Newton Elementary School; March 16, 2006 at Palmer Stone Elementary School; March 30, 2006 at Wildlife Federation; and April 20, 2006 at Turner Lake Complex. It includes an invitation to attend, a website URL (http://www.co.newton.ga.us/), and contact information for Pamela Maxwell and Charlotte Weber.

Envision Newton County's Future		
Visioning Workshops		
Doors open at 6pm.....Meeting starts at 6:30pm		
<b>February 16, 2006</b> Veteran's Memorial Middle School 13357 Brown Bridge Road Covington, GA 30016	<b>March 2, 2006</b> Heard Mixon Elementary School 14110 Highway 36 Covington, GA 30014	<b>March 9, 2006</b> East Newton Elementary School 2286 Dixie Road Covington, GA 30014
<b>March 16, 2006</b> Palmer Stone Elementary School 1110 North Emory Street Oxford, GA 30054	<b>March 30, 2006</b> Wildlife Federation 11600 Hazelbrand Road Covington, GA 30014	<b>April 20, 2006</b> Turner Lake Complex 6185 Turner Lake Road Covington, GA 30014

You are invited and encouraged to attend the County's upcoming Visioning Workshops. The meetings are a vital part of the Comprehensive Plan Update and one of the main opportunities for citizens to offer their input on the future of Newton County. Please come to a meeting and share your vision.

Website: <http://www.co.newton.ga.us/>

or contact Pamela Maxwell with the County at 770-784-2197 or Charlotte Weber with JJG at 678-333-0474

*Flyer for the Visioning Workshops*



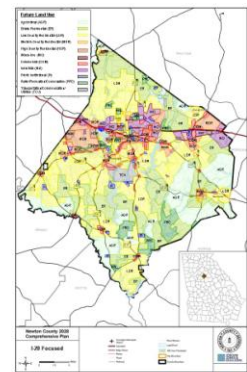
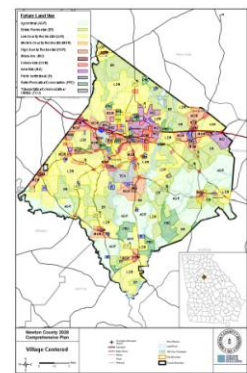
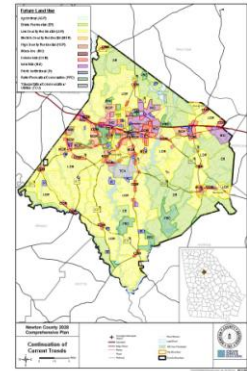
## Strategic Framework Workshop

The Strategic Framework Workshop was held on May 18, 2006, at the Historic Courthouse in downtown Covington. It gave citizens an opportunity to review information from the visioning workshops, data from the community assessment, and a draft vision statement created by the CRC. Citizens also were given an opportunity to discuss the pros, cons, and possible impacts of potential future land use concepts. The workshop had interactive exercises and discussion groups (*full results are available in the Public Involvement Summary Appendix*).

Land use concepts were presented to the participants during the Strategic Framework Workshop. The proposed scenarios included a Current Trends Map, an I-20 Focused Map, and a Village Center Map. After a presentation on the various land use scenarios, participants were asked to vote for the development scenario they preferred. Of the participants that voted, Current Trends – 0 votes, I-20 Corridor Focused – 7 votes, and Village Center-Focused – 27 votes. Once the voting was completed, the groups were separated into three groups. Two groups discussed the Village Center-Focused Scenario, and one group discussed the I-20 Corridor-Focused Scenario. Each group was asked to think about their chosen scenario and what they liked or disliked about it. They were asked if there were elements of other scenarios that should be considered. Finally, they were asked what it would take to implement their preferred scenario. While the scenarios presented were intended to be extreme, the cases were intended to test infrastructure sensitivity and public reaction to alternatives. Public reaction from the workshop was used to produce a hybrid concept known as the Future Development Map, which is described later in Section IV.

## Public Hearings

As required by state guidelines, public hearings were also held before the transmittal of each component of the draft Comprehensive Plan to Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for their review. Two public hearings were held in December 2005 before transmittal of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program, and two public hearings were held in April 2007 before transmittal of the Community Agenda. In each case, one hearing was held before the Planning Commission, who made recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, and one was held before the Board of Commissioners, who adopted a resolution to transmit the plan for state and regional review.



## **Additional Avenues of Communication**

### **Newton County Leadership Collaborative**

The Newton County Leadership Collaborative formed a Comprehensive Development Workgroup to provide representatives of Newton County's various government bodies with a year-round forum for communicating with each other on issues pertaining to and related to development. The Comprehensive Development Group's long term goals are to develop a collective vision and implementation strategy for the future of the County. The Collaborative met several times during the course of the project, and helped to provide an additional forum for review and comment on the process.



### **Staff Visioning Workshop**

In September 2006, County staff met at the Floyd Street Library for a visioning exercise, much like the visioning workshops held in the Spring. However, the county staff was also provided with a brief overview of the goals and objectives for the plan and where the consultant team currently stood in the process. The group was asked to visualize Newton County 20 years from now in terms of population, community services and facilities, housing, transportation, natural and cultural resources, land use, economic development, and intergovernmental coordination.

Participants at the workshop were also given an opportunity to view an early draft of the Future Development Map and Future Land Use Plan Map. The group was then lead through a more focused visioning exercise for several of the Character Areas identified on the Future Development Map. Their input was used to help refine the draft map.

## **Commonly expressed implementation strategies for the Future of Newton County**

From discussion sessions held during the Visioning Workshops, work with the county staff and CRC, and results from the survey, several commonly expressed implementation strategies for the future of Newton County include:

### **\* Appropriate Economic Development**

- Provide more employment options/opportunities
- Establish an Economic Development Authority and Plan

### **\* Housing**

- Improve the Jobs-Housing Balance
- Encourage the development of more Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

✧ **Transportation Alternatives**

- Create a Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Create Mixed-use Developments
- Multi-use/Bicycle/Pedestrian Paths

✧ **Environmental Protection & Open Space**

- Resource Protection Ordinances
- Tree Preservation
- Farmland Preservation
- Parks & Greenways

✧ **Sense of Place**

- Maintain and enhance local/regional identity
- Promote and support historic preservation
- Build a cultural center
- Adopt quality standards for new developments
- Sign controls
- Viewshed/scenery protections
- Downtown – revitalization/preservation

These strategies are later described in greater detail in Section V.

**Summary**

The goal of the Citizen Participation Program was to establish two-way communication between local citizens and their government officials, with the overall goal of better decisions supported by the public. Through the extensive cooperation of the County, stakeholders, the Citizens' Roundtable Committee, and citizens; a wealth of input was gathered through the Visioning Workshops, work sessions, and committee meetings. This plan is the result of an analysis of the information gathered from this extensive public involvement effort and is reflective of the public's vision for the future.

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## IV. Future Land Use

### ***Introduction***

Following are two tools that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in Newton County: (1) the Future Development Map, and (2) the Future Land Use Plan. Both maps are based on the community's vision for the future and were developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005, and the Future Land Use Plan is a requirement of the Newton County Zoning Ordinance.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level. The entire unincorporated county has been divided into 23 character areas. Some of these character areas also cross over into Covington, and are a part of the City's Future Development Map as well. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

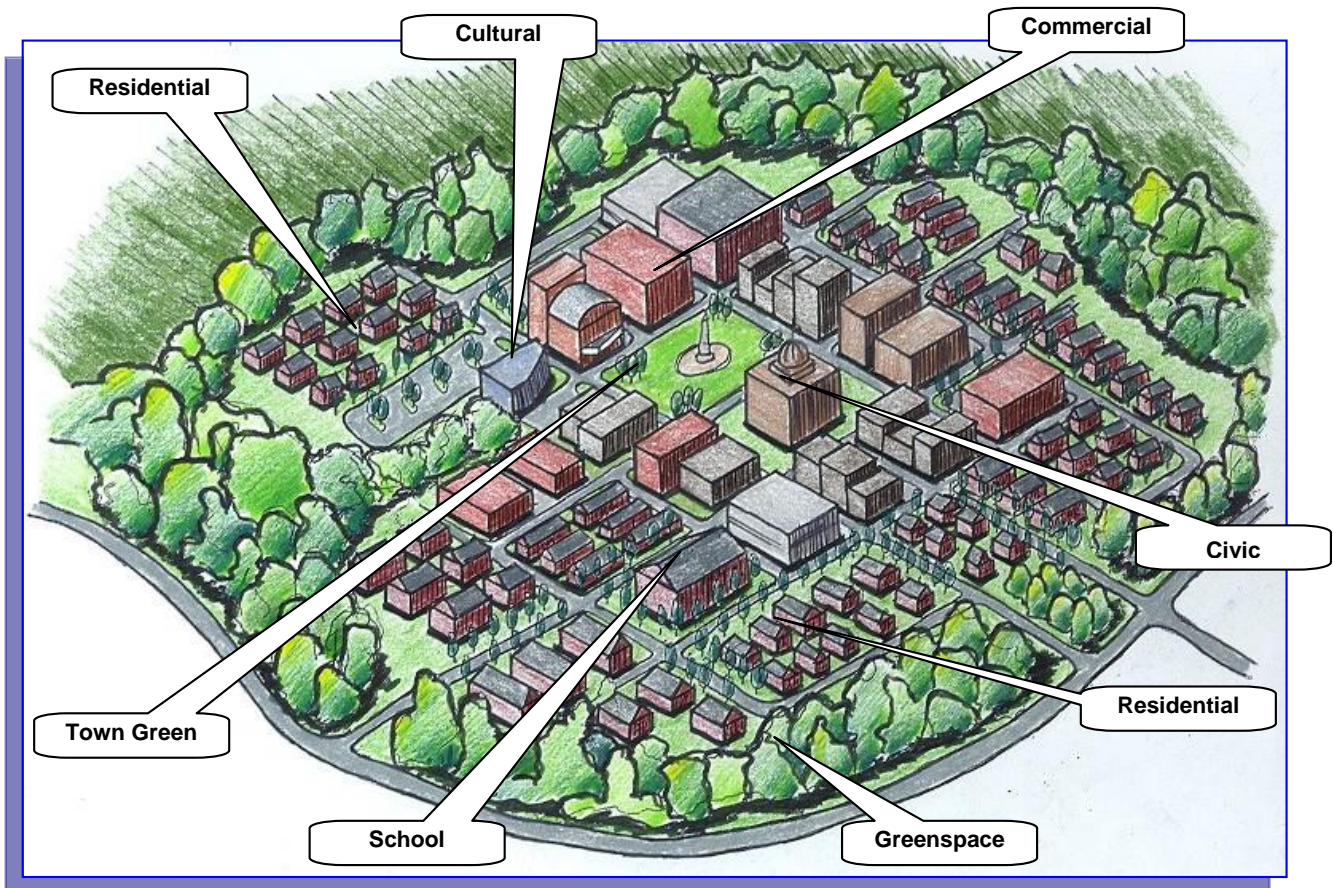
The focus of the Future Land Use Plan, on the other hand, is on defining where different land use types should be allowed to develop. The policies associated with this map refer to which land uses should be allowed in each future land use designation. The scale of this map is at the parcel level. Each Future Land Use category ties directly to an appropriate existing or proposed zoning category. In many respects the Future Land Use Plan is a shorter range tool than the Future Development Map. It is intended to guide current rezoning decisions, and as such it more directly reflects current conditions and constraints on future development, such as the availability of supportive infrastructure like sewer and transportation.

### ***Activity Centers***

A central component of both the Future Development Map and the Future Land Use Plan is that of promoting new development to locate within activity centers. Through the public involvement process, the village center or activity center scenario was the most preferred development option voted on by participants. This plan calls for promoting a village pattern of development that has long been the cornerstone of building a sense of identity for small towns and rural places.

### ***The Village Concept***

The archetype of village form in America is the New England village, which formed both the symbolic and economic heart of the region's small communities. The central element of the village is a public commons, or green, framed by a major crossroad, one or more civic uses, such as a town hall, school, church and cemetery, and surrounded by shops and businesses that serve the commercial needs of the community. The commercial core is surrounded by a series of small, compact neighborhoods that contain a wide variety of housing designed to serve the needs of households of all sizes, incomes, and stages of life. The scale of the village core was



*Village Center Example*

established by the range of the pedestrian – approximately a quarter mile radius measured from the village green. The residential fringe may extend up to an additional quarter mile. (According to Lawrence O. Houston, Jr. in his study published in *Small Town* magazine, three traditional villages in New Jersey all shared a common radius of  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile with a central core of a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile radius). The entire community was designed around a modified grid network of two-lane streets and sidewalks. The distinctions between homes and businesses within the village were often loosely defined - shops and residences were sometimes intermingled and located in similarly sized buildings. By contrast, the village had a relatively distinct edge separating it from the forests, orchards, and open fields of the surrounding countryside.

### **Advantages of the Village Concept**

The re-emergence of a village concept in Newton County will play a pivotal role in the implementation of a sound growth management program for the county's future development. The activity center or village form will offer the following advantages for Newton County:

- A sense of place – The village form provides a strong architectural design theme that gives the community an attractive identity and sense of place that typical suburban subdivision development lacks.
- More efficient use of land – Clustering daily activities in the activity centers creates a mixture and arrangement of land uses that makes a more efficient use of land than the typical suburban subdivision. A village of 10,000 persons can easily be accommodated

on as little as 1,400 acres, compared to over 4,500 acres for a subdivision comprised of 1-acre lots. Therefore each village of 10,000 persons saves 3,000 acres that can remain in greenspace, forest, agriculture, and other rural uses that will preserve the county's rural character. Such rural uses require little or no additional infrastructure investment.

- More efficient use of infrastructure – An activity center brings development and infrastructure together in a balanced way. The capacity of basic urban services such as water, sewer, public safety and transportation are matched efficiently with the arrangement of homes, schools, shops and offices. It also makes it possible to reduce the total amount of land area that will require urban services. By contrast, unplanned growth leads to a widely scattered pattern of low-density development that spreads county infrastructure over large sectors of the county but does not make efficient use of what is built. This pattern of growth can be extremely expensive to serve, especially as systems require more maintenance with age.
- Less vehicular traffic – The village core clusters the daily activities of home, school, shopping and play and orients them around a walkable network of streets, sidewalks, trails and greenways. This form is designed to shorten trip distances, encourage walking and cycling and reduce the dependency of people on their cars.
- Public support – Public workshops concerning Newton County's future found strong support for the village concept as an alternative to the continuation of current trends of dispersed development. People understood that through activity centers Newton County can accommodate growth while creating a sense of place, reducing traffic and conserving rural character.

## **Types of Activity Centers**

The Future Development Map identifies some preferred locations of existing and proposed activity centers, and the Future Land Use Plan identifies where along the Activity Center Life Cycle is in terms of policy guidance. The Future Land Use Plan will be updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in the adopted activity center policies for each area.

The four stages of the Activity Center Life Cycle are:

- (1) Concept – A proposed center that may not even have any of the standard elements of village center built yet, however the site has some advantages such as good transportation access, public utility access, close proximity to community facilities or a cultural resource that can serve as a community focal point.
- (2) Community Crossroads – An activity center focused around a small neighborhood-scale commercial center.
- (3) Village Center – An activity center that contains most of the elements of a small town, which are civic, commercial, and residential uses all linked by a pedestrian-friendly transportation network. The Center should offer housing, employment, commercial and recreational opportunities.
- (4) Development Node – This is an activity center that has an adopted master plan for its development. There are currently two development nodes recognized in Newton County, Stanton Springs and Brickstore.

## ***The Future Development Map***

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of Newton County. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the county. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The county's character areas are described and defined individually in the following fact sheets and are mapped in **Figure IV-1**.

The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

- Siting and configuration of lots.
- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location, extent, and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Supplement the role of the Future Land Use Map.
- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for urban design guidelines and changes to development regulations.



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Newton County's Future Development Map divides the unincorporated county into the following 24 character areas:

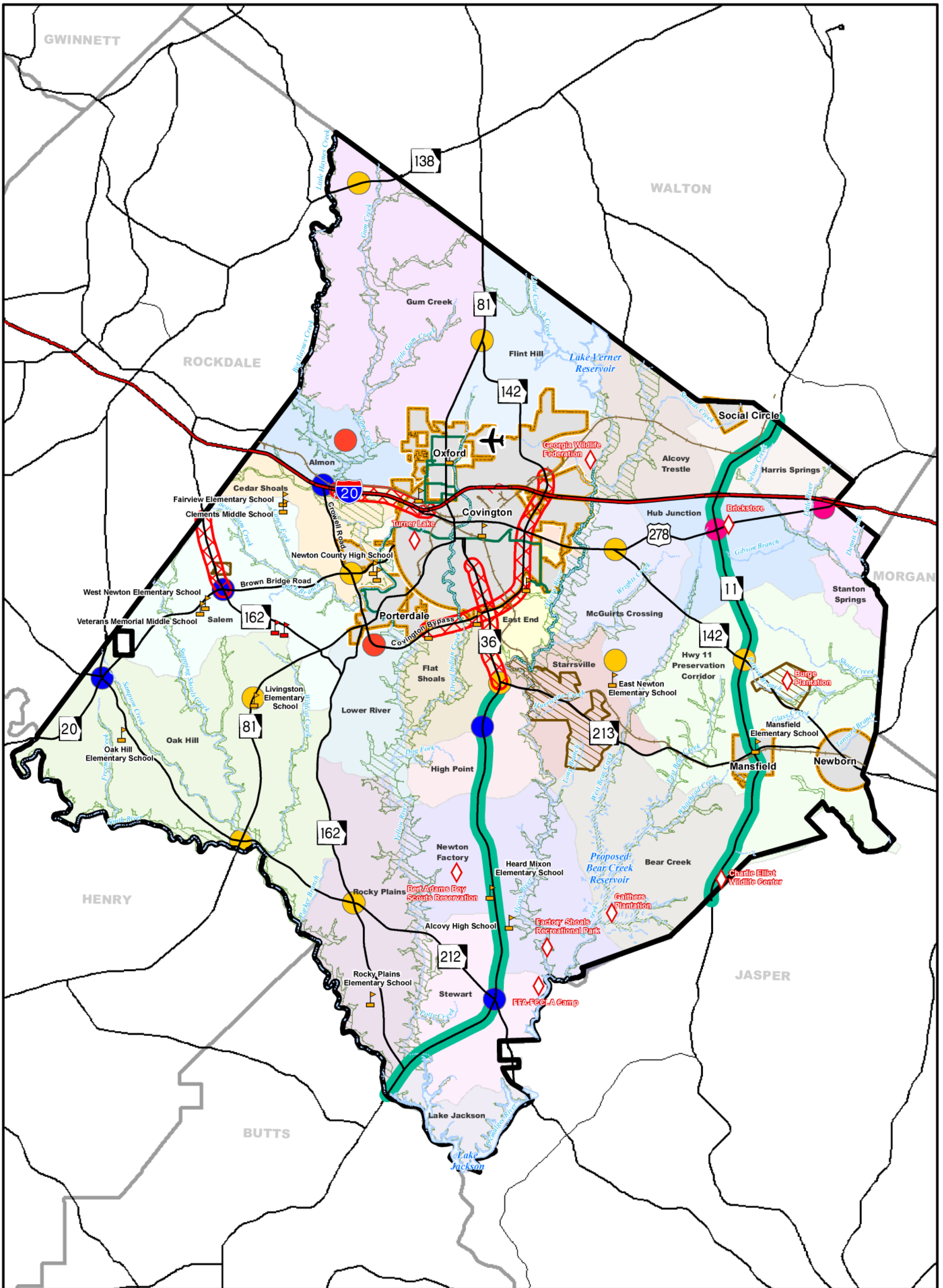
1. Alcovy Trestle
2. Almon
3. Bear Creek
4. Cedar Shoals
5. Dixie Road
6. East End
7. Flat Shoals
8. Flint Hill
9. Gum Creek
10. Harris Springs
11. Highway 11 Preservation Corridor
12. High Point
13. Hub Junction
14. Lake Jackson
15. Lower River
16. McGuirts Crossing
17. Newton Factory
18. Oak Hill
19. Rocky Plains
20. Salem
21. Stanton Springs
22. Starrsville
23. Stewart
24. Turner Lake

In addition the Future Development Map also designates two types of corridors worthy of special attention: Scenic Corridors and Quality Growth Corridors. Separate policies are provided for them as well.

A Quality Community Objective Table can be found in the **Appendix** that indicates which of the character areas addresses each of the State of Georgia's Quality Community Objectives. The Georgia DCA has established statewide goals, and a number of Quality Community Objectives that further elaborate upon the state goals. These goals are based on past growth and development and are intended to provide guidance or targets for local governments to achieve in implementing their comprehensive plan. As the table indicates, the Future Development Map and character areas as presented here do meet each of the Quality Community Objectives.

