

Rockdale County
2020 Comprehensive Plan:
2003 Update



Adopted December 30, 2003

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**A RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
ROCKDALE COUNTY 2020 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Rockdale County has developed a Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Map to set forth a vision for the community's development to the year 2020, and goals and policies to guide that development and public investments; and

WHEREAS, the Rockdale County 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan includes a five year implementation strategy, as well as a plan for County land use; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan represents nearly three years of consideration and planning by County citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Atlanta Regional Commission and neighboring local governments reviewed the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, as required by the Georgia Planning Act of 1999, and found no conflict with local or regional plans; and

WHEREAS, the Atlanta Regional Commission and the State Department of Community Affairs have determined that the Rockdale County 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan meets the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Planning;

THEREFORE, NOW BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the Rockdale County 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, including errata sheets, and Map.

This 30th day of December 2003.

**ROCKDALE COUNTY, GEORGIA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Attest:

By: [Signature]
Ex Officio Clerk

Approved as to form:

By: [Signature]
County Attorney

By: [Signature]
NORMAN WHEELER, Chairman

By: [Signature]
ARTHUR VAUGHN

By: [Signature]
GLENN SEARS

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I. Introduction

1. Purpose

The Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan provides county officials, staff, and residents with a blueprint to guide growth and development over the next 20 years. This plan addresses a wide range of elements including demographics, economic development, natural and historic resources, housing, community facilities, and land use. This official statement will be used as the basis for zoning, transportation planning, and utility system decisions in the future.

Updates to the comprehensive plan shall occur, at a minimum, every ten years. However, after five years, community leaders should determine if the comprehensive plan needs a major update, based upon the degree of change in the community. If little has changed, minor revisions to the plan may be sufficient, in the form of plan amendments. If major changes have occurred or if the data upon which the plan is based has become dated, a complete update of the comprehensive plan should be initiated.

This plan serves as a major revision to the current plan, the *City of Conyers and Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan: 1991-2010*, adopted in March 1991. Data gathering and public involvement efforts related to this update began in November 2000.



2. Planning Process

The Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan consists of a three-step planning process:

Step 1: Inventory and Assessment

The Inventory and Assessment lists the resources in the county and addresses the seven elements listed below. The adequacy of these resources is assessed based on interviews and meetings with elected officials, city and county staff, and residents.

- **Population:** The population element specifically addresses total population, households, age distribution, racial composition, educational attainment, and income. Current, historic, and future data are provided for several of these population characteristics. This data is analyzed in increments from 1970 (**Figure II-1**) until 2020. Comparisons of the county with the region and the state are also provided.
- **Economic Development:** The economic development element examines the county's economic base, labor force characteristics, and local economic development

opportunities and resources to determine economic needs and goals.

- **Natural and Historic Resources:** This element evaluates the county's natural, historic, and environmentally sensitive areas and outlines strategies for their appropriate use, preservation and protection.
- **Community Facilities:** The community facilities element inventories and assesses existing public facilities and services to ensure they have the capacity to support and attract growth and development and/or to maintain and enhance the quality of life of the county's residents. This section specifically addresses law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, water supply and treatment, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, health care services, recreational resources, governmental facilities, educational and cultural facilities.
- **Transportation:** The purpose of this element is to inventory components of the local transportation network, to assess their adequacy for serving both the current and future population and economic needs of the county, and to articulate community goals. An associated implementation program for providing the desired level of transportation facilities and services is also included.
- **Housing:** The housing element provides an inventory and assessment of the county's housing stock. Specifically this section addresses types of housing units, age and condition of housing, owner and renter occupied units, and cost of housing.
- **Land Use:** The land use element of the plan assists local governments in determining existing land use patterns and future patterns of growth. Categories of land use include parks, recreation and conservation; agricultural; commercial; residential; industrial; public/institutional; transportation, communications and utilities; and undeveloped properties.



Step 2: Goals and Policies

Upon completion of the inventory and assessment, existing needs were identified for each planning element. Next, goals and objectives were developed to meet the identified needs. These goals and objectives stem from input from county officials, staff, and citizens. They are consistent with the statewide planning goals

as stated in the Minimum Local Planning Standards and Procedures (Chapter 110-12-1-.04).