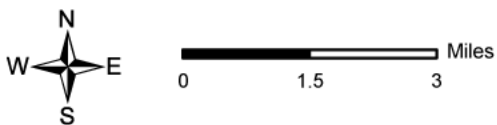
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**Newton County 2028  
Comprehensive Plan**

*Future Development Map*



- |                               |                             |   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Historic District             | Covington Municipal Airport | Activity Centers - Concept              |
| Quality Development Corridors | Point of Interest           | Activity Centers - Community Crossroads |
| 100-Year Floodplain           | Interstate Highway          | Activity Centers - Development Node     |
| Scenic Corridor               | Major Road                  | Activity Centers - Village Center       |
| Existing Schools              | Railroad                    | Lake/Pond                               |
| Future Schools                | River/Stream                | City Boundary - 9/2006                  |
| Proposed Trail System         | Bike Route                  | Newton County Boundary                  |



**Figure IV-1**

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### Character Area Matrix

The following table describes each character area in terms of what defines their character, what is affecting that character, its vision for the future, and the types of policies that need to be in place to achieve that vision. After this table definitions can be found for the policy themes, and fact sheets are included for each character area. Policies do not supersede standards and regulations in the Newton County Zoning Ordinance, Development Regulations and other ordinances as adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Focal Point(s) <i>What defines the Character Area</i></b>	<b>Driver of Change <i>What will impact the Character Area</i></b>	<b>Vision <i>What we want the Character Area to become</i></b>	<b>Policy Themes <i>What types of land use policies need to be in place</i></b>
<b>Alcovy Trestle</b>	Lake Varner, Alcovy Center, GA Wildlife Federation, River Cove Subdivision	I-20, Growth of the Cities of Covington and Social Circle, commercial and industrial growth. Will become a gateway (Hazelbrand Road) to Newton County.	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of the Alcovy Watershed. A destination and home for naturalists and recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> <li>▪ Interstate gateway</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Protection</li> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> </ul>
<b>Almon</b>	Historic community of Almon, I-20, US 278, Railroad, residential development - Gum Creek Landing	West Covington Bypass, commercial and residential development, new interchange at I-20.	A gateway to Newton County that displays a small town ambience built on the community's rich history. A growing community focused around high quality residential homes and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interstate gateway</li> <li>▪ Village Center</li> <li>▪ Residential revitalization</li> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Bear Creek</b>	Gaithers Plantation, Bear Creek, active agriculture, scenic Hwy 11 and Hwy 213	Proposed Bear Creek Reservoir, Development of Gaithers Plantation, residential development.	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources, agricultural heritage, and rich architectural history. A regional cultural and recreation destination focused around the development of the Bear Creek Reservoir and Gaithers Plantation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Protection</li> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> </ul>

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Focal Point(s) What defines the Character Area</b>	<b>Driver of Change What will impact the Character Area</b>	<b>Vision What we want the Character Area to become</b>	<b>Policy Themes What types of land use policies need to be in place</b>
<b>Cedar Shoals</b>	I-20, Porterdale Elementary and Newton High School, City of Porterdale, Browns Bridge/Bypass Intersection, gateway to Porterdale, Yellow River	Growth of the City of Porterdale, Bypass and Browns Bridge Road development, new interchange at I-20, access to existing sewer, potential for aging housing stock.	A gateway to Porterdale that is tied closely to its rich mill town history. A community focused around preservation, design standards, and quality homes and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interstate gateway</li> <li>▪ Village Center</li> <li>▪ Quality Development Corridor</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Dixie Road</b>	Dixie Road and SR 142, Wright's Creek and West Bear Creek, Fire Station	Growth along US 278, growth resulting from the Perimeter College Site and new development at Mount Pleasant	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its agricultural heritage. Promoting and protecting the scenic views along Dixie Road and SR 142.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Preservation</li> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> </ul>
<b>East End</b>	East Side High School, Bypass, Alcovy River, the Bypass, Hwy 36, golf course, future trail system	Growth of the City of Covington and the Bypass.	A mixed-use community focused around high quality commercial, the school, and recreation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ Quality Development Corridor</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Flat Shoals</b>	Middle Ridge Elementary and Indian Creek Middle Schools, Bypass, Hwy 36, Flat Shoals Road, Yellow River, Dried Indian Creek, City of Covington land application site, fire station, park	Growth of the City of Covington and Porterdale, commercial expansion along the Bypass and Jackson Highway, widening of Jackson Highway.	A family-oriented community focused around the school and recreation. A community commercial destination for central Newton County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ Quality Development Corridor</li> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> </ul>
<b>Flint Hill</b>	West side of Lake Varner, Hwy 81 and Hwy 142, Orchard Park, Corners Creek watershed, and City Pond watershed	Terminus of the western bypass, expansion of the airport and Covington Industrial Park.	A rural community tied closely to the preservation, recreation, and conservation of the Lake Varner Reservoir.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Protection</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> </ul>

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Focal Point(s) What defines the Character Area</b>	<b>Driver of Change What will impact the Character Area</b>	<b>Vision What we want the Character Area to become</b>	<b>Policy Themes What types of land use policies need to be in place</b>
<b>Gum Creek</b>	Gum Creek, Hwys 138 and 81, active agriculture, horse country, Big Haynes Creek Watershed, large lot residential	West Covington Bypass, commercial and residential development, close proximity to the Horse Park in Conyers.	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its rural and natural character. A destination for equestrian activities including trails and farms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Protection</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Harris Springs</b>	I-20, large-lot residential, some agriculture, Little River watershed, scenic Hwy 11	Social Circle expansion, development along I-20	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its rural and natural character, while embracing quality educational and commercial developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development Node</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ Interstate Gateway</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Preservation</li> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> </ul>
<b>Highway 11 Preservation Corridor</b>	Active agriculture, Hwy 213 and scenic Hwy 11, Burge Plantation, the Towns of Mansfield and Newborn, Hwy 142, active agriculture, historic Pony Express crossroad intersection, large lot owners, Bear Creek watershed, Yellow River watershed, Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center	Bear Creek Reservoir, Growth of the Towns of Mansfield and Newborn, Hwy 213, scenic Hwy 11, Little River watershed	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its agricultural heritage. Promoting and protecting the Hwy 11 Scenic Highway Corridor and Historic Mansfield through overlay zoning and buffer requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Preservation</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> </ul>
<b>High Point</b>	Hwy 36, Alcovy River, High Point Church, Henderson Restaurant and Grocery, established residential subdivisions	Widening of Hwy 36, potential for aging housing stock.	An activity and commercial center for central Newton County that provides family-oriented services and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Village Center</li> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> </ul>
<b>Hub Junction</b>	Brickstore, Mt. Pleasant (Perimeter College)	I-20, Perimeter College	A regional education center that provides commercial services to eastern Newton County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development Node</li> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Interstate Gateway</li> </ul>

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Focal Point(s) What defines the Character Area</b>	<b>Driver of Change What will impact the Character Area</b>	<b>Vision What we want the Character Area to become</b>	<b>Policy Themes What types of land use policies need to be in place</b>
<b>Lake Jackson</b>	Lake Jackson, Hwys 212 and 36, Ocmulgee River, lakeside residential	Recreational opportunities on Lake Jackson, Hwy 36 widening, lake-oriented commercial and residential growth	Lake-oriented destination with quality residential and commercial development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> </ul>
<b>Lower River</b>	Yellow River, single family residential, large-lot landowners, landfill, churches	Residential and commercial development along the Bypass, Hwy 162, potential for aging housing stock	A strong community enhanced by the scenic and natural resources of the Yellow River that provides opportunities for local jobs, quality homes, and recreational facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> <li>▪ Municipal Gateway</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>McGuirts Crossing</b>	Alcovy River, single-family residential, I-20, Hwy 278, Hwy 142	Growth of the City of Covington, commercial and residential development along arterial roads, Perimeter College	A family-oriented suburban residential community enhanced by the natural setting of the Alcovy River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interstate Gateway</li> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Newton Factory</b>	Factory Shoals Recreational Park, Alcovy River, Alcovy High School, Hwy 36, Bert Adams Boy Scouts Reservation, Yellow River	Widening of Hwy 36, Alcovy High School, residential growth	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources. A sense of community through high quality education, quality homes, and aesthetic standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scenic Highway</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Preservation</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Oak Hill</b>	Oak Hill and Livingston Elementary Schools, mix of new subdivisions and rural properties, South River, Hwy 20 and Browns Bridge Intersection	Hwy 20 and Hwy 212, proximity to Rockdale and Henry Counties, residential growth	A sense of community through high quality education, local jobs, better quality homes, aesthetic standards and family-oriented activity centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Village Center</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>




<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Focal Point(s) What defines the Character Area</b>	<b>Driver of Change What will impact the Character Area</b>	<b>Vision What we want the Character Area to become</b>	<b>Policy Themes What types of land use policies need to be in place</b>
<b>Rocky Plains</b>	Rocky Plains Elementary, Parker Branch, active agriculture, large lot residential, Yellow River, South River, Hwy 212 and Hwy 162 intersection	New school - Rocky Plains Elementary School, residential growth, intersection of Hwy 162 and Hwy 212	A family-oriented residential community focused around local schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agricultural Preservation</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Salem</b>	Commercial node of Browns Bridge and Salem Road, residential subdivisions, two school clusters, historic Salem Campground, Pace Community, starter homes	Commercial and residential development, access to existing sewer, potential for aging housing stock	A sense of community through high quality education, local jobs, better quality homes, aesthetic standards, and family-oriented activity centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality Development Corridor</li> <li>▪ Village Center</li> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> <li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>Stanton Springs</b>	Little River, I-20, Hwy 278	Proposed Stanton Springs development node	A regional mixed-use and employment activity center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development Node</li> <li>▪ Interstate Gateway</li> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> </ul>
<b>Starrsville</b>	Starrsville Historic Rural District, Hwy 213, Alcovy River, Jackson Highway, Intersection of Hwy 213/Hwy 36, East Newton Elementary School	Widening of Jackson Highway, residential growth, Bear Creek Reservoir	A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources, agricultural heritage and architectural history.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Preservation</li> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> </ul>
<b>Stewart</b>	Historic crossroads community of Stewart, FFA-FCCLA camp, Heard Mixon Elementary School, Yellow River, rural, contemporary subdivisions, Hwy 36	Widening of Hwy 36, strong geographic advantage as a crossroads that will attract residential and commercial growth	A rural crossroad community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources and agricultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Historic Preservation</li> <li>▪ Village Center</li> <li>▪ Watershed Protection</li> <li>▪ Residential Revitalization</li> <li>▪ River Protection</li> </ul>


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<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Focal Point(s) <i>What defines the Character Area</i></b>	<b>Driver of Change <i>What will impact the Character Area</i></b>	<b>Vision <i>What we want the Character Area to become</i></b>	<b>Policy Themes <i>What types of land use policies need to be in place</i></b>
<b>Turner Lake</b>	Yellow River, Turner Lake Park, West Covington	Growth of the Cities of Covington and Porterdale, proximity to I-20 and Brown's Bridge Road	A refuge from the urban environment, a community tied closely to the preservation of the Yellow River and Turkey Creek and use of Turner Lake Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Municipal gateway</li><li>▪ River Protection</li><li>▪ Emerging Suburban</li></ul>

## Policy Themes

In the proceeding Character Area Matrix and character areas sheet, common policy themes were identified with each character area. The following is a description of these themes and their corresponding policies.

<b>Watershed Protection</b>	
<p><b>Description:</b> There are several water supply watersheds in the County that are protected by Watershed Overlay Districts, including Big Haynes Creek, Bear Creek, and Little River. Regulations associated with these Overlay Districts protect valuable water sources such as Lake Varner by limiting residential density, imposing impervious surface limits, providing wide buffers along feeder waterways, and prohibiting harmful land uses. The following policies reflect these regulations and provide additional guidance for their protection.</p>	
<p><b>Policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conserve the lands around existing or proposed reservoirs to ensure high water quality.</li> <li>▪ Manage recreational activities on existing reservoirs to protect water quality.</li> <li>▪ Protect tributaries to the reservoir or public water withdrawal facilities by adopting wide natural buffer standards and enforcing strict erosion and sedimentation controls.</li> </ul>	

<b>River Protection</b>	
<p><b>Description:</b> The rivers of Newton County are probably its greatest natural resource, providing opportunities for recreation, water supply, and wildlife habit. The major rivers of Newton County include the South, the Yellow, and the Alcovy.</p>	
<p><b>Policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restrict development in floodplain areas to protect sensitive wetlands and private property from the impact of seasonal flooding. Use floodplains as possible sites for pervious trails and passive recreational uses.</li> <li>▪ Promote the development of conservation subdivisions near major rivers and their tributaries.</li> </ul>	

- Require riparian buffers along watercourses to protect water quality.
- Protect water quality with appropriate stream and reservoir buffers, septic tank setbacks, and prohibit uses that are prone to pollution.
- Protect natural habitat.
- Set aside land for a network of greenways for use by pedestrians, equestrians, bicycles, skaters, and golf carts that link parks, recreation areas, schools, and churches with residential areas.
- Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and greenspace where possible.
- Take special care in siting underground utilities and overhead power lines.
- Provide BMPs for stormwater management and meet or exceed all state and local standards for protection of wetlands, streams, lakes, ponds, and aquifer recharge areas.

### Interstate Gateway

**Description:** I-20 serves the majority of regional traffic approaching and passing through Newton County. The viewshed from the interstate provides a “first impression” of the county, so its maintenance and enhancement are important in defining the character of the community.



**Policies:**

- Provide a clear sense of entry into Newton along I-20.
- Landscape the edges of the highway.
- Provide for streetscaping along major arterials connecting to I-20.
- Prohibit new signs other than approved highway signs on I-20.
- Protect views of locally significant landmarks.
- Prohibit mass grading along the I-20 viewshed.
- Prohibit truck loading areas from being visible from the highway.
- Limit the size of parking lots visible from the highway.

## Municipal Gateway

**Description:** The area adjacent to each municipality has a character that is more reflective of the municipality than the unincorporated county area. Such transition areas include those properties likely to be considered for future annexation. As Newton County municipalities continue to grow and consider annexations, it is increasingly clear that the county's quality of life is intertwined with them. Protecting the county's future quality of life requires a proactive and integrated partnership with its cities to forge a unified approach to common problems such as environmental quality, land use and zoning, transportation planning, wastewater treatment, schools, libraries, parks and public safety.



**Policies:**

- Define through the Service Delivery Strategy Agreement process a Municipal Gateway or Sphere of Influence for each city that includes those properties likely to be considered for future annexation or municipal service delivery.
- Establish a formal procedure within each Gateway for the notification of development or annexation plans between the County and municipality to mitigate the potentially negative impact of land use decisions.
- New development within the sphere should be compatible with the architectural and design standards of the municipality.
- A step down or transition in residential density and urban form should be encouraged within the municipal gateway.

## Rural Conservation

**Description:** Areas of the County where traditional forms of farming and forestry continue; where low density and large-lot residential use and rural pursuits, such as horse breeding, specialty cultivation, and raising livestock, can co-exist on the landscape.



**Policies**

- Preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry.
- Preserve rural character in viewsheds.
- Discourage residential subdivisions with more than three parcels, except for conservation subdivisions.
- Discourage extension of public utilities in these areas.
- Screen all houses from view by providing natural and undisturbed “no-access” buffers along all existing federal, state, and county roads that are adjacent to, or within, the development.
- Protect active farms from encroachment.
- Install landscaping in right-of-way to buffer offensive views

**Scenic Corridor**

**Description:** The land visible from either side of a roadway passing through a predominantly rural or scenic portion of the county. This designation also may apply to a corridor that was once scenic and aspires to become increasingly scenic as development or redevelopment occurs.



**Policies:**

- Maintain scenic and rural character while accommodating appropriate forms of new development within the corridor.
- Protect scenic viewsheds and historic features.
- Residences along the roadway should be clustered and screened from the highway to preserve rural views.
- Encourage commercial development to locate at major intersections, such as Crossroad Community Centers or Villages.
- Prohibit strip development, metal buildings, big boxes, junkyards, mass grading, and large signage that would be visible from the highway.
- Take extra care when siting major utility easements to preserve scenic views and rural character.
- Once adopted, implement any policy recommendations of the Scenic Corridor Overlay district along Hwy 11. The future recommendations of the Scenic Corridor Overlay district will supersede the above policies, in the case of any contradiction.
- Consider application of these recommendations to the following additional corridors after the study of the Hwy 11 corridor has been adopted: Dixie Road, , SR 36 south of Covington, SR 142 from Dixie Road to Jasper County, SR 213, SR 212, Henderson Mill Road from SR 36 south to Jasper County, and Gum Creek Road.

## Quality Development Corridor

**Description:** The land fronting on either side of a heavily traveled local artery that serves several communities and may connect two or more Village Centers or commercial nodes. Commercial uses constitute a growing percentage of the frontage. Residential land uses are often under pressure to transition to commercial uses.



### **Policies:**

- Encourage nodal development with clear physical boundaries and transitions.
- Discourage strip development.
- Redevelop strip malls as a series of interconnected, pedestrian-scale, mixed-use developments.
- Discourage discontinuous land use transitions from residential to commercial uses.
- Buffer existing residences along the highway from incompatible uses.
- Limit driveway spacing along the highway frontage and align driveways wherever possible.
- Encourage shared driveways and inter-parcel access for adjacent commercial uses.
- When residential conversion to commercial uses is allowed adjacent to other residences, maintain the residential scale and appearance of the converted structure.
- Require double-fronting lots or a parallel residential lane when new residential property is developed abutting the highway.
- Require residential subdivisions accessing the highway to be interconnected.
- Provide safe facilities for pedestrians, school buses and bicyclists using the road right-of-way.
- Create safe, convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhoods and subdivisions that are adjacent to the commercial corridors.
- Building siting, building materials, architecture, signage, parking, and lighting should reinforce a residential scale.
- Service areas, service bays, outdoor storage areas, drive-throughs, car washes, and automobile service, including gasoline pumps, should not be visible from public streets.
- Orient new development toward public streets and sidewalks rather than parking areas.

## Residential Revitalization

**Description:** There are many older portions of Newton County that, within the next 20 years and even now, will be in need of revitalization. In particular, many of the starter home developments constructed over the past 10 years are likely to age poorly, unless steps are taken to encourage reinvestment, property maintenance, and home ownership.



**Policies:**

- Promote infill development on vacant parcels.
- Enforce the County’s property maintenance code.
- Encourage neighborhood watch programs
- Eliminate substandard housing incapable of being economically rehabilitated and replace with standard housing or other uses compatible with surrounding uses through public/private investment.

## Historic Preservation

**Description:** Newton County contains several historic districts and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places that contribute to the unique character and charm of the community. New development within these districts or adjacent should be compatible with the established historic character.



**Policies**

- Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures to promote a sense of place related to the established historic theme.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land for viable uses that will complement the overall theme and enhance economic vitality.
- Developments adjacent to or within a ¼ mile of a historic district should continue the traditional street grid, lot size, and traditional architecture.
- Encourage development of a mixture of uses and housing types.
- Encourage compatible architectural style that maintains the historic character and does not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Provide appropriate transitions to surrounding rural or estate residential uses.
- Encourage pedestrian access within historic districts.
- Screen parking areas.



### Village Center

**Description:** A local activity center with a mixture of uses in a clustered form that serves as a live-work-play center for a neighborhood or community. It should include a variety of housing types designed for all ages. The Village Center is intended to provide social, recreational, and commercial services used on a daily basis by residents surrounding the center.



**Policies:**

- The core of the village center should be a mixture of commercial, residential, and institutional uses within a ¼-mile radius, providing a walkable scale.
- Within a 1-mile radius, the core should be surrounded with interconnected residential neighborhoods offering a variety of house types.
- Use public investment in sewer, roads, schools, public safety, parks and open space to encourage private reinvestment in activity centers.
- Each village center should have a unified and distinctive architectural style.
- Promote efficient use of land by encouraging well-designed, pedestrian-oriented developments that include an appropriate mix of uses.

### Development Node

**Description:** These are activity centers where the Board of Commissioners has already approved a master plan for the overall development. A development node provides a planned arrangement of civic/institutional, recreational, commercial, office, and residential uses in a compact area and has an interconnected network of streets, sidewalks, and multi-use trails that encourage travel by walking, biking, and use of golf carts.



**Policies:**

- Each development node must have a unified and distinctive architectural style.
- Encourage the development of a block system of interconnecting streets, sidewalks and bike trails. Block faces may be no longer than 600 feet in length.
- Use public investment in sewer, roads, schools, public safety, parks and open space to encourage private reinvestment in activity centers.

## Emerging Suburban Community

**Description:** With the anticipated growth of the county, there are many areas due to location and the availability of infrastructure that will experience rapid residential growth. It is critical to the future quality of life of the community, that these new suburban areas are planned to accommodate the growth and the appropriate delivery of public services, and in a manner that the future economic viability of the housing can be maintained or improved.



### **Policies:**

- In new residential developments of over 50 acres in size, recreational areas should be set aside.
- Encourage the construction of separate pedestrian and bike trail systems in new residential subdivisions.
- Encourage the development of a secondary road system that links adjacent developments and provides alternative routes for residents to the primary arterial road system where practical. Require stub streets in adjacent developments, where practical, to link to the proposed road system in new surrounding developments.
- Encourage sidewalks and appropriate street lighting to be provided along all collector streets in the subdivision, and along any classified road on the exterior of the subdivision.

## Character Area Fact Sheets

## Alcovy Trestle

**Existing Character Description:**

Alcovy Trestle is an area rich in natural resources that is also experiencing numerous development pressures, due to its proximity to I-20, Covington, and Social Circle. This area contains the Georgia Wildlife Federation property, the east side of Lake Varner Reservoir, and the Alcovy River. Predominate land uses in the area are agricultural, parks/recreation/conservation, and rural residential. Despite being adjacent to I-20, Alcovy Trestle contains almost no commercial or industrial development. Nearby Covington provides local service and shopping needs.



*Railroad Trestle over the Alcovy River*



*Lake Varner*

**Vision for the Future:**

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of the Alcovy Watershed. A destination and home for naturalists and recreation.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Conserve the lands around the Lake Varner Reservoir to ensure high water quality.
- Manage recreational activities on the reservoir to protect water quality.
- Protect the tributaries to the reservoir by adopting wide natural buffer standards and enforcing strict erosion and sedimentation controls.
- Preserve wide natural buffers along the interstate to screen uses and signs.
- Develop a trail system along the Alcovy River.
- Develop a greenspace plan for the area that links corridors of adjacent greenspace together, preserving scenic views and protecting water quality.
- Preserve rural character in viewsheds; undertake a viewshed assessment of the area.
- Maintain rural cross sections for roadways.
- Maintain two-acre or larger minimum lot size for new residential development.
- In new subdivisions, require the clustering of homes, protection of views, and preservation of large portions of the site as permanently protected greenspace.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Agriculture, Rural Residential, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

# Almon

## Existing Character Description

The Almon community has historically served as a gateway for most visitors to Newton County, due to its location along US 278, the railroad and I-20 and its proximity to Rockdale County. With proposed construction of the West Covington Bypass and a new interchange on I-20, this important role as a gateway will only be magnified. The Almon community has a rich history, starting as a local railroad town before the time of the Civil War. The remnants of an old town center still exist, and in 2001 an Almon town plan was undertaken to develop a plan for its revitalization.



## Vision for the Future:

A gateway to Newton County displaying a small town ambience that builds on the community's rich history. A growing community focused around high quality residential homes and businesses.

## Implementation Strategies

- Support the revitalization of historic Almon in a manner consistent with the Master Plan.
- Construct a system of sidewalks and multi-use trails to link local residents to the historic and new town centers.
- Support the development of a new interchange for the West Covington Bypass. Before the construction of the Bypass, adopt a zoning overlay district to guide the development of quality construction.
- Support the extension of public sewer along the I-20 road frontage to encourage economic development and residential redevelopment.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Single-family Residential, Commercial and Industrial uses fronting the interstate, and Mixed-use.

## Bear Creek

### Existing Character Description

The Bear Creek character area is predominantly rural. Most property within the Bear Creek character area consists of large lots of undeveloped land, farms, and rural estates. It is home to the historic Gaithers Plantation. The proposed Bear Creek Reservoir could dramatically change the landscape of this character area. In recent years, a few upscale residential developments have been constructed. These developments resemble typical suburban neighborhoods.



### Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources, agricultural heritage, and rich architectural history. A regional cultural and recreation destination focused around the development of the Bear Creek Reservoir and Gaithers Plantation.

### Implementation Strategies

- Conserve the lands around the proposed Bear Creek Reservoir to ensure high water quality.
- New structures should draw from eastern Newton County's many historic precedents, including Starrsville, the Burge Plantation, Brickstore, Gaithers Plantation and the historic structures in Mansfield and Newborn.
- Protect the tributaries of the reservoir by adopting wide natural buffer standards and enforcing strict erosion and sedimentation controls.
- Prepare a land plan and develop Gaithers Plantation accordingly.
- Discourage residential subdivisions. Where they occur, require the clustering of homes, protection of views, preservation of large portions of the site as permanently protected greenspace, and stub streets to adjacent properties for future connection.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Agriculture, Rural Residential, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Cedar Shoals

### Existing Character Description

Access to I-20 and the Bypass and the old mill town of Porterdale have an influence on the Cedar Shoals area. There are many older commercial and industrial areas around Porterdale, and because of the availability of sewer, the western portions of the area contain some multi-family dwellings as well as suburban residential. Porterdale Elementary and Newton High School are located here, as well as the Yellow River.



### Vision for the Future:

A gateway to Porterdale that is tied closely to its rich mill-town history. A community focused around preservation, design standards, and quality homes and businesses.

### Implementation Strategies

- As a gateway to the central portion of the county and to the City of Porterdale, special attention should be given to promoting quality development in a manner compatible with the historic character of the old mill and historic mill village.
- Encourage village-oriented development near the crossroad community at the intersection of Brown Bridge Road and the Bypass, and near the Almon community along the interstate.
- Work closely with the Cities of Porterdale and Covington to improve the appearance and function of arterial roadways entering the cities, such as Brown's Bridge Road and Old Atlanta Highway.
- Support the development of a trail system along the Yellow River linking Turner Lake with Porterdale.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Commercial, Public/Institutional, Parks/Recreation/Conservation.

## Dixie Road

### Existing Character Description

The Dixie Road community is primarily composed of large rural estates featuring single-family housing. One of the most scenic areas of the county, there are also large tracts of undeveloped land within the character area. The area is likely to experience growth pressure in the future along its northern boundary, which is US 278, with the development of the Perimeter College campus at Mountain Pleasant.



### Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its agricultural heritage, promoting and protecting the scenic views along Dixie Road and SR 142.

### Implementation Strategies

- Establish a scenic overlay zoning district that protects the rural views from the Dixie Road SR 142 corridors.
- Protect active farms from encroachment.
- Preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry.
- Establish rural cross-sections for roadways.
- Encourage the development of conservation subdivisions, preserving the scenic character of the river and its tributaries.
- Discourage extension of public utilities.
- Protect the water quality of Bear Creek.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## East End

### Existing Character Description

The character of this area is being strongly influenced by the expansion of the City of Covington. With direct access to the Bypass and Jackson Highway and the availability of sewer, this is one of the fastest growing areas of the county. This area is home to Eastside High School, and several up-scale residential developments. The Alcovy River also runs along its eastern border.



### Vision for the Future:

A mixed-use community focused around high-quality commercial development, the school, and recreation opportunities.

### Implementation Strategies:

- Support the development of a quality development corridor along the Bypass and Jackson Highway. Adopt zoning overlay guidelines similar to the Covington Bypass Overlay District.
- Protect the water quality of the Alcovy River.
- Support the construction of a trail system along the Alcovy River linking to downtown Covington and the Starrsville community.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Commercial, Residential, Public/Institutional



## Flat Shoals

### Existing Character Description

The Flat Shoals character area is a predominantly undeveloped character area located just south of the City of Covington. The area includes a portion of Covington's southern Bypass and is bisected by Dried Indian Creek. Much of its land area is devoted to Covington's sprayfield. The developed areas are primarily residential with limited commercial areas. Most housing consists of single-family units constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. Middle Ridge Elementary and Indian Creek Middle Schools are located here along the Bypass.



### Vision for the Future:

A family-oriented community focused around the school and recreation. A community commercial destination for central Newton County.

### Implementation Strategies

- Improve Fire Station No. 1 recreation area.
- Establish a community center.
- Maintain stable residential areas.
- Promote residential redevelopment.
- Promote infill development on vacant parcels.
- Enforce a property maintenance code.
- Provide sewer to support infill development.
- Require enhanced amenity areas in new subdivisions.
- Enhance pedestrian networks within residential areas.
- Require stub streets and connections to stub streets wherever possible.
- Protect the Yellow River and Dried Indian Creek with wide stream buffers.
- Create a Yellow River greenway and trail.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and does not include "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Commercial, Public/Institutional, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Flint Hill

### Existing Character Description

The Flint Hill character area is dominated by the Lake Varner Reservoir. The area includes a mixture of undeveloped land, estate residences, large lakefront homes, several subdivisions, and a trailer park. The area includes several large areas of exposed rock, which host many rare and endangered species.



### Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation, recreation, and conservation of the Lake Varner Reservoir.

### Implementation Strategies

- Establish and enforce natural buffers for the tributaries of the reservoir.
- If residential subdivisions are built, encourage them to be conservation subdivisions that include the protection of views, green space, agricultural lands, etc.
- Conserve the lands around the Lake Varner Reservoir to ensure high water quality.
- Manage recreational activities on the Reservoir to protect water quality.
- Protect the tributaries to the reservoir by adopting wide natural buffer standards and enforcing strict erosion and sedimentation controls.
- Protect active farms from encroachment.
- For new residential subdivisions, require the clustering of homes, protection of views, and preservation of large portions of the site as permanently protected agricultural land or greenspace, and stub streets to adjacent properties for future connection.
- Preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry.
- Preserve rural character in viewsheds.
- Acquire areas of exposed rock as conservation areas.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Agriculture, Rural Residential, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Gum Creek

### Existing Character Description

Covering the northernmost reaches of Newton County, the Gum Creek character area is bordered by Rockdale and Walton Counties and the City of Oxford to the south. Its environmental features include Little Hayes and Big Hayes Creeks, Gum Creek, and several large concentrations of exposed rock. The land uses include a mixture of rural and open land, estate residences, and a collection of large-lot style subdivisions.



### Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its rural and natural character. A destination for equestrian activities including trails and farms.

### Implementation Strategies

- Acquire areas of exposed rock as conservation areas.
- Establish viewshed buffers through the use of scenic overlays to preserve rural character.
- Protect active farms from encroachment.
- Establish rural cross-sections for roadways.
- Encourage Conservation Subdivisions to help protect views and preserve large portions of the site as permanently protected greenspace, and create stub streets to adjacent properties for future connection.
- Preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry.
- Support the development of West Covington Bypass. Prior to its construction, establish a zoning overlay district to protect the community character along the corridor.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

# Harris Springs

## Existing Character Description

One of the least-developed character areas in Newton County, Harris Springs is located in the County's northeastern corner. While Interstate 20 forms the southern border, few roads penetrate the area. Development includes roadside single-family houses, a few estates, and a small number of commercial establishments. Harris Springs surrounds Social Circle on three sides.



## Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its rural and natural character, while embracing quality educational and commercial developments.

## Implementation Strategies

- Preserve rural character in viewsheds.
- New structures should draw from eastern Newton County's many historic precedents including Starrsville, the Burge Plantation, Brickstore, and the historic structures in Social Circle, Mansfield, and Newborn.
- Wide natural buffers along I-20 to screen uses and signs.
- Provide a clear sense of entry at each exit along I-20.
- Prohibit mass grading along the I-20 viewshed.
- Prohibit truck-loading areas, outdoor storage, and parking lots from being visible from the interstate.
- Work with the City of Social Circle to regulate the type and form of land use in a manner that is consistent with the intentions of an interstate gateway.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Highway 11 Preservation Corridor

### Existing Character Description

The Highway 11 Preservation Corridor character area is primarily composed of large rural estates featuring single-family housing. There are also large tracts of undeveloped land within the character area. The area is influenced by the towns of Mansfield and Newborn, and the proposed Bear Creek Reservoir.



### Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its agricultural heritage. Promoting and protecting the Hwy 11 Scenic Highway Corridor and Historic Mansfield through overlay zoning and buffer requirements.

### Implementation Strategies

- Establish a scenic overlay zoning district that protects the rural views from the Hwy 11 corridor.
- Protect active farms from encroachment.
- Preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry.
- Establish rural cross-sections for roadways.
- Discourage road widenings.
- Discourage residential subdivisions. Where they occur, require the clustering of homes, protection of views, preservation of large portions of the site as permanently protected agricultural land or greenspace, and stub streets to adjacent properties for future connection.
- Discourage extension of public utilities.
- New structures should draw from eastern Newton County's many historic precedents, including Starrsville, the Burge Plantation, Brickstore, Gaithers Plantation and the historic structures in Mansfield and Newborn.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

# High Point

## Existing Character Description

High Point is an existing unincorporated community located along Highway 36. The area has many older single-family subdivisions, several small-scale commercial establishments, and community institutions. The area also has older estate homes on large lots and areas of undeveloped land. The High Point Church and Henderson Restaurant and Grocery are focal points in the area.



## Vision for the Future:

An activity and commercial center for central Newton County that provides family-oriented services and facilities.

## Implementation Strategies

- Create a community center using public investment.
- Create new parks, both large and small neighborhood sized.
- Introduce design elements and signage unique to High Point to help foster a sense of community and place.
- Maintain stable residential areas.
- Promote infill development on vacant parcels by providing public sewer.
- Support the development of a Village Center along Jackson Highway that can serve as a center of community activities.
- Enforce a property maintenance code.
- Require enhanced amenity areas.
- Enhance pedestrian networks within residential areas.
- Create an Alcovy River greenway and trail, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Hub Junction

**Existing Character Description.** Hub Junction is traditional rural crossroads community. Due to its close proximity and good access to I-20 and US 278, and the announced location of new campus for Perimeter College, it will experience a number of significant changes over the planning horizon. The County has been very proactive in adopting the Brickstore Overlay District to help protect the scenic character of the area and to encourage quality development.



### **Vision for the Future:**

A regional education center that provides commercial services to eastern Newton County.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Support the development of the Perimeter College campus in this area, and the development of the Mt. Pleasant Master Plan in a manner consistent with the Brickstore Overlay District.
- Maintain wide natural buffers along the interstate to screen uses and signs.
- Provide a clear sense of entry at the Highway 11 exit on I-20.
- Prohibit new signs visible from the interstate, other than approved GDOT signs. Work to remove all existing commercial signage visible from the interstate right-of-way.
- Prohibit mass grading along the interstate viewshed.
- Prohibit truck-loading areas, outdoor storage, and parking lots from being visible from the interstate.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Commercial, Public/Institutional

## Lake Jackson

**Existing Character Description:** Lake Jackson has long been the home to small lake-oriented residential development. Many of the older vacation homes here are being replaced by more expensive permanent dwellings.



**Vision for the Future:**

Lake-oriented destination with quality residential and commercial development.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Encourage residential redevelopment in the area.
- Maintain stable residential areas
- Enforce a property maintenance code.
- Help protect and improve the water quality of Jackson Lake by encouraging the consolidation of small lots and maintaining adequate buffers between new development and the shoreline.
- Support the development trail systems linking Jackson Lake to surrounding recreation areas and activity centers.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Parks/Recreation/Conservation, Lake-oriented Commercial



## Lower River

### Existing Character Description

Bordered to the east by the Yellow River and its associated wetlands and floodplains, the Lower River character area predominately features single-family residences. It is home to some rural residential units on large parcels of land. A number of public facilities are also located in the Lower River character area, including the landfill. The focal points of the character area are a number of community-oriented churches.



### Vision for the Future:

A strong community enhanced by the scenic and natural resources of the Yellow River, which provides opportunities for local jobs, quality homes, and recreational facilities.

### Implementation Strategies

- Maintain stable residential areas.
- Promote infill development on vacant parcels.
- Enforce a property maintenance code.
- Enhance pedestrian networks within residential areas.
- Require stub streets and connections to stub streets wherever possible.
- Protect the Yellow River with wide stream buffers.
- Create a Yellow River greenway and trail.
- New developments should mix housing price points.
- Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional character, and does not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Preserve the scenic character of Lower River Road.
- Create opportunities for water recreation, including access available at the bridges along the Bypass.
- Develop a Bypass Overlay District in this area to encourage the development of quality commercial uses along the corridor.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## McGuirts Crossing

### Existing Character Description

Much of the character area consists of typical suburban residential development. The Alcovy River and the City of Covington are located on the area's western edge and have a strong influence in local development patterns. The northern edge of the character area abuts I-20.



### Vision for the Future:

A family-oriented suburban residential community enhanced by the natural setting of the Alcovy River.

### Implementation Strategies

- Maintain wide natural buffers along the interstate to screen uses and signs.
- Protect the water quality of the Alcovy River.
- Support the development of a trail system along the river.
- Encourage the development of conservation subdivisions, preserving the scenic character of the river and its tributaries.
- Restrict big-box commercial development along US 278 in this area to maintain the residential and scenic character of the area.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Newton Factory

**Existing Character Description.** Newton Factory is an area rich in natural resources and recreational opportunities. It contains Factory Shoals Recreational Park, the Alcovy River, Bert Adams Boy Scout Reservation, and the Yellow River. It is also the site of the recently constructed Alcovy High School, and is seeing the development of new residential subdivisions. The future widening of Jackson Highway will increase growth pressures in the area.



### **Vision for the Future:**

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources. A sense of community forged through high-quality education, quality homes, and aesthetic standards.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Protect the water quality of the Alcovy and Yellow Rivers.
- Develop a local trail system to link the high school with surrounding residential uses and the recreational areas along the rivers.
- Adopt a Scenic Overlay District to protect the viewshed along Jackson Highway.
- Discourage strip commercial development along Jackson Highway.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Public/Institutional, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

# Oak Hill

## Existing Character Description

The Oak Hill character area is a mix of new subdivisions and rural properties. It also features several public facilities, including a fire station, Oak Hill Elementary School, and includes the small historic hamlet of Oak Hill, the namesake of the character area.



## Vision for the Future:

A sense of community forged through high-quality education, local jobs, better quality homes, aesthetic standards, and family-oriented activity centers.

## Implementation Strategies

- Introduce design elements and signage unique to Oak Hill to help foster a sense of community and place.
- Improve local arterial roads through operation improvements, better signalization, and limited widening to better handle traffic.
- Establish recreational options, including both passive parks and neighborhood parks.
- Support the creation of a new activity center around civic uses through the expansion of public sewer service.
- Maintain and enhance pedestrian access in the areas through the construction of more sidewalks and a regional trail system.
- Support neighborhood-oriented commercial development in recommended activity centers to reduce the dependence on auto-trips.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Rocky Plains

### Existing Character Description

Many new residential developments and a new elementary school have been constructed in Rocky Plains. Nonetheless, the character area still features many rural, undeveloped tracts of land and farms. The Yellow River and South River run through the character area.



### Vision for the Future:

A family-oriented residential community focused around local schools.

### Implementation Strategies.

- Promote the development of community crossroads or nodal forms of neighborhood-oriented commercial areas at the intersection of local arterial roads and highways.
- Support the development of a pedestrian sidewalk and trail network linking these commercial areas with the surrounding residential developments.
- Protect the water quality of the Yellow and South Rivers.
- In new residential subdivisions, require the clustering of homes, protection of views, preservation of large portions of the site as permanently protected greenspace, and stub streets to adjacent properties for future connection.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Commercial, Parks/Recreation/Conservation, Public/Institutional

## Salem

### Existing Character Description

A loose collection of disconnected, residential subdivisions developed since 1970. The area is characterized by its automobile orientation, high degree of building separation, segregation of uses, and disconnected street patterns. Two school clusters are located in the character area: West Newton Elementary and Veterans Memorial Middle complex off Browns Bridge, and Fairview Elementary and Clements Middle off Fairview Road. A third complex is being proposed along GA Highway 162, between Brown Bridge Road and Highway 81.



### Vision for the Future:

A sense of community through high-quality education, local jobs, better quality homes, aesthetic standards, and family-oriented activity centers.

### Implementation Strategies

- Promote the development of Village Center around the intersection of Browns Bridge Road and Salem Road.
- Integrate the three school complexes in the area more closely with the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Encourage pedestrian access to the sites and the co-location of other public facilities.
- Promote new developments that emulate the positive aspects of community.
- Promote moderate density, traditional development (TND) style residential subdivisions.
- New development should be master planned with mixed uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips.
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points.
- Foster the establishment of a regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Commercial, Institutional/Public, Mixed-use.

## Stanton Springs

**Existing Character Description:** Currently this character area is predominately comprised of agriculture and forestry land. Located at the intersection of I-20 and US 278, this area has excellent highway access, and is the proposed location for a large mixed-use employment center. The area is also located within the Little River Watershed.



### **Vision for the Future:**

A regional mixed-use and employment activity center.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Follow the Stanton Springs Master Plan.
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce to recruit industries to locate here.
- Provide a clear sense of entry at US 278 exit on I-20.
- Protect the water quality of the Little River through the use of Best Management Practices.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Industrial, Commercial, Mixed-Use, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Starrsville

### Existing Character Description

The historic Starrsville character area is centered on the National Register-listed Starrsville Historic District. This rural community includes a mix of farms, rural estates, forest lands, and, increasingly, new subdivisions. East Newton Elementary School is located within the character area.



### Vision for the Future:

A rural community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources, agricultural heritage and architectural history.

### Implementation Strategies

- Introduce design elements and signage unique to Starrsville to help foster a sense of community and place.
- New structures should draw from the character area's historic precedents.
- Protect active farms from encroachment.
- Preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry.
- Establish rural cross-sections for roadways.
- Discourage road widenings.
- In new residential subdivisions, require the clustering of homes, protection of views, preservation of large portions of the site as permanently protected agricultural land or greenspace, and stub streets to adjacent properties for future connection.
- Preserve rural character in viewsheds.
- Discourage extension of public utilities.
- Protect the Alcovy River with wide stream buffers.
- Create an Alcovy River greenway and trail.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation, Public/Institutional



# Stewart

## Existing Character Description

Stewart is a predominantly rural character area in southern Newton County. The area features many rural, undeveloped tracts of land, with a few contemporary subdivisions. The Yellow River forms the area's western edge. Heard Mixon Elementary School and the FFA-FCCLA camp are located within the Stewart character area.



## Vision for the Future:

A rural crossroad community tied closely to the preservation and conservation of its natural resources and agricultural heritage.

## Implementation Strategies

- Promote the development of Stewart as a Village Center by locating new civic uses in a supportive manner.
- New structures should draw from southern Newton County's many historic precedents.
- Protect the Yellow River with wide stream buffers.
- Create a Yellow River greenway and trail.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Parks/Recreation/Conservation, Mixed-use

## Turner Lake

**Existing Character Description.** Turner Lake is largest public park in the county parks and recreation system, and special attention should be taken to encourage that new development around it be built in manner supportive of the park's function and intent. The area has a very natural character derived from the park, as well as the streams and wetlands between it and the Yellow River.



**Vision for the Future:**

A refuge from the urban environment and a community tied closely to the preservation of the Yellow River, Turkey Creek and the use of Turner Lake Park.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Support the construction of trail system linking Porterdale to Covington.
- Encourage the development of conservation subdivisions, preserving the scenic character of the river and its tributaries.
- Protect and enhance the water quality of the Yellow River and its tributaries.

**Appropriate Land Uses:** Residential, Parks/Recreation/Conservation

## Future Land Use Plan

The recommended future land use plan for Newton County is a parcel-specific map that is intended to serve as a guide in making rezoning and capital investment decisions. The map assigns a future land use designation to every parcel in the unincorporated area of the County. The future land use categories shown on the map are listed and defined in the following table. The definitions also describe what zoning districts are appropriated for each future land use category. The housing densities indicated may only be obtained through application of a TDR Program, and/or the adoption of an Activity Center Master Plan by the Board of Commissioners.

**Future Land Use Categories and Definitions**

Future Land Use Category	Definition
Agriculture/Forestry (AF)	These are lands which will retain their rural character during the planning period. This includes all land used for agricultural purposes, such as cropland, livestock production, and commercial timber. This category may also include farm houses or single-family homes on 10 acres or more. <b>Corresponding Zoning District: Agriculture (A).</b>
Rural Residential (RR)	A single-family house on 2 or more acres of land. Some hobby farming may be taking place on the property. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: A, RE, A-R (with 2 acre minimum)</b>
Residential (RES)	Conventional residential subdivisions as well as conservation subdivision, with supportive recreational amenities and small-scale public institutional uses. Lots sizes range from 15,000 to 51,000 square feet (sf) (less than 3 units per acre, 25,500 sf lot most common) <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: AR, R1, R2, R3, MSR, MHS.</b>
High Density Residential (HDR)	Apartments, town homes, or duplexes on lots of 15,000 to 80,000 sf (up to 8 units per acre). <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: DR, RMF, MHP, Zero Lot Line Development.</b>
Commercial (COM)	Property where business and trade are conducted; includes retail stores, shopping centers, and office buildings. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: CN, CH, CG, OI.</b>
Mixed Use (MX)	Allows a variety of commercial, residential, and civic uses typically found in a village, tied together with good street and pedestrian connectivity. Could be the core of a future development node. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts except M-2.</b>
Development node (DN)	A Mixed-use development that must be part of a BOC adopted Master Plan. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>
Industrial (IND)	Property used for warehousing, distribution, trucking and manufacturing. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: M-1 and M-2.</b>
Public/ Institutional (PI)	Areas used for local government's community facilities, general government, and institutional land uses. Examples include schools, city halls, county courthouses, health facilities, churches, libraries and police and fire stations. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>
Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities (TCU)	Areas used for transportation, communication or utility related activities, such as power generation plants, sewage and water treatment facilities, landfills, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities, or similar uses. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>

### Future Land Use Categories and Definitions

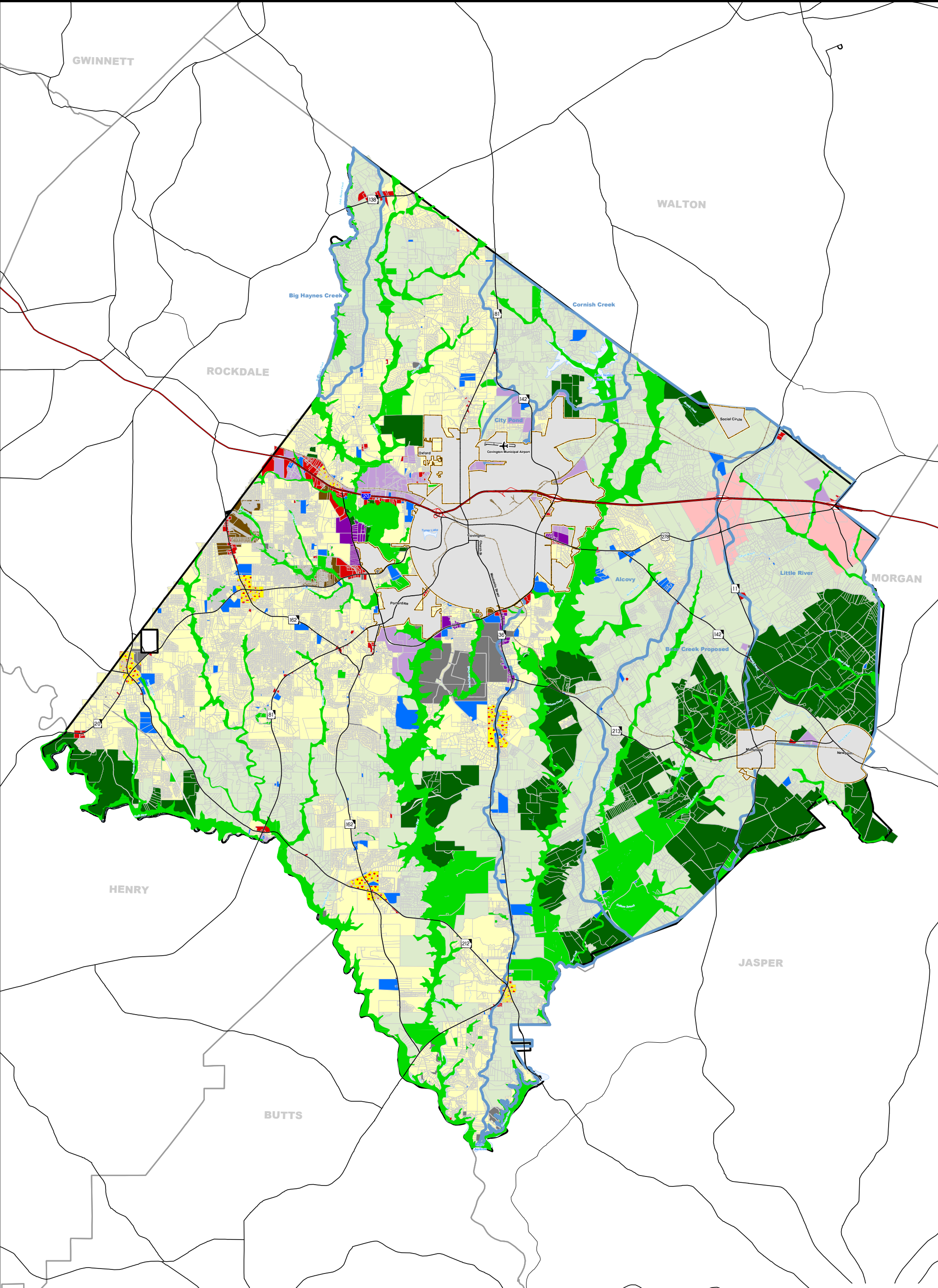
Future Land Use Category	Definition
Park/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)	Areas developed or proposed to be developed for park or recreation use or are designated as open space. Includes Public Parks, Private Recreation areas, lands held for Conservation, and Floodplain. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>
Road Right-of-Way (ROW)	Land dedicated to road right-of-way, a form of TCU. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts.</b>

The following shows the total area of land covered by each category in the county. This includes the future land uses within the county's six municipalities. As shown in the table, the majority of the land is classified as Residential and Rural Residential.

### Future Land Use - Total Area

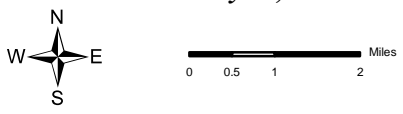
Future Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture/Forestry (AF)	24,181	13.5%
Rural Residential (RR)	62,579	34.9%
Residential (RES)	47,865	26.7%
High Density Residential (HDR)	852	0.5%
Commercial (COM)	1,424	0.8%
Mixed Use Neighborhood (MXN)	1,168	0.7%
Mixed Use Corridor (MXC)	630	0.4%
Development node (DN)	2,932	1.6%
Industrial (IND)	2,413	1.3%
Public/Institutional (PI)	2,987	2%
Transportation/Communications/Utilities (TCU)	2,285	1%
Park/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)	6,371	4%
Road Right-of-Way (ROW)	8,184	5%
Floodplain (PRC)	18,484	10%
Incorporated	22,744	
<b>Total</b>	<b>179,400</b>	<b>100%</b>

On the following page is a reduced copy of the Future Land Use Plan, **Figure IV-2**. A PDF of a larger 30" x 40" sized version of the map is available from the Newton County Planning Department.



**Newton County 2028  
Comprehensive Plan**

*Future Land Use  
February 19, 2008*



**Future Land Use**

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Rural Residential        | Industrial                             |
| Residential              | Public Institutional                   |
| High Density Residential | Agricultural/Forestry                  |
| Commercial               | Park/Recreation/Conservation           |
| Mixed Use Neighborhood   | Watershed Protection Area              |
| Mixed Use Corridor       | Transportation/Communication/Utilities |
| Development Node         | Right-of-Way                           |

- Interstate Highway
- U.S. Route
- State Route
- Road
- Railroad
- River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Parcel Boundary
- City Boundary
- Newton County Boundary



02/19/08

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## V. Translating the Vision into the Plan

### ***Introduction***

To translate a future vision for the community into an implementation plan first requires goal setting and an identification of the issues and opportunities that will likely be faced in making the plan a reality. The overarching goal is to develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community, and this plan is divided into seven major elements:

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

Following is a goal statement for each element and list of issues and opportunities that were first identified by the public and later refined by County officials and consultants.

### ***Land Use***

***Goal: Preserve and enhance the rural and small town character of the community while promoting sustainable economic growth.***

Part of the vision for the community is to create an environment that residents and visitors alike will be comfortable using, is unique to Newton County, and maintains a strong connection to the land, its resources and the rich history of the community. The citizens and leaders of the county also realize, however, that a healthy and sustainable community must have a strong economic base in order to efficiently provide the public services needed to meet the demands of anticipated population growth. This vision hinges on the creation of new employment and commercial centers, as well as the creation of new villages and crossroads communities that draw from the traditional rural character of the county.

### ***Land Use Issues***

1. **Suburban Sprawl.** Most of the recent development in the county over the past 10 years has occurred in a typical suburban land use pattern. Most of the new development associated with this pattern is single-family residential spread out in a leap-frog fashion. Retail and employment opportunities are primarily relegated to Covington and surrounding counties such as Rockdale, forcing more and more residents to drive longer distances.
2. **Strip Commercial Development.** The land uses along some highway corridors form stereotypical commercial strips that detract from the rural character and regional identity.

## Land Use Opportunities

1. **Reserve land for industrial and commercial growth.** Within the Future Land Use Plan, include adequate space for the growth of employment-related uses. Proposed developments such as Stanton Springs can help nurture the need for an expanded employment base.
2. **Interstate Gateways.** New developments like Stanton Springs and the new campus of Perimeter College offer an opportunity to improve the gateways to the community from I-20 through proper land use controls.
3. **More mixed-use developments.** Additional employment and retail opportunities close to housing would reduce driving time for residents
4. **Encourage traditional neighborhood development.** Traditional neighborhood developments can be viable in any context, but they should be encouraged in crossroad communities where appropriate supportive infrastructure is in place.
5. **Encourage the development of village centers.** Through the visioning process, Citizens identified a desire promote the concentration of new development in village centers rather than in a sprawled suburban pattern as has already occurred in many parts of western Newton County. The County should provide incentives for this village development pattern through the provision of sewer in identified village centers and through the location of new county facilities and schools to support this. The County should also support the crafting of master plans around these village centers to promote an appropriate mix of uses, the construction of a supportive transportation infrastructure, and the preservation of valuable natural and cultural resources.
6. **Protect natural resources within developments.** Promote the use of the conservation subdivision ordinance, enforce the stream buffer ordinance and create an incentive to create greenway connections.
7. **Preserve the rural areas of Newton County.** As the county continues to grow, much of its open spaces and many of its scenic views are being developed. The loss of open land and greenspace were among residents' greatest concerns for the future of the county. As much of the unincorporated county still retains its rural character, the community has the opportunity to preserve some of its rural areas.

## Land Use Implementation Strategies

1. **Growth management** through the preservation of water supply watersheds and use of the village center concept.
2. **Adopt architectural standards and site design requirements** to support the development of activity centers that enhance and reflect local character.
3. **Adopt Smart Code or form-based zoning codes** to support the development of walkable communities and to help preserve the architectural character of the community.



4. **Support historic preservation** and adaptive reuse of historic structures.
5. **Study the possible use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)** to preserve the rural character of the community and support development within activity centers.

## **Transportation**

*Goal: Maintain an efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation network to support efficient land use, minimize traffic congestion, and facilitate community-wide and regional circulation.*

In the face of rapid population growth, traffic congestion is one of the most visible and pressing problems facing the county. To handle the anticipated needs of the public and local employers this plan calls for the development of a transportation system that is not wholly dependant on the automobile or local roads. Throughout the public



involvement effort the community showed great support for the development of a connected and integrated system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that could also allow for the recreational and possible utilitarian use of other forms of transportation, such as golf carts and horses.

## **Transportation Issues**

1. **Lack of adequate traffic signals.** There are many all-way stops in the community that need to be signalized. Existing signals should be synchronized. This would help to reduce queuing.
2. **Mitigating increasing traffic congestion.** Traffic congestion is going to get worse as the county grows. Steps need to be emplaced to slow the increase in congestion including requiring street connectivity and conducting traffic studies.
3. **Poorly connected or incomplete pedestrian network.** There are ordinances in place to promote sidewalk construction as a part of new development, but the network is disconnected. The County should identify future collector streets to be built as development occurs.
4. **Address safety concerns in the transportation system.** Many of the county's roads were primarily built to support agricultural uses, and were not originally intended to support the amount of traffic placed on them as the county grew. Many roads are in need of improved alignments, signalization, sight-distances and capacity improvements in order to make them safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

5. **No county transit system.** There is no public transit system in Newton County. The community should study the opportunities for express bus routes and vanpooling.

### Transportation Opportunities

1. **Improving street connectivity within and between developments.** By requiring adjacent developments to provide stub streets, and to connect to any existing stub streets on adjacent property, a secondary network of roadways that can serve more than just the new development may be established.
2. **Implement the Greenway and Bicycle Plan.** Though the County has a bicycle plan, the need remains for more multi-use trails for walking and biking.
3. **Transportation plan.** The County is currently undertaking a countywide transportation plan.

### Transportation Implementation Strategies

1. **Street connectivity plan.** Newton County should prepare an official map dedicated to street, highway and path connectivity.
2. **Context-sensitive street design.** Adopt standard drawings for each type of local roadway that meets regional transportation goals but also does not negatively impact local neighborhoods or businesses.
3. **Build new roadway capacity** in support of regional transportation and local economic development goals.
4. **Implement operational improvements**, such as traffic signals and turn lanes, where capacity-adding improvements are not justified.
5. **Conduct a transit feasibility study** to support the growing needs of the aging population in Newton County, and the needs of commuting workers.
6. **Expand pedestrian and bicycle facilities** within recommended activity centers as part of all new development, and in support of the County Greenways Plan.
7. **Support access management** along quality development corridors. Access management is the process of coordinating, planning, designing, and implementing land use and transportation strategies so that the flow of traffic between the road and surrounding land is efficient and safe.
8. **Adopt Travel Demand Management (TDM)** strategies to reduce the need for building roadway capacity-adding projects. TDM strategies include carpooling, vanpooling, transit, biking, walking, telecommuting and flexible work schedules.

## **Economic Development**

*Goal: Promote a strong, diversified local economy and fiscal tax base*

The public and local leadership recognize that Newton County has developed into a bedroom community, and they want to take proactive steps to create a conducive environment for local industries and employment opportunities to change this. Only through effective economic development efforts can the community maintain the fiscal health of the county and local municipalities as well as their unique identity.

### **Economic Development Issues**

1. **Lack of jobs-housing balance.** Newton County has one of the lowest employment-to-labor-force ratios in the Atlanta metro area. This results in a fiscal imbalance as well as longer commutes. Residential growth is outpacing employment growth. New commercial development is required to offset the growing public service demands of its residential population. New retail and industrial/business park development is currently underway or planned, but additional commercial development is necessary in the future.
2. **Lack of a strategic economic development plan.** The County lacks a strategic economic development plan (however, a Market Analysis completed by Ackerman & Co. in November 2005 could serve as a foundation for an economic development plan). Neither the City of Covington nor Newton County has a staffed economic development office, however this function is assumed by the Chamber of Commerce. Providing a consistent proactive approach to business marketing, recruitment and retention is vitally important for developing new jobs in the County.
3. **Inadequate measures to identify and attract target industries.** The County needs to carefully evaluate which industries, sectors, and clusters are the most compatible with the county and develop a program to attract them. Recruitment efforts should focus on additional white-collar, technology or other higher paying jobs. Newton County and the City of Covington should become more aggressive in pursuing an employment base of regional-scale employers that will attract a full range of complementary jobs to Newton County.
4. **Provision of adequate infrastructure to support future economic development.** Other potential challenges are ensuring there is adequate land for industrial and commercial development (particularly in the Covington area) and providing the appropriate infrastructure – roads, water, and sewer – to support this type of development.

### **Economic Development Opportunities**

1. **Growing economic base.** Newton County has a 2003 employment base of 18,584, which is forecasted to grow to between 30,350 and 51,251 by 2028. These projections are dependent on the County's economic development policies, particularly related to roads, water, and sewer improvements, as well as maintaining Newton County's high quality of life. The city of Covington currently hosts 56% of the jobs in Newton County. The city's job base as a portion of the county's will likely erode in the future as new

employment centers, such as Stanton Springs, emerge in unincorporated areas of the county.

2. **Become an employment center for east metro Atlanta.** Due to its long frontage along I-20 and relatively affordable and available land supply, Newton County is uniquely positioned to host major employment centers that would diversify its tax base and provide employment opportunities for its growing labor force.

3. **Attract jobs and employers that increase the diversity of Newton County's economy.** The county has a diversified economy, but it lacks a strong base of export jobs and needs to expand beyond the government, manufacturing, service and retail sectors. A more diverse economy will help protect the county against economic downturns and expand the opportunities for residents to work near home.



*Local industry in Covington*

Manufacturing is the most significant basic or export-oriented industry and it offers potential growth in Newton County among firms requiring advanced technologies and a highly skilled labor force. Other high-growth employment sectors are professional and business services, education and health services, trade, transportation and utilities, and government.

4. **Promote and market Newton County to business.** A more proactive approach to business marketing and recruitment, along with retention and expansion of key existing businesses that anchor the economy is required. Both the County and the City of Covington should become more aggressive in pursuing an employment base of national- and regional-scale employers that will attract a wide range of complementary jobs to Newton County.
5. **Strong education system.** The County offers an excellent education system. It has one of the top primary education systems in the state of Georgia, as well as a variety of secondary education opportunities, including Oxford College of Emory University, DeKalb Tech, and Georgia Perimeter College (planned). The opportunities for work-force education are a significant advantage for Newton County and it should be promoted assertively.
6. **Hold more community events.** One of the best ways for the community to attract visitors and raise a little revenue for community causes is through holding local festivals, craft fairs, and musical events. The community should consider constructing appropriate venues to hold such events at County Parks. Gaithers Plantation, in particular, would be an excellent location for an auditorium or civic center. The square in downtown Covington could also be promoted as a location for community events.

### **Economic Development Implementation Strategies**

1. **Establish tax incentives to attract target industries** including healthcare facilities and high-tech options.
2. **Market available sites.** Prepare an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.
3. **Promote advanced educational opportunities.** Engage leadership to support institutions of higher learning, and promote more program offerings at local colleges.

### **Housing**

*Goal: To provide a variety of housing choices to suit the changing needs and lifestyles of county residents.*

Not only is Newton County growing in terms of population numbers, it is also experiencing changes in its socioeconomic characteristics. In particular, the community is aging, and this change requires that the County offer a variety of housing options to accommodate residents, wherever they may be in the life cycle.

### **Housing Issues**

1. **Rapid population growth.** The 2004 estimate of population for the County is 81,524, and by 2028 the population is projected to more than double to somewhere between 171,000 and 236,653, depending on land use and growth management policies. This means that the county will need a minimum of 32,500 new housing units to accommodate this population increase.
2. **Demographic changes affect housing demand.** There are several demographic factors shaping the local housing market for Newton County. These include: 1) domination by family householders; 2) a solid middle-class community; 3) a significant increase in children; 4) a significant increase in seniors; and 5) a fast-growing minority population, particularly Hispanic.
3. **Limited housing choices.** Housing in the unincorporated county is dominated by single-family residences, representing more than 80% of the market. A broader choice of housing options could be accommodated through village-type development and the provision of sewer in strategic portions of the county.
4. **Limited workforce housing.** Newton County is considered relatively affordable compared to more urban counties in metro Atlanta, but housing costs are rising more rapidly than incomes. New high-income households are relocating to the county, pushing housing prices higher than local wages can support, so the balance of affordable housing is changing. County officials need to ensure that workforce housing continues to be available in the future.
5. **Lack of executive housing.** Newton County has a median house sale price of approximately \$138,000, which is affordable for middle-income families. But the county

lacks higher-priced housing in the \$300,000+ price range. Before the County can attract major employers offering high-paying jobs it will have to encourage development of the kinds of high-quality residential choices that would attract upper management.

### **Housing Opportunities**

1. **Encourage traditional neighborhood developments.** Traditional neighborhood developments (TND) follow historic patterns of neighborhood design. They are compact, walkable, have a connected network of streets, sidewalks and paths, and have a mixture of housing types, styles and uses. They help foster a sense of community through the use of front porches, neighborhood commercial space, and neighborhood green spaces and parks. There are several excellent examples of TND developments in Covington, such as Clark's Grove, that can serve as a model for future developments. These TND developments offer a variety of housing types in a dynamic mixed-use environment that helps to reduce auto trips and create a strong sense of place that makes Newton unique.
2. **Encourage the development of village centers.** Nodal development in the form of village centers could provide a variety of housing types close to employment opportunities. It will be important that these emerging centers provide the right mix of housing to support local jobs.
3. **Encourage conservation subdivisions.** Conservation subdivisions are a regulatory tool that allows for clustering of residential development in a portion of a site, while maintaining open space in remainder of the site. It is used as way to protect open space in rural areas of the county.

### **Housing Implementation Strategies**

1. **Foster redevelopment and infill.** While redevelopment options within the unincorporated county are limited, there is tremendous opportunity for infill within the county's western area. The area that developed in a contemporary suburban fashion over the past few decades left a significant portion of developable land vacant. Some of these areas offer mixed-use – residential and commercial – infill and redevelopment opportunities, particularly the area close to the interstate and the county's employment centers.
2. **Provide for an aging population through better healthcare, additional senior services and housing alternatives.** The Baby Boomer generation is beginning to retire, resulting in one of the nation's greatest demographic shifts. Many of these wealthier, active seniors are looking for alternatives to larger-lot single family dwellings – neighborhoods with sidewalks, access to transit, and the ability to walk to shops, restaurants and recreation areas.
3. **Provide enough work force housing to meet demand.** In 2004, 63 percent of all jobs in metropolitan Atlanta paid less than \$40,000. The County needs to seek ways to provide housing for people at a variety of income levels and at different stages in their lives.

## **Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Goal: Protect, preserve and enhance the county's valuable natural and cultural resources.**

Newton County is very proud of its rural heritage, and is fortunate to possess an abundance of scenic natural resources. In the face of rapid growth, the community is very concerned about preserving and managing these resources for future generations.

### **Natural and Cultural Resource Issues**

1. **Declining water quality.** Four of Newton County's significant streams and rivers do not meet federal water quality standards. Lake Jackson in south Newton County is also in violation of clean water standards, in large part due to these impaired streams and rivers. None of these streams originate in Newton County, and all are impaired by the time they reach the county. Several large urban areas are upstream of Newton County, as are a number of active agricultural areas. Much of the pollution generated is due to urban and rural non-point source runoff, but wastewater from industrial and municipal uses also contributes to substandard water quality.



*Lake Jackson*

2. **Poor air quality.** Newton County is one of 21 metropolitan Atlanta counties with poor air quality. The county, along with the region, does not meet federal clean air standards for particulate matter or ground-level ozone. Regionally, the bulk of the problem originates with high traffic volumes, often traveling relatively long distances in congested operating conditions. Several ongoing trends will likely exacerbate Newton County's air quality problem. These include:
  - Increased development – commercial and residential
  - New developments continue to focus on travel by motor vehicle
  - Segregation of land uses
  - Poor street connectivity/cul-de-sac and dead-end streets
  - Lack of pedestrian or bicycle facilities
  - Lack of adequate job opportunities in the county
  - Loss of tree canopy

Stemming these trends will require a multi-faceted campaign of zoning and land development regulation reform, public education, and intergovernmental coordination between all government entities in the region.

4. **Preservation of historic resources.** There is a need for design guidelines in areas of redevelopment and infill, but at present the county's historic resources, districts, and sites lack local protection from demolition, inappropriate modification, or encroachment of incompatible development. Very few of the many historic sites located throughout the county are federally protected with a listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and this places a large majority of the county's historic resources at risk. To protect its historic integrity, the County should adopt both historic preservation districts and architectural and design guidelines to be overseen by a historic preservation commission.

### Natural and Cultural Resource Opportunities

1. **Greenspace and open space preservation.** A greenspace plan, which identified opportune areas for trails and greenways, was created shortly after the County's April 2000 Comprehensive Plan Update. This plan has stimulated greater levels of interest in trails and greenspace as both community assets and tools for natural resource preservation. Further efforts should be made to implement the plan and keep it up-to-date. The County has purchased several tracts of land for preservation, but more can be done. By developing a protective ordinance/overlay district, the County could demonstrate its commitment to protecting these resources from inappropriate development.
2. **Preservation of prime agricultural and open space conservation.** Newton County contains many areas of large, undeveloped land, particularly in its eastern and southern sections. It also retains thousands of acres of active, productive farms. Large expanses of open space are generally attractive to the development community, and development pressure on these valuable resources is growing. At this time the County lacks a comprehensive strategy for preservation and retention of these open spaces and farmlands, though it does have a greenspace plan that identifies areas for trails and greenways.
3. **Protect water quality.** A regional solution that is carried out in cooperation with surrounding counties is the optimal approach for addressing this problem. Consistent enforcement of existing erosion and sedimentation control regulations is also needed, and revisions to development standards could include limits on impervious surfaces, additional conservation subdivision options, requirements for pervious parking areas, or incentives for green roofs.
4. **Protect air quality.** Currently, Newton County does not have a specific strategy for addressing air quality. Standards that help reduce driving, promote walking and bicycling, or preserve trees and tree canopy help improve air quality. Many aspects of the existing regulatory environment promote air quality-friendly development including:
  - Zoning districts that allow for mixed land uses
  - Requirements for pedestrian facilities
  - Conservation subdivision and tree saving standards
  - Standards to limit impervious surfaces and shared parking



5. **State and federal historic preservation program.** The preservation of historic and cultural sites within the county presents an opportunity to create a unique sense of place that can help to attract residents, business and tourism. There are numerous state- and federally-funded programs that support the goal of historic preservation that could be utilized to help in this effort.
6. **Preserve scenic views.** The County needs to protect the aesthetic character of scenic routes such as Highway 11 from the negative aspects of new development. Appropriate zoning regulations should be established along recognized scenic routes to protect the viewshed.
7. **Protect and replace trees and tree canopy.** The loss of trees to new construction is common problem in the county. Local citizens would like to see the County adopt and enforce a stronger tree ordinance.

### Natural and Cultural Resources Implementation Strategies

1. **Preserve prime agricultural lands and greenspace** through the development process, tax exemptions, and support of local land trusts.
2. **Protect local water quality** through effective watershed protection efforts and stormwater management.
3. **Support Atlanta regional efforts to improve air quality** through effective land use controls and transportation planning.



4. **Protect the viewshed of the county's scenic roadways** by adopting scenic highway overlay districts.
5. **Support local historic preservation efforts** through efforts such as improving the Gaithers Plantation as a living museum.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

*Goal: Provide an efficiently managed system of public facilities and services that will accommodate the needs of the current and future population and businesses.*

The implementation of the Future Development Map presented in this plan is contingent on the location, capacity and design of the county's infrastructure. Community facilities guide growth as much as the land use planning and zoning process. This plan calls for supporting the development of activity centers around the community by strategically placing public facilities and increasing service capacity where needed.

### **Community Facilities and Services Issues**

1. **Meeting the service demands of explosive population growth.** The county has witnessed and is expected to experience rapid population growth over the planning horizon, and with that growth has come increased demands for public services. Careful planning is required to ensure adequate services are available over the next 20 years including police, fire, water, sewer, roads, libraries, schools and parks.
2. **Anticipated failure of individual septic tank systems.** The majority of county residents use septic tanks and, over the planning horizon, many of these tanks will fail.
3. **Diminishing supply of regional water.** Septic and land application systems are consumptive uses of water. As a result, there may be future political pressure to develop sewer systems with surface water discharges, as opposed to continued use of septic systems or land application systems.

### **Community Facilities and Services Opportunities**

1. **Expanding sewer capacity.** The County has plans to expand sewer service and make it available to more customers. Promoting development in village centers as recommended by the public through the visioning workshops will require more sewer capacity at key locations.
2. **Expand recreation areas.** The County Recreation Master Plan noted that more recreational space will be needed to keep up with the anticipated growth of the community. Appropriate locations should be identified and acquired early in anticipation of development rather than catching up to meet demand after land prices have risen.



3. **Construct the Bear Creek Reservoir.** It has been estimated that by 2017, the demand for county water will meet its current capacity. The Bear Creek Reservoir will be needed before that time to meet the growing water demands of the community and provide more passive recreation space.
4. **Make growth pay for itself.** This plan needs to support a more self-sustaining land use mix that will improve the overall fiscal health of the community. The county needs a stronger industrial and commercial base, and more quality housing.

### **Community Facilities and Services Implementation Strategies**

1. **Locate new public facilities within designated local activity centers** to help encourage private investment and foster community identity and sense of place. In particular, locate and plan for new neighborhood level parks, recreation facilities and schools that can serve as community gathering places.
2. **Expand local sewer capacity** in support of activity center development and to help protect water quality.
3. **Continue to work closely with the Newton County Board of Education** in the planning of new school facilities and in support of County land use decisions.
4. **Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends** to determine the future needs for public services. This includes efforts to regularly update the Capital Improvements Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

*Goal: Support the individual and common goals of local, state and regional governments through cooperative efforts and open collaboration.*

The growth witnessed in the community has placed a strain on the relationships between the County and local municipalities. Many efforts have been made to keep an open and continuous public dialogue on the issue that concern all parties, and the future of this plan is dependant on this dialogue continuing in spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination Issues**

1. **Regional transportation planning.** To ensure the proper coordination and execution of much-needed transportation improvements, County officials need to be actively involved in transportation planning activities at the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, and Georgia Department of Transportation.
2. **Land use conflicts that result from annexation.** Newton County and its cities have not established future annexation



areas and service agreements that could serve as a basis for its extraterritorial jurisdiction.

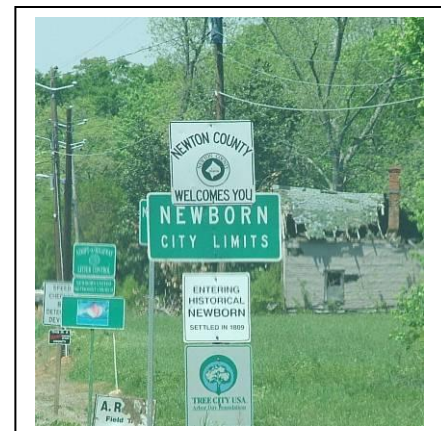
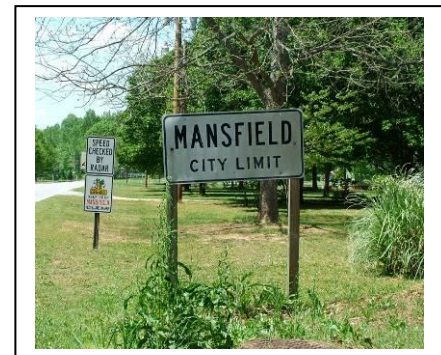
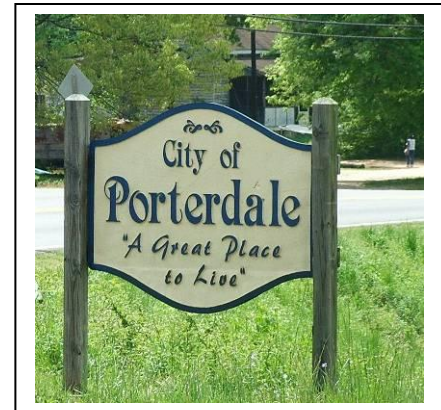
3. **Regular County and municipal coordination.** The county does not have a regular meeting process with the county and neighboring cities to discuss regional issues.

### Intergovernmental Coordination Opportunities

1. **Shared services.** The County and city governments cooperate to provide or share services (parks and recreation, E911, Emergency Services, Police or Sheriff's Office, schools, water, sewer, and others). There are opportunities to do more.
2. **Impact fees.** The recent adoption of impact fees by the County presents a good opportunity for mutual cooperation with the city governments in the collection and funding of needed capital improvements related to new construction.
3. **Special purpose local option sales tax.** County officials need to continue to work closely with cities to help ensure that this important source of capital improvement funding is used effectively.

### Intergovernmental Coordination Implementation Strategies

1. **Establish extra-territorial spheres of influence** around each of the local municipalities to improve the coordination of services and help mitigate the negative impacts of annexations. Work cooperatively with each local municipality to develop a common vision and development strategy for areas within their respective sphere of influence.
2. **Actively participate in and support regional planning efforts** of the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Atlanta Regional Commission.
3. **Work closely with the local municipalities** in the provision of and planning for public services. Support the consolidation of services where it is deemed appropriate.



## VI. General Policies

Policies are adopted to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local officials. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the Community Vision and appropriately addressing the Community Issues and Opportunities. The policies listed below are intended to be general in nature and applied countywide, particularly at the time of rezoning, permit review and budget preparation. Many of these policies will be referenced in staff reports for future rezonings and may influence conditions of zoning that may be placed on future development. Geographic-based policies are listed in Section IV as part of the description of the Future Development Map and Future Land Use Plan. Policies do not supersede standards and regulations in the Newton County Zoning Ordinance, Development Regulations and other ordinances as adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

The following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

- Land Use (page VI-1)
- Transportation (page VI-2)
- Economic Development (page VI-3)
- Housing (page VI-4)
- Natural Resources (page VI-5)
- Community Facilities and Service (page VI-7)
- Intergovernmental Coordination (page VI-10)

### ***Land Use***

LU-1: Integrate recreation areas and greenspace throughout our community: within neighborhoods, along streets, in parking lots, and within commercial and industrial developments.

LU-2: Encourage the use of landscaping, lighting, signage, building design standards and underground utilities to enhance the aesthetics of our community.

LU-3: Promote development that is sensitive to the land and gives consideration to adjoining, existing, and planned development, as well as the overall community.

- Preserve the rural character of Newton County and promote opportunities for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of our community.



*Pathway with greenspace serves as a buffer between road and housing*

- Develop a recognizable transition from the urban to the rural areas of our community.
- Guide appropriate residential and non-residential infill development and redevelopment in a way that complements surrounding areas.

LU-4: Discourage development that may result in noise, odors and light levels detrimental to the public health or quality of the human environment.

LU-5: Support the redevelopment of abandoned industrial and commercial sites located within our community.

LU-6: Protect future industrial, warehouse-distribution, and office areas from encroachment by residential development.

LU-7: Encourage location of industrial uses where stormwater runoff and prevailing wind directions will not adversely affect residential areas.

LU-8: Encourage use of buffer zones (parks, paths, and undisturbed greenspace) between incompatible residential and commercial uses outside of the activity centers.

LU-9: Regularly review and update the Comprehensive Plan to keep it current with changing demographics, development trends and public initiatives.

- County staff will present consistency updates to the Comprehensive Plan twice a year.
- Map-change requests from the public will also be reviewed as part of a four times a-year review cycle. However exceptions may be granted by the BOC in between the regular review cycle in cases of hardship related to a particular zoning, or in cases of large-scale developments that may provide special economic benefits to the community.



## **Transportation**

TR-1: In large-scale new developments over 100 acres in size, require the construction of transportation corridors that support multiple modes of transportation and enhance the aesthetics of the community.

TR-2: Connect streets, sidewalks, open space and paths in adjacent developments to each other and stub out to adjacent undeveloped land.

TR-3: Plan and permit road networks of neighborhood-scaled streets (generally two or four lanes) with high levels of connectivity and short blocks.

TR-4: Ensure that new development bears an equitable share of and responsibility for the cost of new roads, as well as the impact of additional use on existing roads.

TR-5: Ensure that new developments will be designed to be conducive to walking and biking.

- Require sidewalks on both sides of roadways in all new residential developments where the average lot size is less than one acre.
- Require sidewalks in new commercial and office developments, along fronting roadways, access roadways, and within parking lots providing pedestrian access to store fronts and businesses.
- Promote and support the provision of bicycle and pedestrian ways.
- If a new development is in the path of a proposed bicycle trail or multi-purpose trail as displayed on the Future Development Map or an adopted County Trails Master Plan, require the connection to that trail either be maintained or constructed.
- Require necessary traffic and pedestrian signals and paths to promote a safer environment for pedestrians.



TR-6: Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads and other facilities to fit topography and other site conditions.

TR-7: Provide for the routing of truck traffic around congested areas.

TR-8: Seek to reduce the number of curb cuts onto arterial streets and roadways to mitigate traffic congestion, through the requirement of inter-parcel access where appropriate.

TR-9: Promote the provision of shared parking in commercial development.

TR-10: Encourage traffic calming methods, such as splitter islands, roundabouts and rumble strips be constructed in new developments to reduce traffic speed in neighborhoods.

### ***Economic Development***

ED-1: Support programs for the retention, expansion and creation of businesses that enhance our economic well-being.

ED-3: Attract and maintain appropriate and compatible businesses with emphasis on “clean,” high-tech, and high-wage industries.

- ED-4: Support and encourage land banking of industrial sites, which is the public and private purchase of industrial sites within and adjacent to industrially zoned and existing industrial areas for future industrial development.
- ED-5: Target reinvestment in declining neighborhoods to further encourage private sector redevelopment and accommodate future growth.
- ED-6: Support local tourism, including historic and sports tourism.
- ED-7: Support and encourage the maintenance and establishment of academic and vocational programs in existing educational institutions, as a means to maintain, attract and educate a highly and appropriately skilled labor force.
- ED-8: Promote, whenever possible, job training programs such as Georgia Quick-Start and the Job Training Partnership Act.

### ***Housing***

- H-1: Accommodate our diverse population by supporting master planned developments that provide a variety of housing types, styles and price points toward the goal of creating “life cycle” housing in the community.
- H-2: Maintain and enhance the integrity and nature of existing residential neighborhoods.
- H-3: Support the elimination of substandard or dilapidated housing in our community through restoration or nuisance abatement to help ensure that quality housing is available for all residents.
- H-4: Encourage home ownership by increasing opportunities for low- to moderate-income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.
- H-5: Promote fair housing practices. Promote equal opportunity in housing regardless of race, religion, sex, age or national origin and support existing agencies and groups that offer technical and legal aid to persons who have been discriminated against.
- H-6: View each component of neighborhoods, such as schools, parks, residences, and businesses, as part of the greater community. Facilitate access among land uses through planned connections of walkways, bike paths, roads and public transportation.
- H-7: Encourage appropriate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.



*Infill housing that reflects existing housing adds to area character*



H-8: Encourage the design and construction of walkable, safe neighborhoods with pleasant, accessible public gathering places. Encourage the dedication of adequate space for recreational use in all neighborhoods.

### **Natural Resources**

NR-1: Promote and pursue the eventual protection of at least 20 percent of the landmass of unincorporated Newton County as permanently protected greenspace.

- Pursue permanent greenspace protection status of the most environmentally sensitive areas of the county.
- Promote public education and awareness of the benefits of permanently protected greenspace.
- Encourage the development of parks, permanently protected passive recreational sites, and greenspace in areas otherwise inappropriate for structural development.
- Support programs that encourage land owners of aesthetic natural resources to sensitively preserve the land as open space.
- Promote the connection, maintenance, and enhancement of greenspace in all new development.
- Pursue the possible use of Transfer of Development Rights program.

NR-2: Preserve, protect, and promote Newton County's unique cultural and historic character and the resources that contribute to this character. Encourage the maintenance of all historic structures and, when appropriate, their adaptive reuse.

NR-3: Support and encourage the development of historical sites as tourist attractions, where appropriate.

NR-4: Support and cooperate with federal, state, and local historic preservation societies and agencies in their efforts to preserve and protect Newton County's resources.

NR-5: Minimize hazardous levels of water, air, noise and other forms of pollution throughout Newton County by supporting rigorous enforcement of state and federal air and water pollution control laws and standards.

NR-6: Protect ground and surface water sources and water supply intakes to ensure adequate supplies of quality water.

- Support strict enforcement of regulations for use and quality of Newton County's water resources.



*Preservation of greenspace is a core policy goal for the County*

- Assure that adequate erosion and sedimentation control measures are taken in watershed areas to protect county water supplies.
- Ensure that all land disturbing activities are carried out in such a way as to sufficiently protect the public drinking water supply reservoirs and intakes.
- Encourage and support the development and implementation of water and sewer improvement programs in order to protect sensitive water resources.

NR-7: Follow procedures to ensure that road and culvert maintenance practices by the county help control pollution of and sedimentation in creeks.

NR-8: Promote and pursue the preservation of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas (streams, rock out-cropping, meadow, steep slope) for their ecological and aesthetic value, and for common enjoyment.

NR-9: Encourage the preservation and planting of native trees and other vegetation that enhance community livability and appearance. Preserve and restore trees and tree canopy in developed and developing areas.



NR-10: Seek to improve the visual quality of the highway system through appropriate regulation of telecommunication towers and signage.

NR-11: Seek opportunities to partner with and support the work of local organizations in protecting and conserving physical resources and natural features.

- Promote and support the development of resource recovery activities.
- Promote public education and awareness of conservation methods, the impacts of an unclean environment, and the costs of environmental improvement.

NR-12: Require that adequate and appropriate drainage systems be constructed and maintained as part of all development activities.

NR-13: Encourage construction practices that minimize soil erosion and sedimentation. Require erosion control during and revegetation immediately after development.

NR-14: Encourage developers to pursue environmental and sustainability certifications for the projects through programs such as Southface EarthCraft Communities or the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

NR-15: Give priority to stormwater management Best Management Practices (BMPs) in drainage basins associated with streams that fail to fully support designated uses according to federal law.

### ***Community Facilities and Services***

CFS-1: Provide an adequate, efficient, and appropriate level of community services and public facilities that satisfy the needs of all citizens of Newton County and are within the County's fiscal capacity.

CFS-2: Provide adequate staffing, space, training and equipment to support efficient and effective delivery of County services.

CFS-3: Support new development that is consistent with this plan in areas where necessary infrastructure – particularly roads, schools, public safety protection, and wastewater treatment systems – are in place or planned for in the short-term.

CFS-4: Coordinate the timing, location and capacity of community facilities with desirable patterns of land use and development.

CFS-5: Make efficient use of existing infrastructure before making new investments in capital projects that will increase operating and maintenance costs.

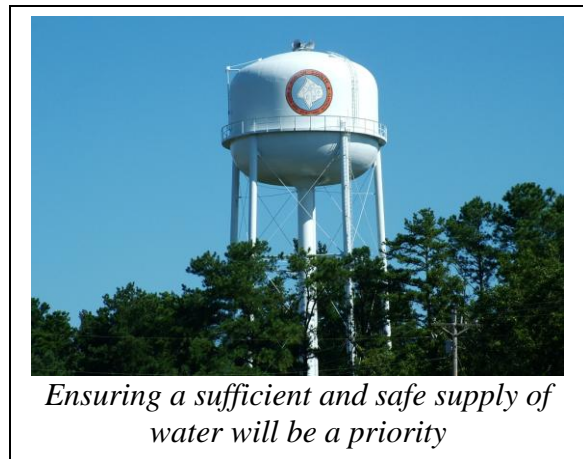
CFS-6: Encourage future development to take place through the logical expansion of existing developed areas with a utility extension policy that is sequential and phased.

CFS-7: Support high design standards for community facilities that will be a source of pride for the community and set the standard for high-quality development in the private sector.

CFS-8: Promote and encourage the use of underground utilities, wherever possible, in developing areas.

CFS-9: Provide sufficient and safe water to all residents of Newton County.

- Seek federal and state funding to develop programs designed to improve water quality.
- Monitor sources of water pollution and institute remedial actions aimed toward a regional policy for combating sources of environmental pollution.
- Support rigorous enforcement of state health laws and adequate treatment measures to



ensure safe drinking water.

- CFS-10: Provide an adequate water delivery system to meet both present and foreseeable water needs in accordance with safe drinking water standards.
- Develop an annual program for the cleaning and maintenance of water pipes.
  - Develop and implement a comprehensive water conservation program throughout the county that includes implementing standards for plumbing fixtures, landscape design, metering and pricing.
- CFS-11: Provide removal and treatment of sewage in the most environmentally-safe, economical and efficient manner possible.
- CFS-12: Provide for efficient, environmentally safe, and sanitary disposal of solid waste in a manner that minimizes cost and financial risk to the County.
- Increase efficiency of existing solid waste disposal systems.
  - Continue to monitor innovations in solid waste technology to provide the County with educated alternatives for future solid waste disposal. Continue to provide collection services of home and business solid wastes.
  - Encourage and support public education that focuses on the benefits of recycling practices and safe, environmentally sound methods of waste disposal.
  - Support the rigorous enforcement of anti-litter and dumping laws countywide.
- CFS-13: Ensure protection from unsafe and overcrowded buildings and other structures.
- Enforce construction standards for new development.
  - Continue systematic structural inspection of public buildings, bridges and other structures.
  - Enforce housing standards and building codes.
- CFS-14: Support enforcement of construction standards consistent with reasonable engineering design procedures.
- CFS-15: Supply the county's residents with well-designed, functional, and versatile recreation opportunities.
- Support the maintenance and development of a parks and recreation system that serves the needs of citizens of all ages and abilities.
  - Encourage extended use of County school grounds for recreational purposes, especially in low-density areas where facilities are lacking.



*Golf is one of many recreational facilities that will meet the needs of the community*

- CFS-16: Make library services available to all residents of Newton County.
- Encourage the expansion of library services to areas experiencing population growth.
  - Support and encourage the use of public school libraries and post-secondary educational libraries as an alternative to building additional library facilities.
  - Support and maintain existing library services and facilities.

CFS-17: Promote and maintain professional law enforcement departments.

- Increase Sheriff's Department staffing to meet growth and the rising demand for public safety.
- Encourage professional comprehensive law enforcement training programs.
- Promote maintenance of law enforcement administration and support facilities.



*Newton County Judicial Center*

CFS-18: Promote and maintain effective professional fire protection services in Newton County.

- Increase fire fighting and EMS staffing, facilities and equipment to accommodate rising service demands in areas where population density and property values are greatest.
- Encourage and support each fire department with sufficient personnel to efficiently carry out their duties.
- Encourage and support fire protection training programs.
- Maintain or improve the current fire insurance rating.
- Enforce fire safety standards for all structures in the county.

CFS-19: Provide to all Newton County residents appropriate warnings and protection from national and natural disasters.

CFS-20: Encourage the availability of health care services to all residents of Newton County.

- Seek and encourage improved availability of modes of access to medical service areas, based on population density and growth.
- Support the availability of a variety of care options for elderly residents.
- Encourage and support improved and expanded public health and education.
- Support a quality primary care hospital in Newton County.
- Support maintenance and expansion of public and private emergency medical and ambulance services as population needs require.

## ***Intergovernmental Coordination***

- IC-1: Work closely with the Newton County public school system to coordinate school siting decisions based on land use changes and the concurrent development of roads, sewer and other community facilities. Focus on community schools as centers for a variety of neighborhood services and programs.
- IC-2: Continue and improve the coordination of County and municipal land use, zoning, capital improvements and service delivery.
- IC-3: Increase the level and quality of citizen participation in the planning process.
- Promote the establishment of and support neighborhood and community citizen organizations.
  - Work with the media to disseminate planning and development information on a consistent basis.
  - Identify and implement improvements in digital technology and communications that increase citizen access to Planning Department information and that save time for customers and staff of the Department of Planning and Development.
  - Support and encourage the holding of local public informational meetings in a variety of locations on neighborhood, community and county issues.
- IC-4: Support the creation and maintenance of formal mechanisms for intergovernmental cooperation and coordination involving the several governmental units in Newton County.
- Cooperate and share services and information with other public entities within the county.
  - Maximize the use and support of the Regional Development Centers for matters requiring or appropriate for intergovernmental cooperation and mutual assistance.
- IC-5: Support intergovernmental coordination of the expansion and shared operation of community facilities.



*Citizen participation during the Comprehensive Plan workshop*

## VII. Implementation Program

### Introduction

The following Implementation Program is presented in two major parts. First is a description of how to implement the activity center concept, a central component of the plan that cuts across all the fundamental policy areas of the Comprehensive Plan, which include:

- Land Use,
- Transportation,
- Economic Development,
- Housing,
- Natural and Cultural Resources,
- Community Facilities and Services,
- Intergovernmental Coordination.

Several of steps outlined in the discussion of activity center implementation have been incorporated into the second major part of this Implementation Program, a discussion of implementation strategies. This discussion of strategies is intended to address the issues and opportunities raised in Chapter V, and is presented in a question and answer format. Action items are identified, along with responsible parties and a projected timeframe for implementation. This timeframe is expressed either as Ongoing, Short-Range (1 to 5 years), or Long-Range (5+ years). Below is a list of abbreviations and acronyms for responsible parties and partners referenced in this Implementation Program.

AFT	American Farmland Trust
ARC	Atlanta Regional Commission
CEWC	Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center
CCNF	Concerned Citizens for Newton's Future
CHA	Covington Housing Authority
CNCC	Covington-Newton County Chamber of Commerce
Center Cities	The Center for the Facilitation of Community Preservation and Planning The Cities of Newton County
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GDCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
GDED	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDEH	Georgia Department of Environmental Health
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
GRTA	Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
MARTA	Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transportation Authority
GWF	Georgia Wildlife Federation
HHNC	Habitat for Humanity Newton County
JDA	Joint Development Authority

KCNCB	Keep Covington/Newton Clean & Beautiful
MUTANTS	Multi-Use Trail Advocates for a Newton Trail System
NCAA	Newton County Arts Association
NCCF	Newton County Community Foundation
NCCQG	Newton County Council for Quality Growth
NCBOC	Newton County Board of Commissioners
NCBOE	Newton County Board of Education
NCBOR	Newton County Board of Realtors
NCCG	Newton County Greenspace Committee
NCGIS	Newton County Geographic Information Systems
NCHBA	Newton County Home Builders Association
NCHS	Newton County Historical Society
NCIDA	Newton County Industrial Development Authority
NCLTA	Newton County Land Trust Alliance
NCPD	Newton County Planning & Development Department
NCPW	Newton County Public Works Department
NCRA	Newton County Recreation Authority
NCTAA	Newton County Tax Assessors
NCWSA	Newton County Water & Sewer Authority
NEGRDC	Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
Path	Path Foundation
SGNC	Smart Growth Newton County
TPL	Trust for Public Land
USHUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Ongoing items are either policies or routine tasks undertaken to achieve one of the community goals and are funded through general operating funds. Unique tasks or projects are identified as either short-range or long-range. Each of the short-range items listed in the Implementation Strategies is later carried forward in Chapter VIII, the Short Term Work Program. The Long-Range items should be evaluated regularly each year when the STWP is updated to see what items can be carried forward.

## Implementation of Activity Centers

As described in the Introduction, successful implementation of the Activity Center Concept will require the coordination of these important areas of the plan, and how this impacts each of these areas is presented below.

**Land Use** – The Future Development Map is the document that forms the blueprint for the spatial arrangement of neighborhoods, employment centers, commercial development, and community infrastructure and services. It is naturally the place where Activity Centers are identified in terms of their location, scale, intensity and function. The location of Activity Centers on the Future Development Map should be guided by basic criteria such as:

- Transportation accessibility
- Accessibility to infrastructure, such as water and sewer
- Availability of other community services, such as schools, parks and fire stations
- Avoidance of environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas



- Proper spacing to give space for activity centers to expand
- Land use compatibility with adjacent land uses, or provision of appropriate buffers

Once identified in the Future Development Map, the Activity Centers need to be the central organizing feature for the plan's future private and public investments. In particular, the cost-effectiveness of community facilities outlined in this plan depend largely on achieving the arrangements of land use and development shown on the Future Development Map so that service delivery can be fitted to predictable land use patterns that emerge as the county grows.

**Economic Development** – Economic growth and jobs should be focused in Activity Centers, especially in the cities and existing Development Nodes that are located along I-20.

**Housing** – The Comprehensive Plan should indicate that most of the redeveloped housing and much of the newly constructed housing in Newton County should occur in the neighborhoods that ring the county's Activity Centers. The Activity Center concept transforms subdivisions into diverse, life-cycle neighborhoods. Achieving the proper character of the Activity Center as a social unit requires a broad diversity of housing –housing of all types, sizes and price ranges in order to accommodate all types of households in different stages of life and incomes.

**Natural and Cultural Resources** – Every Activity Center needs a close relationship to nature, including a generous supply of greenspace. These natural areas can take the form of greenways that buffer streams and lakes and promote walking and biking. Or, greenspace can be arranged to provide a greenbelt or buffer to form a transition to adjacent property and improve land use compatibility. Greenspace also contributes significantly to the Activity Center's sense of place, as well as recreational opportunities. At the same time, Activity Centers are generally busy places for human activity that should not be located in areas that have significant amounts of vulnerable natural resources such as prime habitat, wetlands, steep slopes, erodible soils, or floodplains. Historical resources and landmarks such as churches, cemeteries, historic homes, historic courthouses, business districts, country stores or traditional mill districts should be thoughtfully preserved and appropriately incorporated into Activity Centers to form a central theme or sense of place.

**Community Facilities** - The successful implementation of Activity Centers as a land use policy depends on the coordination of the location, timing, capacity and design of the county's infrastructure and community facilities to support development of Activity Centers. Readiness of the infrastructure system – especially roads and sewer – will serve as an incentive that guides growth to Activity Centers. At the same time, adopting a land use strategy of focusing growth in Activity Centers at locations with existing infrastructure improves the efficient operation of the infrastructure. The same is true of community facilities, especially parks, libraries, schools, fire stations and other facilities. They perform best when they are sited in Activity Centers where the population and needs are concentrated around areas with good transportation access.

**Transportation** – There is a strong and important relationship between the land use goal of promoting Activity Centers and the transportation goal of improving the mobility of future Newton County residents. Forming well-designed clusters of housing, employment, commercial services and community facilities reduces travel demand in several ways:

- Activity Centers are an alternative to suburban sprawl and strip commercial development that degrade the level of service on long stretches of the highway system.
- Activity Centers promote the provision of connected grid street systems that provide more efficient transportation access and mobility for all modes of travel.
- Activity Centers are designed with wide, comfortable sidewalks that make walking more convenient.
- Walkable districts within Activity Centers make it possible for residents and employees to accomplish more of their daily activities by walking, thus reducing the number of highway trips and parking spaces needed.
- Focusing activity in a smaller area reduces the length of automobile trips and increases the opportunities to make multiple stops for errands in a single trip from home to work.
- Clustered population and employment areas also provide potential nodes for future transit service that would not be viable without the concentration of potential origins and destinations.
- All of the points above serve as travel demand measures that not only improve transportation effectiveness, but also reduce the cost of transportation, reduce energy consumption, and improve air quality.

**Intergovernmental Coordination** – The success of activity centers in the Newton County Comprehensive Plan will require close coordination of all the public agencies in the county. The cities are principal players in the Activity Center scheme. They will have mutual interests to share with Newton County in planning, implementing and serving Activity Centers. In addition, coordination with the Water and Sewer Authority, the Board of Education, and other agencies that provide or fund public facilities and services will be vital to the success of Activity Centers. The cities, the county and these boards will all need to work together on this strategy. In particular, the current method of siting new public facilities tends to scatter public facilities in an effort to acquire the least expensive sites instead of clustering them in “value added” community centers that provide for a sense of place for neighborhoods. New schools and other community facilities are important building blocks to neighborhood identity and character. They should be designed to be attractive, well landscaped and interconnected with surrounding residential areas with direct and convenient access for both vehicles and pedestrians. Wherever possible new schools should be sited along with parks and libraries to form community service clusters oriented to be functional and convenient for families with children. Community service clusters also help reinforce the sense of place that residents seek. The county and the school system should work together with developers who could donate land that can be used to site some of the new schools in Activity Centers adjacent to new parks and libraries.

One of the primary goals of this activity center strategy is to concentrate population in areas that can best accommodate the growth and preserve those areas that can not. As a result Activity Centers need to be reflected in the distribution of population forecasts across the cities and the counties. A Comprehensive Plan based on directing growth into activity centers should indicate concentrations of population in the existing municipalities of Newton County as well as other areas where Activity Centers are planned. These population distribution patterns should be used for projecting needs and locations for public infrastructure and facilities. A table outlining this project distribution of population and employment as well as maps illustrating this distribution can be found in the **Appendix B**.

## **Recommended Policies for Development Nodes- and Village-Scale Activity Centers**

- Identify appropriate size, location, trade area, and a range of uses for each center.
- Locate in prominent location for access by both cars and transit.
- Avoid conflicts with extensive areas of environmentally sensitive lands.
- Encourage a mixture of uses and housing types for singles, families, elderly, and extended families.
- Provide for a dense, core area centered on a Town Green or other appropriate public space surrounded by public facilities and a mixture of uses, anchored by retail and commercial services.
- Encourage higher density housing types within walking distance of the core.
- Separate through traffic from local traffic.
- Use access management strategies in appropriate locations.
- Design for walkability within the center.
- Create interconnected pattern of streets and trails extending into surrounding neighborhoods for cars, bikes, golf carts, and pedestrians.
- Manage “big box” uses by placing them on the edge of the center, backing up to a major thoroughfare, and facing towards the core area.
- Encourage mixed-use developments.
- Orient all buildings to the street.
- Limit parking in front yards. Consider structured parking where feasible.
- Make appropriate land use transitions to single-family neighborhoods that are outside the Center.
- Provide incentives for developers to contribute to the cost of infrastructure.
- Adhere to design guidelines for common elements such as streetscapes, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, signage, building massing and other site design features that promote a consistent visual image.

## **Recommended Policies for Crossroads Community Centers**

- Ensure that each new Activity Center has a unique theme or landmark that promotes its own sense of place
- Identify appropriate size, locations, and a range of uses.
- Protect small town/ neighborhood character in architecture, siting, and landscape.
- Prohibit “big box” retail or industrial uses.
- Design for walkability within the center.
- Provide appropriate transitions to surrounding rural or estate residential uses.
- Separate through traffic from local traffic.
- Plan for future expansion as the surrounding area grows.

## **Recommended Implementation Strategies for New Activity Centers**

The location of new Activity Centers will be guided by the Future Development Map in terms of the appropriate location, scale, intensity and function. The Future Development Map should be supported with priority funding for infrastructure and community facilities in Activity Centers.

The Zoning Ordinance should be revised to provide for mixed use development by right, establish design standards, and provide density bonus incentives that reward:

- Mixed-use buildings
- Open space conservation
- Affordable housing, where appropriate
- Structured parking, where appropriate.

These standards may be contained in a Zoning Overlay District that may be applied to locations that are consistent with the Future Development Map after an Activity Center Master Plan is approved by the Board of Commissioners for the designated area.

The first step in implementing a specific Activity Center would be to prepare an Activity Center Master Plan for the designated area. The Master Plan should include sufficient land to provide a “critical mass” (such as 75% of the land identified in the Future Development Map) with a complementary mix of civic, residential and non-residential uses. There should be public participation in the preparation of the Activity Center Master Plan. The implementation of Activity Centers should be a public/private partnership in terms of finance and design. In cases where significant redevelopment is required, the public sector (city or county) may need to initiate the Master Plan process in order to stimulate redevelopment and to ensure that there is a unified and coherent plan that embraces existing uses, infill development and redevelopment of catalyst sites. This strategy may be supported with public funds for the Master Plan, such as the Livable Center Initiatives program of the Atlanta Regional Commission, and be combined with publicly funded key infrastructure or community facilities. A market feasibility study should be conducted for Activity Centers that comprise more than 200 acres.

Alternatively, if a private property owner or developer controls a large enough land area to provide a “critical mass”, the developer may propose an Activity Center Master Plan and ask for approval to initiate the planning process through a rezoning application.

At a minimum, each Activity Center Master Plan should address proposed land use, housing types and densities, employment areas and commercial development, open space, parking, streets, sidewalks, utilities, community facilities, signage, landscaping, and include design standards.

The Activity Center Master Plan should be reviewed by staff for its technical merits, and then presented in public hearings for approval by the Board of Commissioners. The action of approving the Master Plan should include establishing the area as a Zoning Overlay District with flexibility to develop the plan in a specified time frame consistent with the approved Master Plan. If applicable, the developer must submit the application for review by the Regional Development Center as a Development of Regional Impact.

An additional approach that would also help implement the activity center concept would be for Newton County adopt a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. This would require preparation of a local TDR ordinance consistent with the state enabling act. This ordinance should be the end product of a thorough study of the economic and technical feasibility of the

process. The County currently undertaking such a study now, which includes an extensive public participation of property owners that would be affected by the process? Some of the key decisions in implementing a TDR program include:

- Identifying the conservation goals and other public purposes that are to be served by the process,
- Identifying the TDR district, including the areas to be considered “receiving areas” and “sending areas”,
- Establishing the appropriate “base” density to be applied to property within the TDR district prior to allowing development rights transfers
- Determining the potential number of development rights to be created in the TDR district
- Studying the adequacy of infrastructure and community facilities in the receiving areas,
- Setting time limits for transactions in the transfer process, and
- Designing and funding the method of administering the TDR process.

It is possible that a “land development bank” would need to be established and publicly funded in order to assure that there is an adequate supply of development rights to be traded in order to achieve the desirable land plan. The Zoning Ordinance would also need to be amended to establish the permissible uses and intensities in the receiving and sending areas, and to establish how the TDR procedure would be used either in conjunction with rezoning, or in lieu of rezoning, to increase the intensity of land use beyond the “base” density. The tax assessor would need to adopt appraisal techniques and procedures to recognize the changes in property tax assessments that would occur along with the transfer of development rights.

## Implementation Strategies

### Land Use

How can we control suburban sprawl in the County’s rural areas?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Support the development of identified activity centers by locating new public facilities and expanding sewer service within the activity centers. See section entitled Community Facilities.	NCBOC, NCBOE	NCWSA	Ongoing
Regularly review and consider the appropriateness of planning and development concepts and standards that may be new to our area, but have been successful in other places.	NCPD	Center	Ongoing
Designate Oak Hill as a Development Node, and undertake the following planning efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Community Facility Master Plan for the Oak Hill Center identifying the appropriate location, capacity and timing of needed public facilities in the activity center.</li> <li>• Prepare Oak Hill Overlay District to regulate urban design, signage, open space and landscaping within the Oak Hill Activity Center</li> </ul>	NCBOC	NCPD, Center	Short-range

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Following the example of the Oak Hill planning effort, designate Salem Road as a Development Node and undertake a similar planning program.	NCBOC	NCPD, Center	Short-range
Study the possible implementation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program	NCBOC, Cities	Center	Short-range

### How can we better manage the proliferation of strip malls and retail sprawl along our highways?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Implement the land use policies of Plan, particularly as they relate to the Quality Development Corridors and Scenic Corridors	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Do not support rezoning decisions that contrary to the Comprehensive Plan and limit revisions to the Plan to only twice a year	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Prepare and adopt a Scenic Corridor Overlay district along Hwy 11, and possibly other designated scenic corridors on the Future Development Map	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Prepare and adopt a Quality Development Corridor Overlay district along county's portions of the Covington By-pass, and possibly other designated Quality Development Corridors on the Future Development Map	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range

### What steps should we take to reserve land for industrial and commercial growth?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Do not support rezonings to residential uses in areas designated for industrial and commercial development on the Future Land Use Plan	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Actively market the county's industrial sites and actively recruit desired industries to locate in the County	CNCC	NCBOC	Ongoing
Support and encourage land banking of industrial sites, the public and private purchase of industrial sites within and adjacent to industrially zoned and existing industrial areas for future industrial development	JDA, NCIDA	NCBOC, CNCC	Ongoing

### How can we improve our interstate gateways?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Beautify and maintain interstate interchanges with extensive low-maintenance landscaping.	NCBOC	NCPW, KCNCB	Ongoing
Prepare an Interstate Gateway Overlay zoning district to regulate the character of development near the I-20 corridor.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Work with the Chamber of Commerce to prepare a visitor information station and wayfinding system from the I-20 interchanges.	NCBOC	CNCC	Long-range

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Work with local cities to adopt the same sign and billboard controls for cities and the County in the corridor.	NCBOC	NCPD, the Cities	Long-range

### How can we foster mixed use developments in appropriate and planned locations throughout the County?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Study the possibility of adopting Smart Code or form-based zoning codes	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Revise standards for commercial zoning to encourage mixed-use development within designated activity centers	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range

### How can we encourage traditional neighborhood developments?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Create by-right options for traditional neighborhood development within residential zoning districts.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Study the offering of development incentives for the use of higher quality construction materials and traditional neighborhood design	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range

### How can we encourage the development of village centers?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Support the development of identified activity centers by locating and prioritizing new public facilities and expanding sewer service within the activity centers	NCBOC, NCBOE	NCWSA	Ongoing
Designate Oak Hill as a Development Node and undertake the planning efforts described under "Land Use" Implementation Strategies.	NCBOC	NCPD, Center	Short-range
Following the example of the Oak Hill Activity Center, designate Salem Road as a Development Node and undertake the planning efforts described under "Land Use" Implementation Strategies.	NCBOC	NCPD, The Center	Short-range
Adopt a circulation master plan for each activity center that defines how the street, sidewalk, and path network will look within the village and how the village will connect to surrounding neighborhoods.	NCBOC	NCPW, NCPD	Short-range
Pursue LCI funds for planning and implementation	NCBOC	ARC, Center	Short-range
Study and possibly adopt a Transfer of Development Rights program	NCBOC	City of Covington, The Center	Ongoing, and Short-range

### How can we preserve natural resources within developments?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Support private land conservation efforts	NBOC	NCLTA, TPL,	Ongoing

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
		TNC	
Purchase sensitive land for public conservation and recreation	NCBOC		Ongoing
Survey the County for additional scenic views or scenic routes.	NCPD	NCBOC	Ongoing
Study the possibility of amending the county land use regulations to require the dedication of recreation areas in residential subdivisions	NCPD		Short-range
Continue to support the development of Conservation Subdivisions, and modify the Conservation Subdivision provisions of Zoning Ordinance	NCPD	NCBOC	Ongoing and Short-range

## Transportation

### What can we do to improve our traffic signals?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Identify potential intersection improvements through the Newton County Transportation Plan	NCPW	NCBOC, Cities, GDOT, ARC	Ongoing
Implement projects in the local CIP and regional TIP/RTP	NCPW	ARC, GDOT	Ongoing

### How do we alleviate traffic congestion along our major roadways?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Identify potential new road projects through the Newton County Transportation Plan.	NCPW	NCBOC, Cities, GDOT, ARC	Ongoing
Increase alternatives to automobile travel as described in this Agenda.	NCBOC	GDOT, ARC	Ongoing
Implement projects in the local CIP and regional TIP/RTP	NCPW	ARC, GDOT	Ongoing
Develop a countywide Access Management Plan for major corridors	NCPD	NCPW, NCBOC	Short-range

### How do we improve the pedestrian network?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Identify gaps in the pedestrian network through the Newton County Transportation Plan	NCPW	NCBOC, Cities	Ongoing
Require sidewalk connections between adjacent developments, including developments of different uses.	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Identify funding sources for sidewalk improvements	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Adopt typical street cross sections for all urban and suburban street types that include sidewalks	NCBOC	NCPW	Short-range

### How do we address safety concerns in our transportation system?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
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Identify potential new safety projects through the Newton County Transportation Plan.	NCPW	NCBOC, Cities, GDOT, ARC	Ongoing
Require the dedication of acceleration / deceleration lanes as a part of new land development	NCBOC	NCPD, NCPW	Ongoing
Revise and adopt an improved Subdivision, Road Names and Property Addressing Ordinance	NCBOC	NCPD, NCTAA	Short-range

**What can we do to begin transit service?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Coordinate with ARC to promote the 1-87-RIDEFIND service to Newton County residents	NCBOC	ARC	Ongoing
If GRTA expands to include Newton County, coordinate to provide Xpress bus service	NCBOC	GRTA	Ongoing
Conduct a Transit Feasibility Study to analyze transit needs and opportunities	NCBOC	ARC, GRTA	Short-range

**How do we improve street connectivity?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
As part of the Oak Hill Community Facilities Master Plan adopt a street connectivity ordinance that establishes minimum block sizes or lengths within Activity Centers, requires stub streets, connections between developments, shared and connected parking lots, and establishes limits on dead end streets.	NCBOC	NCPD, NCPW	Short-range

**How do we increase walking and biking alternatives?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Adopt typical street cross sections for all urban and suburban street types that include sidewalks and provisions for bicycles	NCBOC	NCPD, NCPW	Short-range
Implement the Newton County Greenway and Bicycle Plan	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Adopt a Street Connectivity Plan to identify conceptually where new connections should be made as development occurs. Adopt the Plan with a process for working with developers during the concept stage to set aside, preserve, donate, or sell the right-of-way to the planned routes.	NCPD	NCBOC	Short-range

**How do we plan for a better transportation system in the future?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Conduct a countywide Transportation Plan to identify future transportation needs and opportunities	NCBOC	NCPW, ARC	Short-range

**How can we promote and implement travel demand management?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Create a County Transportation Management Association to promote pedestrian and cyclist trips, provide ride matching services for commuters and local businesses and other congestion mitigating activities.	NCBOC	NCPW, ARC, GRTA	Long range

**Economic Development****How do we improve our economic development recruitment and marketing efforts?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Expand alliances beyond GDED, Georgia Power, and EMCs to include target industries and connect resources	CNCC	CNCC	Ongoing
Promote tourism in the community. Identify historic, and sports tourism opportunities as the basis for a marketing and promotion strategy	CNCC	NCBOC	Ongoing
Develop budget and additional staff to support recruiting activities	NCBOC	CNCC	Ongoing
Conduct a target industry analysis to identify market segments that support the local economy with high-paying jobs	CNCC	NCBOC	Short-range
Develop and implement a proactive marketing strategy to target those industries	CNCC	NCBOC	Short-range

**How do we improve our County's Jobs-Housing Balance**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Develop partnerships with cities in the County and Metro Atlanta to tie-in to sporting events	CNCC		Ongoing
Develop marketing and promotion budget to facilitate effective outcomes	CNCC		Ongoing
Develop placement opportunities with educational institutions – "local graduates in local jobs"	NCBOE		Ongoing

**How can the community improve its provision of needed infrastructure to support business recruitment efforts?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Prioritize the provision of sewer to industrial areas, such as the Stanton Springs Development Node	NCWSA	CNCC	Ongoing
Improve and expand needed transportation network	NCBOC		Ongoing
Showcase parks, and recreational venues in national databases and trade publications	CNCC		Ongoing

## Housing

### How do we create a balance of housing choices?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Create regulations for mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods in village-type developments	NCPD	NCBOC, NCHBA	Short-range
Study the possibility of creating by-right options for traditional neighborhood development within residential zoning districts or the creation of neo-traditional neighborhood ordinances	NCPD	NCBOC, NCHBA	Short-range
Maintain large-lot residential districts (2+ acres) to protect designated rural areas of County	NCPD	NCBOC, NCHBA	Ongoing

### How do we encourage development of workforce housing?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Develop land use regulations that allow for moderately priced attached or detached houses to be part of the overall housing mix within planned development	NCPD	NCBOC, NCHBA	Short-range
Provide financial assistance programs for first-time homebuyers and low to moderate-income home buyers	CHA	GDCA, USHUD	Long range
Encourage development of special needs housing for very low-income residents, including seniors and handicapped residents, as well as for transitional housing	NCBOC	GDCA, USHUD, CHA, ARC	Long range
Encourage development of day care and elder care facilities near workforce housing	NCBOC	GDCA, USHUD	Long range

### How do we encourage development of executive housing?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Create regulations supporting high-quality design elements, including construction materials, landscaping, etc.	NCPD, NCHBA	NCBOC	Ongoing
Provide for large minimum house sizes in appropriate designated areas	NCPD	NCBOC	Short-range
Encourage development of higher end retail, restaurants, and other support facilities	CNCC	NCBOC	Long range

### How do we provide housing for an aging population?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Develop land use regulations that allow for development of attached or detached homes in the form of condominium ownership	NCPD	NCBOC	Short-range

Create design regulations that appeal to an aging population, including one-level living and/or master bedrooms on the main living level	NCPD	NCBOC, Center, NCHBA	Long-range
Develop land use regulations that allow for age-restricted communities, both for sale and for rent, including assisted living facilities and independent living apartments, condominiums, and cluster homes	NCPD	NCBOC	Short-range
Explore methods to keep property taxes low for 65+ year old residents to allow for aging in place housing options	NCBOC		Long range

## **Natural and Cultural Resources**

### **How can we protect and improve our water quality?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Expand Adopt-A-Stream program.	NCBOC	KCNCB, NCPD	Ongoing
Maintain 2 acre residential zoning districts in the Watershed Protection Areas	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Prepare protection plans for the impaired streams within Newton County that are "Not Supporting" their designated uses: Yellow River, Snapping Shoals Creek, and Little River.	NCBOC	NCPD, GEPD	Short-range
Initiate County-wide ongoing water quality monitoring program.	NCBOC	NCPW, GEPD	Short-range
Prepare Watershed Protection Plans for the impaired streams and lakes within Newton County that are "Partially Supporting" their designated uses: South River and Lake Jackson.	NCBOC	GEPD	Short-range
Explore the possibility of establishing a stormwater utility.	NCBOC	NCPW	Short-range

### **What can we do locally to manage and improve our air quality?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Shift to a clean fleet of county and school system vehicles.	NCBOC, NCBOE		Ongoing
Improve the connectivity of streets, sidewalks, and paths. See strategies outlined under Transportation.	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Initiate a Travel Demand Management (TDM) Program.	NCBOC	ARC	Long-range
Support the development of mixed-use land uses. See strategies outlined under Land Use	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing
Orient schools and residential areas towards each other to improve the opportunity for walking or bicycling to school.	NCBOE	NCBOC	Ongoing

### **How can we ensure the preservation of our historic resources?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Adopt a Countywide Historic Preservation Ordinance. This should include protection for all of the Federally designated areas and sites, as well as	NCBOC	NCHS	Short-range

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
additional significant resources identified in the Community Assessment or other historic surveys.			
Inventory historic cemeteries in the County for protection and preservation	NCBOC	NCHC	Ongoing
Identify and maintain an inventory of historic resources on the County Zoning Map	NCGIS	NCPD	Ongoing
Adopt detailed architectural and design guidelines to apply within the historic areas.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Hire a staff architect or urban designer to assist in the application of the historic district.	NCBOC		Short-range
Apply for National Register status for additional areas of historic significance.	NCHS	NCBOC	Short-range
Consider forming a joint Historic Preservation Commission between Newton County and some or all of the cities.	NCBOC	NCHS	Short-range

### How do we preserve the County's greenspace and open areas?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Modify the Conservation Subdivision regulations specifically for the rural areas of the County that requires a higher percentage of set aside of the site as permanently protected open space.	NCPD	NCBOC	Short-range
Plan to not provide public utilities or expand services in the rural areas of the County. Coordinate this effort with the school board and state and regional planning agencies.	NCBOC	NCWSA, NCBOE	Ongoing
Maintain an inventory of resources within GIS (geographic information system) and maintain the GIS datafiles to keep track of the location of endangered natural, historic, and cultural resources.	NCGIS	NCPD	Ongoing
Modify subdivision regulations to require preservation of sensitive and unique natural areas; including streams, rock outcroppings, and steep slopes.	NCPD	NCBOC	Short-range
Adopt a Open Space Conservation Plan as an Official Map that links open spaces together into a publicly accessible open space network and create incentives for developers to follow it.	NCBOC	NCRA	Short-range
Create a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.	NCBOC		Short-range
Study the possibility of adopting a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.	NCBOC	City of Covington, The Center	Ongoing, and Short-range

### How can we conserve our prime agricultural lands and our agricultural economy?

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Adopt a right-to-farm ordinance.	NCBOC		Short-range
Foster the recreational equestrianism and the equine economy through equestrian events,	NCBOC	NCRA, Center	Ongoing

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
favorable zoning and land use standards, and public trails and greenways for equestrians.			
Support local farmers markets and grocers stands throughout the County and in each of the cities for local farmers to sell their crops directly to consumers.	NCBOC		Ongoing
Support a "Buy Local" campaign for local produce. Work with the school board and local grocers to buy/sell from local farmers.	NCBOC		Ongoing

**How can we preserve our County’s many scenic views?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Adopt a Scenic Route Overlay District for scenic routes throughout the County.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Incorporate scenic view guidelines into the Conservation Subdivision zoning district and Agricultural district.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Acquire conservation easements for scenic views in cases where views are threatened.	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing

**What can we do to protect our County’s trees and help restore our tree canopy?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Identify rural roadways that can be future canopy roads and plant appropriate trees along those roads.	NCBOC	NCPD	Long range
Adopt typical street cross sections for all roadway types that include street trees.	NCBOC	NCPD	Long range
Provide information on the County website about planting, growing, and preserving trees.	NCBOC		Ongoing

**Community Facilities and Services**

**How do we meet the service demands of our rapidly growing population?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Develop long-range functional plans for key infrastructure and community facilities that are consistent with the Future Development Map and growth management strategies.	NCBOC	NCPW, NCRA, NCBOE, NCWSA	Ongoing

**How can we mitigate the negative effects of large scale septic tank use and their occasional failure?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Organize and implement procedures for monitoring performance of aging septic tanks and private package systems.	NCWSA		Short-range
Identify drainage basins of stream segments that do not support designated uses, monitor septic tanks,	NCWSA	NCBOC	Short-range

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
and prepare a strategy for reducing and mitigating septic tank failures.			
Develop a policy and procedure for connecting neighborhoods that rely on failing septic tanks to public wastewater treatment systems if available.	NCWSA	GDEH	Short-range

**How can we strategically expand sewer in coordination with our land use plan?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Expand sewer service areas in support of activity centers and industrial areas, particularly along I-20 and in the Oak Hill area.	NCWSA	NCBOC	Short-range
Develop a countywide policy on decentralized sewer system maintenance and operation.	NCWSA	NCBOC	Short-range

**How should we expand our recreation areas to keep pace with our growth?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Adopt a future parks and conservation plan that incorporates the County Trails Master Plan and the Recreation Master Plan. It should include an Official Greenspace Map that links open spaces together into a publicly accessible open space network and create incentives for developers to follow it.	NCBOC	NCPD, NCRA	Short-range
Maintain a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program in support of the county's opens space preservation efforts.	NCBOC	NCPD, NCRA	Ongoing
Create a Master Plan for the Gaithers Plantation	NCBOC	NCPD, Friends of Gaithers	Short-range

**What steps should we take to help growth pay for itself?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Maintain the impact fee program.	NCBOC		Ongoing
Annually, update the Capital Improvements Element.	NCBOC		Ongoing
Promote compact growth and discourage leapfrog development by adhering the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan	NCBOC	NCPD	Ongoing

**Intergovernmental Coordination**

**What steps should we take to ensure that our interests are being properly pursued at the state and regional level?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Actively participate in the regular scheduled meetings at ARC, NEGRDC, and GDOT on regional transportation and land use issues?	NCBOC	ARC, GDOT, GRTA, NEGRDC	Ongoing
Work closely with State Environmental Protection	NCBOC	NCPD, GEPD	Ongoing

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Division on matters of watershed and stream protection			
Work closely with our local State Representatives to promote State legislation of local interest and monitor the progress of proposed legislation	NCBOC		Ongoing

**How do we mitigate the land use and service delivery conflicts that result from annexation?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Work with our representatives in the State Legislature to support new legislation to require greater consistency between proposed land use changes associated with annexations and the Comprehensive Plan.	NCBOC	State Legislature, Cities	Ongoing
Create a Newton County-Municipal Comprehensive Planning Coordinating Committee that regularly meets to discuss coordination issues at the staff level regarding regular updates to the Comprehensive Plan, the Service Delivery Strategy Agreement, and monthly development issues.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range
Establish extra-territorial spheres of influence around each city within which special care will be taken to notify the affected municipality and the county of any proposed rezonings, annexations or new developments.	NCBOC	NCPD	Short-range

**How do we better coordinate Municipal-County Coordination efforts?**

Description/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
Synchronize County, School Board, Sewer & Water Authority and local Cities Fiscal Years to aid in planning for coordination efforts.	NCBOC	COUNTY, Cities, NCWSA, BOE	Short-range
Work closely with local jurisdictions to support the maintenance of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program	NCBOC	Cities	Short-range



## VIII. Short Term Work Program 2007-2011

Following is a list of short-term tasks and projects identified in this plan as needed to achieve community goals and objectives. Note that on-going tasks or policies, such as the regular updating of this plan, are listed in Chapter VI – Policies and Chapter VII - Implementation Strategies. Note: Cost estimates are for planning purposes only. Actual costs may vary widely, particularly over time.

Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b>Land Use</b>								
Amend the Zoning Ordinance so that it will strongly encourage compliance with the Comprehensive Plan	◆					\$50,000	COUNTY	LOCAL, GA OTH, GA RDC
Prepare Community Facility Master Plan for the Oak Hill Center identifying the appropriate location, capacity and timing of needed public facilities in the activity center.	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Prepare Oak Hill Overlay District to regulate urban design, signage, open space and landscaping within the Oak Hill Activity Center		◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Prepare Community Facility Master Plan for the Salem Road Center identifying the appropriate location, capacity and timing of needed public facilities in the activity center.			◆	◆		NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Prepare Salem Road Overlay District to regulate urban design, signage, open space and landscaping within the Salem Road Activity Center				◆		NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Begin implementation of the TDR Program (Received grant from the EPA for modeling Software that will be utilized to model development nodes)	◆	◆				\$10,000	COUNTY, NEGRDC	LOCAL, GA OTH, FEDERAL

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Prepare and adopt a Scenic Corridor Overlay district along Hwy 11	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Prepare and adopt a Quality Development Corridor Overlay district along county's portions of the Covington By-pass, and possibly other designated Quality Development Corridors on the Future Development Map			◆	◆		NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Prepare an Interstate Gateway Overlay district to regulate the character of development near the I-20 corridor.				◆	◆	NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Study the possibility of adopting Smart Code or form-based zoning codes	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Revise standards for commercial zoning to encourage mixed-use development within designated activity centers	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Study the offering of development incentives for the use of higher quality construction materials and traditional neighborhood design	◆					NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Create by-right options for traditional neighborhood development within residential zoning districts.		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Study the possibility of amending the county land use regulations to require the dedication of recreation areas in residential subdivisions	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Modify the Conservation Subdivision provisions of Zoning Ordinance to better support the preservation of scenic corridors and in support of creating a countywide greenspace network.	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
<b>Transportation</b>								

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b>Intersection Improvements</b>								
SR 212 & SR 20 – Relocate intersections, turn lanes and signalization	◆	◆				\$1,679,497	COUNTY	GDOT, Impact Fees, General Fund
Brown Bridge Road & Crowell Road – Turn lanes	◆					\$1,106,046	COUNTY	GDOT, Impact Fees
SR 81 & Crowell Road (Porterdale) – Turn lanes and signalization		◆	◆			\$834,385	COUNTY	GDOT, Impact Fees, General Fund, City of Porterdale
SR 36 & Flat Shoals Road, Steele Road, Henderson Mill Road – Turn lanes and signalization	◆	◆				\$1,477,527	COUNTY	GDOT, Impact Fees
Covington Bypass & Dearing Street – Relocate intersection, turn lanes, signalization	◆					\$499,366	COUNTY	Impact Fees
SR 162 & Spring Road		◆	◆			\$840,563	County	GDOT, Impact Fees
SR 162 & Smith Store Road	◆	◆				\$660,953	County	GDOT, Impact Fees
SR 162 & SR 81	◆	◆				\$1,214,017	County	GDOT, SPLOST
I-20 & West Covington Connector	◆	◆				\$5,899,057	County	GDOT, SPLOST
<b>Bridge Improvements</b>								
Crowell Road at Yellow River Tributary – Bridge Replacement	◆	◆				\$1,562,352	County	SPLOST
Edwards Road at Gum Creek – Bridge Repair	◆					\$239,421	County	SPLOST
Alcovy Road at Cornish Creek – Bridge deck replacement	◆	◆				\$207,227	County	SPLOST

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b>Roadway Projects</b>								
Dial Mill Road from Mt. Zion Road to Gum Creek Road – Rehabilitation	◆					\$482,738	County	SPLOST
Salem Road from Rockdale County Line to Brown Bridge Road – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$45,390,699	County	GDOT, SPLOST, Impact Fees
West Covington Bypass (South) from Salem Road to Almon Road/I-20 Underpass – new 4-lane road	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$2,134,223 *	County	GDOT, Local
West Covington Bypass (North) from I-20/Almon Road to SR 81/SR 142 – new 4-lane road	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$3,622,024 *	County	GDOT, Local
Brown Bridge Road from Crowell Road to SR 162 – Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$26,224,719	County	GDOT, Impact Fees
Crowell Road from Brown Bridge Road to I-20 – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆			\$10,668,455	County	GDOT, Impact Fees
Fairview Road from Rockdale County Line to I-20 Frontage Road – Widen from 2 to 3 lanes	◆	◆				\$10,621,645	County	Impact Fees, SPLOST
River Cove Road Extension to SR 11	◆					\$1,284,544	County	SPLOST
Covington Bypass (SR 142) from US 278 to CR 653 – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes		◆	◆			\$8,000,000	County	GDOT, Impact Fees, SPLOST
Salem Road from Brown Bridge Road to SR 81 – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$16,290,707	County	GDOT
Brown Bridge Road from SR 162 to SR 212 – Shoulder widening	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$2,253,496 *	County	SPLOST
Covington Bypass from US 278 (SR 12) to SR 36 – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆			\$2,527,596 *	County	Impact Fees
US 278 from Covington Bypass East to SR 142	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$21,217,199	County	GDOT, Impact Fees

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Covington Bypass from SR 36 to SR 81 – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$22,037,392	County	GDOT, Impact Fees
Crowell Road from SR 81 to Brown Bridge Road – Widen from 2 to 4 lanes	◆	◆	◆			\$5,480,056	County	Impact Fees
Gaither Road Realignment at Bear Creek Reservoir	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$352,653 *	County	SPLOST
* Cost Estimate includes Preliminary Engineering, Reimbursable Utility, and Right of Way Costs. Cost Estimate does not include Construction costs								
<b>General Transportation Planning</b>								
Countywide Transportation Master Plan	◆	◆				\$330,000	COUNTY	County, ARC
Countywide Transit Study	◆	◆	◆			\$1,031,000	COUNTY	SPLOST, ARC
Develop a countywide Access Management Plan for major corridors		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Adopt typical street cross sections for all urban and suburban street types that include sidewalks			◆	◆		NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
Revise and adopt an improved Subdivision, Road Names and Property Addressing Ordinance	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
<b>Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements</b>								
Turkey Creek/Yellow River Trail from Turner Lake Park to Newton County High School to Porterdale	◆	◆	◆			\$937,500	COUNTY	SPLOST, Federal
Trail from Library to Eastside High School and the Alcovy River (2 miles from the Library, pedestrian underpass to Eastside along undeveloped road ROW)	◆	◆				\$1,000,000	COUNTY	SPLOST

Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b><i>Economic Development</i></b>								
Conduct a target industry analysis to identify market segments that support the local economy with high-paying jobs	◆	◆				NA	Covington-Newton County Chamber of Commerce	LOCAL
Develop and implement a proactive marketing strategy to target those industries		◆	◆			NA	Covington-Newton County Chamber of Commerce	LOCAL
<b><i>Housing</i></b>								
Prepare an infill housing incentive study for the identified Activity Centers	◆	◆				\$35,000	COUNTY	LOCAL, GRANTS
Develop zoning and regulations for senior living communities		◆	◆			\$15,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Develop land use regulations that allow for development of attached or detached homes in the form of condominium ownership			◆	◆		\$15,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Evaluate the Zoning Ordinance to determine the need for possible revisions to allow for the construction of a wider variety of housing types and lot sizes. If needed, draft amendments for consideration by the Board of Commissioners		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY	LOCAL

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>								
<b>Historic Preservation</b>								
Adopt a Countywide Historic Preservation Ordinance. This should include protection for all of the Federally designated areas and sites, as well as additional significant resources identified in the Community Assessment or other historic surveys.	◆	◆				\$50,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL
Adopt detailed architectural and design guidelines to apply within the historic areas.		◆	◆			\$50,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL
Hire a staff architect or urban designer to assist in the application of the historic district.				◆		\$45,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Consider forming a joint Historic Preservation Commission between Newton County and some or all of the cities.		◆				NA	COUNTY, CITIES, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL
Nominate Burge Plantation as a Georgia Centennial Farm	◆					\$2,400	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Nominate Gaither plantation to the National Register	◆					\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Create a Master Plan for the Gaithers Plantation	◆					\$35,000	COUNTY, Friends of Gaithers	LOCAL
Map historic resources identified in 1989 Department of Natural Resources intensive survey	◆					\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Conduct feasibility study for using a building as a historical museum facility	◆					\$2,500	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA OTH
Nominate Almon Community to National Register		◆	◆			\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Nominate Henderson Mill to National Register	◆	◆				\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Nominate Mt. Pleasant Church to National Register	◆	◆				\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Nominate Dial Mill to National Register	◆	◆				\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Nominate Gum Creek Community to National Register	◆	◆				\$5,000	COUNTY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY	LOCAL, GA DNR, GA OTH
Restoration of Porterdale Train Depot	◆	◆	◆			\$55,680	COUNTY	SPLOST
Restoration of Historic Jail and County Museum	◆	◆				\$500,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
<b>Natural Resources</b>								
Prepare protection plans for the impaired streams within Newton County that are "Not Supporting" their designated uses: Yellow River, Snapping Shoals Creek, and Little River.	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY	LOCAL, GA OTH
Initiate County-wide ongoing water quality monitoring program.		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY	LOCAL, GA OTH



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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Prepare Watershed Protection Plans for the impaired streams and lakes within Newton County that are "Partially Supporting" their designated uses: South River and Lake Jackson.			◆	◆		NA	COUNTY	LOCAL, GA OTH
Complete & submit an Implementation plan for Phase II MPEDS Stormwater Permit Compliance for Urbanized areas		◆	◆			\$50,000	COUNTY	LOCAL, GA OTH
Study & adopt a county stormwater utility	◆	◆				\$25,000	COUNTY	LOCAL, GA OTH
Promote a County Wide Tree Planting Program (Education/Incentives/Sponsorship)	◆					\$5,000	COUNTY, GA OTH	LOCAL, GA OTH
Support development of Greenway along Alcovy River	◆					\$ 5-7,000,000	COUNTY	LOCAL, PRIVATE
Create and adopt a Open Space conservation plan as an Official Map that links open spaces together into a publicly accessible open space network and create incentives for developers to follow it.		◆	◆			\$25,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Adopt a right-to-farm ordinance		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY	LOCAL
<b>Community Facilities</b>								
<b>Libraries</b>								
Oak Hill Branch Library		◆	◆	◆		\$ 5,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	General Fund, State of Georgia, 60% Impact Fees
Library Collection Volumes	◆					\$ 363,576	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	General Fund, State of Georgia, 71% Impact Fees

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Library Collection Volumes	◆	◆				\$ 380,115	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	General Fund, State of Georgia, 72% Impact Fees
Library Collection Volumes		◆	◆			\$ 379,065	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	General Fund, State of Georgia, 72% Impact Fees
Library Collection Volumes			◆	◆		\$ 412,273	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	General Fund, State of Georgia, 74% Impact Fees
<b>Recreation</b>								
Update the County Recreation Master Plan Annually	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	\$ 30,000	REC COMMISSION	LOCAL, GA OTH
Covington Neighborhood Park - Land	◆					\$ 75,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	100% Impact Fees
Oak Hill Park Master Plan and Construction	◆					\$ 1,236,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	100% Impact Fees
Crossroads Neighborhood Park - Land		◆	◆			\$ 750,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	100% Impact Fees
Oxford Neighborhood Park - Land			◆	◆		\$ 900,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	100% Impact Fees

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Land Acq. - Gathering Place		◆	◆			\$ 1,200,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	100% Impact Fees
Cousins Gym/Property	◆					\$ 1,598,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees, CDBG, SPLOST
Planning/Design Fees	◆	◆	◆	◆		\$ 654,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	100% Impact Fees
Land Acq. - Beaver Park Expansion	◆	◆				\$ 750,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Improvements to existing parks	◆	◆	◆			\$ 1,266,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Denny Dobbs Park (Oak Hill)	◆					\$ 486,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Community Park - Oxford	◆	◆				\$ 3,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Community Park - Beaver Park Exp	◆	◆	◆			\$ 1,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Community Park - Gathering Place		◆	◆			\$ 1,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Covington Park	◆					\$ 438,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
West Central Park - Phase 1		◆	◆	◆		\$4,299,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Directional/Entryway Signage	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	\$ 8,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	General fund, Donations, Public/Private Partnerships, Impact Fees

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Parks and Recreational Facility Contingencies	◆	◆	◆			\$1,817,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Impact Fees
Newton County Civic Center	◆	◆	◆			\$5,000,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
Porterdale Gym	◆	◆	◆			\$444,320	COUNTY	SPLOST
<b>Sewer</b>								
Study a county revenue generation plan that will allow the NCWSA to fund sewerage expansion	◆	◆				\$25,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Implement a county revenue generation plan that will allow the NCWSA to fund sewerage expansion	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	\$25,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Organize and implement procedures for monitoring performance of aging septic tanks and private package systems.	◆	◆				\$10,000	COUNTY, NCWSA	LOCAL
Identify drainage basins of stream segments that do not support designated uses, monitor septic tanks, and prepare a strategy for reducing and mitigating septic tank failures.		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY, NCWSA	LOCAL
Develop a policy and procedure for connecting neighborhoods that rely on failing septic tanks to public wastewater treatment systems if available.		◆	◆			NA	COUNTY, NCWSA	LOCAL
<b>Public Safety</b>								
800 Radio Communications System	◆	◆	◆			\$6,000,000	COUNTY	SPLOST

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Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Data Communication System	◆	◆	◆			\$1,625,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
Detention Center - PODS	◆	◆	◆			\$90,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
Complete Phase II Landfill Development	◆	◆				\$3,700,000	COUNTY	LOCAL, SPLOST
<b>General Community Facilities</b>								
Implement a Capital Improvement Plan	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	\$ 50,000	COUNTY	LOCAL
Develop a comprehensive long-term infrastructure plan and map that inventories existing systems, describes current projects, identifies current and future needs, projects costs and identifies potential funding sources	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	\$ 150,000	COUNTY, NCWSA	LOCAL
County Office Complex	◆					\$5,000,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
Mechanic Shop Expansion	◆	◆	◆			\$2,000,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
Community Building – District 4	◆	◆	◆			\$500,000	COUNTY	SPLOST
Judicial Center Parking	◆	◆	◆			\$344,910	COUNTY	SPLOST

Planning Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b><i>Intergovernmental Coordination</i></b>								
Create a Newton County-Municipal Comprehensive Planning Coordinating Committee that regularly meets to discuss coordination issues at the staff level regarding regular updates to the Comprehensive Plan, the Service Delivery Strategy Agreement, and monthly development issues.	◆					NA	COUNTY, CITIES	LOCAL
Establish extra-territorial spheres of influence around each city within which special care will be taken to notify the affected municipality and the county of any proposed rezonings, annexations or new developments.	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY, CITIES	LOCAL
Work closely with local jurisdictions to support the maintenance of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	NA	COUNTY, CITIES	LOCAL
Synchronize County, School Board, Sewer & Water Authority and local Cities Fiscal Years to aid in planning for coordination efforts	◆	◆				NA	COUNTY, BOE, WSA, Cities	LOCAL

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## Appendix

### A. Quality Community Objectives

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established statewide goals and objectives for local communities. These goals and objectives are based upon growth and development concerns regularly highlighted in regional and local plans. To ensure these items are being addressed, DCA requires that communities identify specific quality community objectives being addressed in each character area. This section is intended to meet this state planning requirement and supplement the defining narrative for character areas presented with the Future Development Map in Section IV.

The following table identifies quality community objectives to be pursued in each character area with a short description of ways the objective will be pursued.

Character Area	Quality Community Objectives Pursued
Alcovy Trestle	<p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> Wide natural buffers as well as the development of a greenspace plan will help preserve open space.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Continued preservation of the Lake Varner Reservoir and Alcovy River as well as pro-active conservation policies will help protect natural resources.</p>
Almon	<p><u>Heritage Preservation Objective.</u> Existing character will be maintained through revitalization of historic areas.</p> <p><u>Growth Preparedness Objective.</u> Extending public sewer along I-20 and seeking a new interchange for West Covington Bypass will help provide quality growth and support economic development.</p> <p><u>Transportation Alternatives Objective.</u> Construction of sidewalks and a trail system will diversify local transportation options.</p>
Bear Creek	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Conservation of land and protection of tributaries leading to proposed Bear Creek Reservoir will protect environmental resources.</p> <p><u>Heritage Preservation Objective.</u> The promotion of development that reflects existing historic structures will help maintain the area's heritage.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> Protection of views and existing greenspace will be highly favored over development in this area.</p>
Cedar Shoals	<p><u>Heritage Preservation Objective.</u> Compatibility with the historic mill and village will be promoted for new developments.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> A potential trail system along the Yellow River will supplement the area's public park system.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective:</u> Village-oriented development in area crossroad communities will facilitate a greater sense of place.</p>

Character Area	Quality Community Objectives Pursued
Dixie Road	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Preservation efforts will help protect existing agricultural land and forestry as well as protect the area’s water quality.</p> <p><u>Regional Identity Objective.</u> Reserving existing lands for agricultural uses will help maintain fading elements of the region’s agricultural identity.</p>
East End	<p><u>Infill Development Objective.</u> The proposed adoption of overlay guidelines in areas with sewer availability will help guide quality infill development that favors mixed use while discouraging sprawl.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> Construction of a trail system will help preserve greenspace in a growing area of the community.</p> <p><u>Housing Opportunities Objective.</u> This area will continue to provide up-scale housing for the community while allowing for appropriate infill housing options.</p>
Flat Shoals	<p><u>Infill Development Objective.</u> Infill development will be promoted in the community to help encourage clustered growth.</p> <p><u>Traditional Neighborhood Objective.</u> Enhancement of the sidewalk network as well as requiring stub streets and connections to existing stub streets will promote traditional neighborhood development.</p> <p><u>Regional Identity Character.</u> Compatible architecture styles that maintain regional character will help contribute to the region’s unique sense of place.</p> <p><u>Growth Preparedness Objective.</u> Improved sewer capacity has been identified as a critical element to support proposed growth.</p>
Flint Hill	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Encouragement of conservation subdivisions and natural buffers will preserve area’s greenspace and connections to the Lake Varner Reservoir. The acquisition of areas with large concentrations of exposed rock for conservation will also add to environmental protection efforts.</p> <p><u>Housing Opportunities Objective.</u> Area includes a mixture of housing types that will be encouraged to expand through clustering of new homes.</p>
Gum Creek	<p><u>Appropriate Businesses Objective.</u> Protecting local farms from encroachment will help preserve the role of agriculture in the local economy.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> Creating a zoning overlay district for the west Covington Bypass will help maintain the community’s character.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> The acquisition of areas with large concentrations of exposed rock for conservation will supplement existing environmental protection efforts.</p>

Character Area	Quality Community Objectives Pursued
Harris Springs	<p><u>Heritage Preservation Objective.</u> Architectural styles reflecting historic community buildings will be encouraged, complementing the area's heritage.</p> <p><u>Growth Preparedness Objective.</u> Better regulation and gateways near I-20 will ensure quality growth as the area's population and pass-through traffic increases.</p> <p><u>Regional Cooperation Objective.</u> Working with the City of Social Circle to address the I-20 gateway will create the best outcome for the region.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> Encouraging compatible architecture, preserving viewsheds, and creating wide natural buffers will preserve area character.</p>
Highway 11 Preservation Corridor	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Protection of agriculture and forestry will help protect water and air quality.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> The creation of a scenic overlay district will preserve the area's agricultural and rural character.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> The discouragement of road widenings and subdivisions will help preserve open space in the County.</p>
High Point	<p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> A Village Center will be encouraged to develop along Jackson Highway, serving as a focal point for the nearby community.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> New parks are encouraged for the area to help preserve public space for recreation.</p> <p><u>Transportation Alternatives Objective.</u> The enhancement of the pedestrian network will provide more options for getting to and from community focal points.</p> <p><u>Housing Opportunities.</u> Maintenance of existing housing supply will help maintain a range of housing sizes and costs in the area.</p>
Hub Junction	<p><u>Educational Opportunities Objective.</u> Further development of the Perimeter College campus will increase training opportunities for community members.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> Greater design regulations consistent with existing overlay district will maintain the area's character.</p> <p><u>Regional Identity Objective.</u> Prohibiting undesired signage and blights on the local landscape will promote the region's developing smart growth identity.</p>
Lake Jackson	<p><u>Housing Opportunities Objective.</u> Housing redevelopment will sustain the existing size of the housing stock, complementing other new housing options.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Smart land use decisions around Jackson Lake will help improve and protect the area's water quality.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> The development of trails that link Jackson Lake to surrounding recreation areas will improve the area's open space.</p>

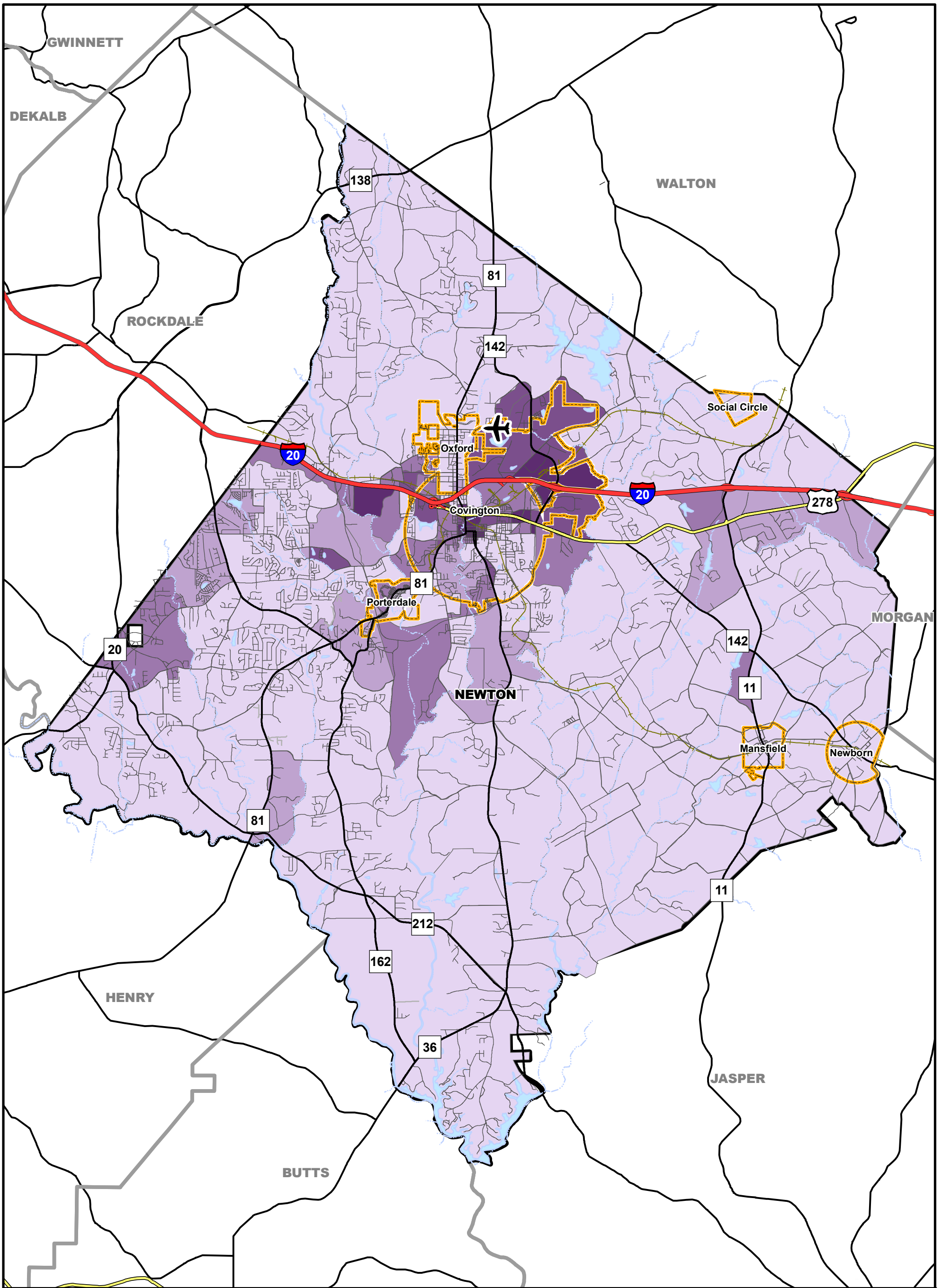
Character Area	Quality Community Objectives Pursued
Lower River	<p><u>Traditional Neighborhood Objective.</u> Encouragement of enhanced pedestrian networks and required street connections will lead to a more cohesive community environment.</p> <p><u>Housing Opportunities Objective.</u> Recommendations include mixing housing price points, providing greater housing options for residents and workers.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Preservation efforts at Yellow River will help preserve the area’s water system and other natural resources.</p> <p><u>Employment Options Objective.</u> Adding positive design elements to the bypass area will help attract higher end commercial and a greater variety of jobs to the area.</p> <p><u>Regional Identity Objective.</u> Encouraging architecture that is common to the region will help connect the community to the rest of the region.</p>
McGuirts Crossing	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Conservation subdivisions and a trail system along the Alcovy River will add protection to environmental resources.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> A trail system along the river will add to green public space in the community.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> Restricting inappropriate development will help sustain the area’s residential and scenic character.</p>
Newton Factory	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Protection of the Alcovy and Yellow Rivers will help maintain superior water quality in the County.</p> <p><u>Transportation Alternatives Objective.</u> Linking the local high school to surrounding areas with provide alternative transportation options.</p>
Oak Hill	<p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> Introduction of design elements and creation of a new activity center will help foster greater continuity and a focal point for the area.</p> <p><u>Employment Options Objective.</u> Commercial businesses that locate in the activity center will provide more job options to nearby residents.</p> <p><u>Growth Preparedness Objective.</u> Expansion of the public sewer system will help ensure that needed infrastructure is provided to help facilitate the growth of the activity center.</p>
Rocky Plains	<p><u>Transportation Alternatives Objective.</u> New pedestrian and trail infrastructure will generate alternate transportation options for residents.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Protection of the Alcovy and Yellow Rivers will help maintain high water quality in the County. Promotion of conservation subdivisions will help protect water and air quality.</p>

Character Area	Quality Community Objectives Pursued
Salem	<p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> The development of a Village Center at the intersection of Browns Bridge Road and Salem Road will facilitate a sense of place.</p> <p><u>Transportation Alternatives Objective.</u> Greater emphasis is being placed on pedestrian/bike connections to encourage alternate transportation methods.</p> <p><u>Open Space Preservation Objective.</u> Open space will be encouraged in the area to provide needed greenspace and parks for the growing population.</p> <p><u>Traditional Neighborhood Objective.</u> Traditional neighborhood development will lead to increased connectivity within the community.</p> <p><u>Regional Cooperation Objective.</u> Through a variety of tactics, area strategies will lead to greater greenspace, connectivity, and housing options.</p>
Stanton Springs	<p><u>Employment Options Objective.</u> Working with the area Chamber of Commerce will help attract new industries and jobs.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Efforts to protect the water quality of the Little River will help preserve the area's water quality.</p>
Starrsville	<p><u>Heritage Preservation Objective.</u> Encouraging structures and design elements that reflect the area's history will preserve the area's heritage.</p> <p><u>Appropriate Businesses Objective.</u> Protecting local farms from encroachment will help preserve the role of agriculture in the local economy.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Protection of the Alcovy River will be a priority in this area as will clustering of houses to help preserve greenspace.</p>
Stewart	<p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> The environment will be protected through efforts to create wide stream buffers and a greenway trail on adjacent lands.</p> <p><u>Regional Solutions Objective.</u> Structures will be encouraged to reflect the County's historic precedents in building design.</p> <p><u>Sense of Place Objective.</u> A village atmosphere will be encouraged to facilitate a sense of place for area residents.</p>
Turner Lake	<p><u>Transportation Alternatives Objective.</u> The construction of a trail system between Porterdale and Covington will provide an additional option for local travel.</p> <p><u>Environmental Protection Objective.</u> Conservation subdivisions and protection of the Yellow River will help preserve water and air quality.</p> <p><u>Open Space Objective.</u> Conservation subdivisions and a trail system will set aside space for future generations.</p>

## **Appendix B. Projected Distribution of Population and Employment**

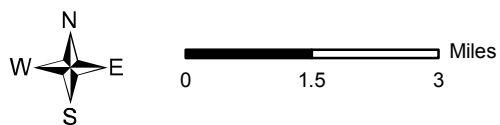
The following table reflects the distribution of population, employment, and households throughout Newton County, with actual counts for the Year 2000 and projections for the Year 2028. Data is distributed by traffic analysis zones. Maps that reflect these employment and population distributions are shown on the following pages, Figure B-1 and Figure B-2 respectively.












Traffic Analysis Zone	Area Acres	Population		Employment		Households	
		2000	2028 Projection	2000	2028 Projection	2000	2028 Projection
1827	10681	3,591	13,101	249	2,179	1,305	4,997
1828	8468	2,266	4,877	124	760	843	1,860
1829	9318	1,834	2,334	359	2,646	660	890
1830	2411	1,340	3,236	23	71	479	1,234
1831	1823	1,661	1,845	1,176	3,147	628	704
1832	2877	2,297	6,530	6,355	12,348	827	2,491
1833	7240	771	2,732	44	4,049	281	1,042
1834	14016	2,206	10,699	89	7,100	816	4,081
1835	2178	1,052	12,179	99	9,048	359	4,645
1836	3096	974	2,262	21	816	359	863
1837	11952	2,537	3,037	660	3,866	866	1,158
1838	1908	539	6,386	4	726	208	2,436
1839	1626	3,003	6,288	3,618	8,122	1,260	2,398
1840	894	958	5,520	2,855	6,656	376	2,106
1841	3408	3,624	11,987	635	2,869	1,481	4,572
1842	4167	7,834	18,405	613	2,794	2,926	7,020
1843	2026	3,157	7,378	207	720	1,178	2,814
1844	2763	4,161	10,360	483	2,049	1,490	3,952
1845	2406	2,948	10,537	649	1,503	1,081	4,019
1846	1508	4,029	8,313	716	1,362	1,450	3,171
1847	4670	6,293	17,970	804	3,867	2,220	6,854
1848	6027	3,817	7,552	160	549	1,371	2,880
1849	6240	3,380	7,623	288	549	1,214	2,908
1850	4192	2,125	4,605	102	272	766	1,756
1851	4907	1,829	5,820	237	1,375	626	2,220
1852	2274	1,300	5,109	212	1,022	457	1,949
1853	2193	1,003	6,074	70	936	346	2,317
1854	12728	2,681	6,117	45	937	946	2,333
1855	14346	3,413	13,398	129	710	1,234	5,110
1856	5377	1,572	3,031	13	486	587	1,156
1857	20933	2,396	2,896	303	675	862	1,105








**Newton County 2028  
Comprehensive Plan**

*Projected 2030 Employment Density*



-  Airport
-  River/Stream
-  Lake/Pond
-  City Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Interstate Highway
-  Interstate Access Ramp
-  U.S. Route
-  State Route
-  Collector/Local Road
-  Railroad

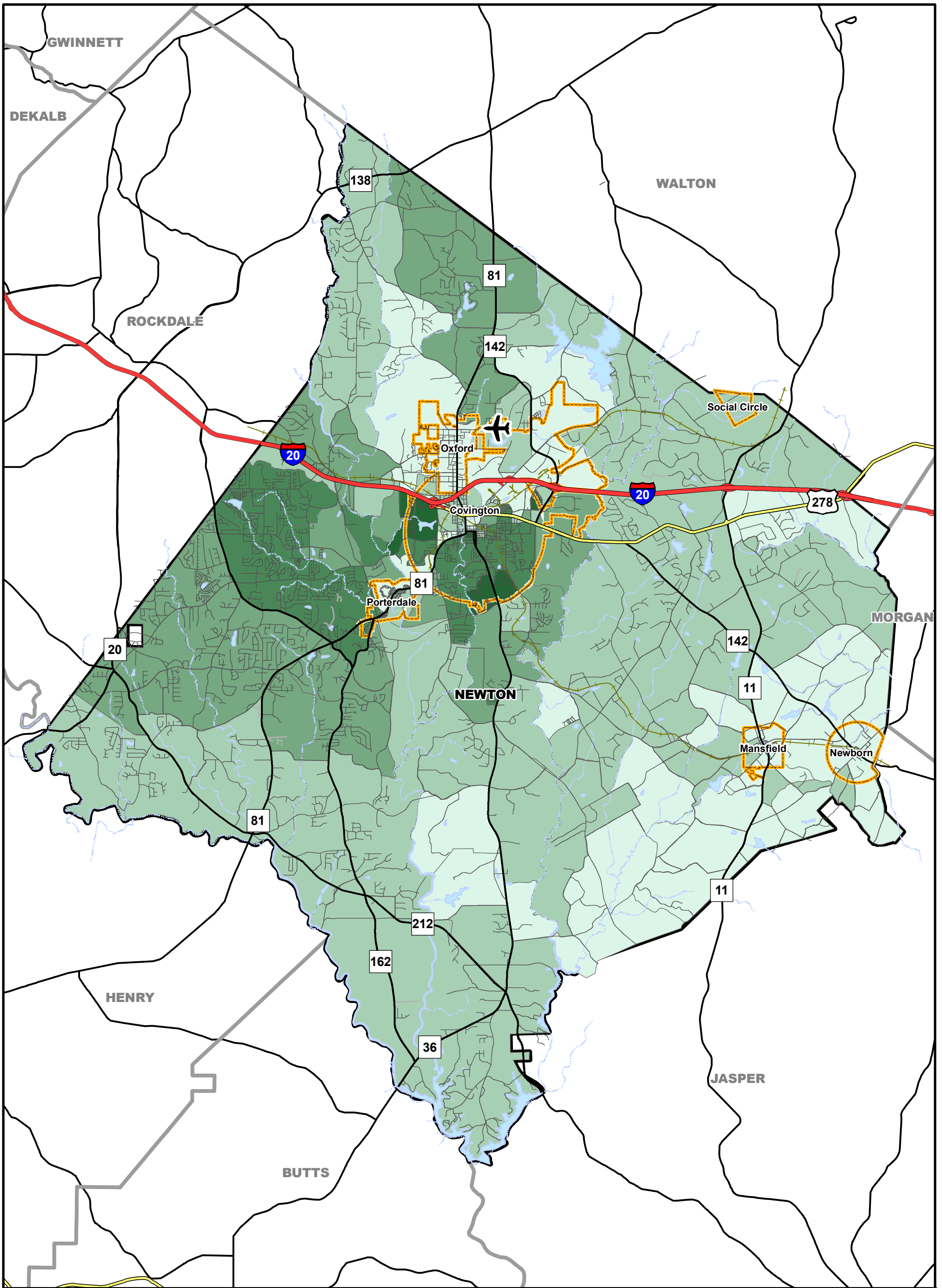
- Employees per Acre**
-  Less than 0.5
  -  0.5 to 1
  -  1 to 5
  -  5 to 10
  -  More than 10



  
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

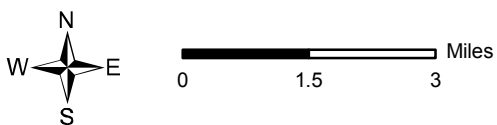
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




**Newton County 2028  
Comprehensive Plan**

*Projected 2030 Population Density*



-  Airport
-  River/Stream
-  Lake/Pond
-  City Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Interstate Highway
-  Interstate Access Ramp
-  U.S. Route
-  State Route
-  Collector/Local Road
-  Railroad

**Population per Acre**

-  Less than 1
-  1 to 3
-  3 to 5
-  5 to 8
-  More than 8



  
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2/19/08

**C. Record of Accomplishments**

The following table lists the status of those items identified in the Newton County 2006-2011 Short Term Work Program and Capital Improvements Update.

Newton County Record of Accomplishments						
Item	Activity	Begin Year	End Year	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Status
<b>Community Facilities</b>						
<b>Libraries</b>						
1.	Oak Hill Branch Library	2008	2010	\$5,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	Pending
2.	Library Collection Volumes	2006	2007	\$363,576	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	Pending
3.	Library Collection Volumes	2007	2008	\$380,115	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	Pending
4.	Library Collection Volumes	2008	2009	\$379,065	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	Pending
5.	Library Collection Volumes	2009	2010	\$412,273	Board of Commissioners, Library Board	Pending
<b>Recreation</b>						
6.	Update the County Recreation Master Plan Annually	2006	2011	\$30,000	Recreation Commission	Ongoing
7.	Covington Neighborhood Park - Land	2006	2007	\$75,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
8.	Oak Hill Park	2006	2007	\$1,236,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
9.	Crossroads Neighborhood Park - Land	2008	2009	\$750,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
10.	Oxford Neighborhood Park - Land	2009	2010	\$900,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
11.	Land Acq. - Gathering Place	2008	2009	\$1,200,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
12.	Cousins Gym/Property	2006	2007	\$1,598,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending

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Newton County Record of Accomplishments						
Item	Activity	Begin Year	End Year	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Status
13.	Planning/Design Fees	2006	2010	\$654,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
14.	Land Acq. - Beaver Park Expansion	2007	2008	\$750,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
15.	Improvements to existing parks	2006	2009	\$1,266,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
16.	Denny Dobbs Park (Oak Hill)	2006	2007	\$486,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
17.	Community Park - Oxford	2006	2008	\$3,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
18.	Community Park - Beaver Park Exp	2006	2009	\$1,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
19.	Community Park - Gathering Place	2008	2009	\$1,000,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
20.	Covington Park	2006	2007	\$438,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
21.	West Central Park - Phase 1	2008	2010	\$4,299,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
22.	Directional/Entryway Signage	2006	2010	\$8,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
23.	Contingencies	2006	2009	\$1,817,000	Board of Commissioners, Parks & Recreation Board	Pending
<b>Sewer</b>						
24.	Study a county revenue generation plan that will allow the NCWSA to fund sewerage expansion	2006	2008	\$25,000	County	Pending
25.	Implement a county revenue generation plan that will allow the NCWSA to fund sewerage expansion	2006	2011	\$25,000	County	Pending
<b>Public Safety</b>						
26.	Complete Phase II Landfill Development	2006	2008	\$1,500,000	County	Pending
27.	Phase One Jail Expansion			\$7,527,043	Board of Commissioners, Sheriff's Office	Completed

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Newton County Record of Accomplishments						
Item	Activity	Begin Year	End Year	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Status
<b>General Community Facilities</b>						
28.	Develop a comprehensive long-term infrastructure plan and map that inventories existing systems, describes current projects, identifies current and future needs, projects costs and identifies potential funding sources	2008	2011	\$150,000	County, NCWSA	Pending
29.	Create a Capital Improvement Program			\$20,000	County	Completed
30.	Implement a Capital Improvement Plan	2006	2011	\$50,000	County	Ongoing
<b>Transportation</b>						
<b>Intersection Improvements</b>						
31.	S.R. 212 & S.R. 20 Combined	2006	2007	\$497,190	Board of Commissioners	Pending
32.	S.R. 81 & Crowell Road	2006	2007	\$292,465	Board of Commissioners	Pending
33.	Brown Bridge Road & Crowell Road	2006	2007	\$257,369	Board of Commissioners	Pending
34.	S.R. 36 & Flat Shoals Road	2007	2009	\$240,406	Board of Commissioners	Pending
35.	Covington Bypass & Dearing Street	2008	2010	\$146,232	Board of Commissioners	Pending
36.	S.R. 162 & Spring Road	2008	2009	\$292,465	Board of Commissioners	Pending
37.	S.R. 162 & Smith Store Road	2009	2011	\$263,218	Board of Commissioners	Pending
<b>Roadway Improvements</b>						
38.	Salem Road from Rockdale County Line to S.R. 81	2007	2009	\$45,390,699	Board of Commissioners	Pending
39.	Brown Bridge Road from Crowell Road to S.R. 162	2007	2008	\$26,224,719	Board of Commissioners	Pending
40.	Covington Bypass from U.S. 278 to S.R. 142	2008	2009	\$11,866,288	Board of Commissioners	Pending
41.	U.S. 278 from Covington Bypass East to S.R. 142	2009	2011	\$21,217,199	Board of Commissioners	Pending
<b>Land Use</b>						
42.	Amend the Zoning Ordinance so that it will strongly encourage compliance with the future Land Use Map	2006	2007	\$50,000	County	Pending
43.	Study, adopt and implement a county impact fee ordinance			\$84,700	County	Completed

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Newton County Record of Accomplishments						
Item	Activity	Begin Year	End Year	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Status
44.	Contract with private consultants to conduct a Future Land Use Study	2006	2009	\$200,000	County, GA RDC, Consultant	In Process
45.	Update the Comprehensive Plan	2006	2011	\$100,000	County, GA RDC	Ongoing
46.	Begin implementation of the TDR Program (Received grant from the EPA for modeling Software that will be utilized to model development nodes)	2006	2008	\$10,000	County, GA RDC	Pending
47.	Develop Smart Growth Policy Guidelines			\$5,000	County, GA RDC	Completed
48.	Develop Comprehensive Development Regulations	2006	2006	\$25,000	County	Ongoing
49.	Implement Comprehensive Development Regulations	2006	2008	\$25,000	County	Ongoing
50.	Develop a Planning Commissioner Program			\$500	County, GA RDC, GA OTH	Completed
51.	Implement a Planning Commissioner Program			\$20,000	County GA RDC, GA OTH	Completed
<i>Natural and Cultural Resources</i>						
<b>Historic Preservation</b>						
52.	Identify significant historic resources on zoning map	2006	2011	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
53.	Include archaeological resources in zoning map	2006	2011	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
54.	Nominate Burge Plantation as a Georgia Centennial Farm	2007	2007	\$1,400	County, Historical Society	Pending
55.	Consider developing library or building as facility for preservation uses	2006	2011	\$ -	County, Historical Society	Pending
56.	Nominate Gaither plantation to the National Register	2007	2007	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
57.	Map historic resources identified in 1989 Department of Natural Resources intensive survey	2006	2007	\$5,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
58.	Conduct feasibility study for using a building as a historical museum facility	2006	2006	\$2,500	County, Historical Society	Pending
59.	Nominate Almon Community to National Register	2007	2008	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
60.	Nominate Henderson Mill to National Register	2007	2008	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending

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Newton County Record of Accomplishments						
Item	Activity	Begin Year	End Year	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Status
61.	Nominate Mt. Pleasant Church to National Register	2007	2008	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
62.	Nominate Dial Mill to National Register	2007	2008	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
63.	Nominate Gum Creek Community to National Register	2007	2008	\$1,000	County, Historical Society	Pending
64.	Adopt historic preservation ordinance	2006	2008	\$15,000	County, GA RDC	Pending
65.	Update survey information annually	2006	2011	\$1,000	County	Ongoing
<b>Natural Resources</b>						
66.	Complete & submit an Implementation plan for Phase II MPEDS Stormwater Permit Compliance for Urbanized areas	2008	2009	\$50,000	County	Pending
67.	Study & adopt a county stormwater utility	2006	2008	\$25,000	County	Pending
68.	Promote a County Wide Tree Planting Program (Education/Incentives/Sponsorship)	2006	2007	\$5,000	County, GA OTH	Pending
69.	Support development of Greenway along Alcovy River	2006	2007	\$ 5-7,000,000	County	In Process. Property has been purchased.
70.	Encourage use of Soil Conservation Best Management Practices	2006	2011	\$ -	County	Ongoing









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6801 Governors Lake Parkway • Building 200 • Norcross, Georgia 30071  
T 770.455.8555 • F 770.455.7391 • [www.jjg.com](http://www.jjg.com)