Step 3: Implementation Strategy

Based on the goals and objectives for each planning element, an implementation strategy for each element was prepared. These implementation strategies were then rolled into a Five-Year Short Term Work Program for the county. The work program indicates the projects and programs that will be initiated in the next five-years. The programs and projects were prioritized, a cost estimate provided, and the responsible department or party was indicated.

3. Minimum Local Planning and Procedural Standards

This plan was prepared following the requirements of the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning prepared by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The Minimum Standards require that all local governments follow the three-step planning process outlined above. The planning process was applied to each planning element. The Minimum Procedural Standards require holding two public hearings during the planning process. An initial public hearing is held before any planning begins to inform the community about the purpose of the plan, the planning process used in its preparation, and to encourage community input on local needs, issues and goals. This meeting was held in November of 2000. Another public hearing is held after the draft plan is prepared and before it is submitted for review. At this hearing, the community is informed about the content of the plan, its recommendations, and is allowed to make suggestions, additions or revisions. This final public meeting was held on September 5, 2003.



4. Planning Area

The Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan includes all of the unincorporated area in Rockdale County. Rockdale County covers 130 square miles of the Piedmont Plateau in north Georgia. Rockdale has the second smallest land area of Georgia's 159 counties. The county is located 24 miles east of Atlanta with I-20 bisecting the county from west to east. Other major roadways that serve the county include SR 138, SR 20, SR 212 and SR 162.

5. Public Participation

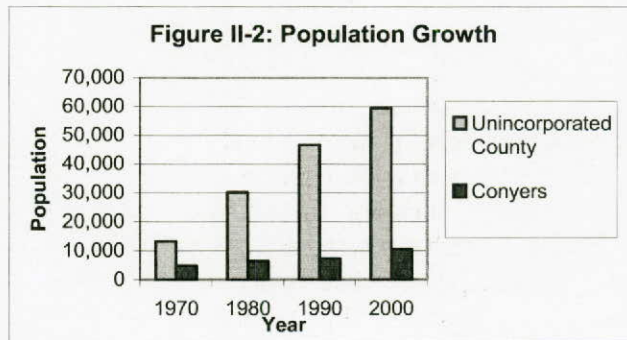
In addition to the required Public Hearings for the Plan update, the county created six citizen subcommittees. These subcommittees, comprised of more than 50 total members, met periodically over

Figure II-1: Population

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Georgia	4,589,575	5,026,300	5,463,105	5,970,700	6,478,216	7,332,300	8,186,453
Rockdale County	18,152	27,450	36,747	45,419	54,091	63,306	70,111
Unincorporated County	13,262	21,721	30,180	38,446	46,711	53,684	59,422
Conyers	4,890	5,729	6,567	6,974	7,380	9,622	10,689

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Jordan, Jones and Goulding

Rockdale County is one of the fastest growing counties in Georgia. At 4.6% per year, the county had the tenth fastest average growth rate in Georgia between 1970 and 2000. As can be seen in **Figure II-3**, the number of new residents has remained fairly constant over the past three decades with about 17,000 new residents moving to the county per decade.



The population growth rate in Rockdale County exceeded that of Georgia in each of the past three decades. Georgia grew 19% in the 1970s and 1980s and 26% during the 1990s.

Figure II-3: Population Growth Rates

	70 to 80	80 to 90	90 to 00
Georgia	19%	19%	26%
Rockdale County	102%	47%	30%
Unincorporated County	128%	55%	27%
Conyers	34%	12%	45%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

B. Households

Figures II-4 and **II-5** summarize the total households and average household size characteristics of Rockdale County. In 2000, the total number of households in Rockdale County was 24,052. The average household size in the county was 2.87, significantly higher than the state's 2.65 or Conyers' 2.67. According to household

type data (see **Figure II-5**), Rockdale County has more households with children and married couples with children than the state as a whole. The county also has a smaller proportion of single persons living alone (17% versus 24% statewide). Like most suburban Atlanta counties, Rockdale is attractive to families with children seeking a quiet subdivision in which to raise their children.

Figure II-4: Households

	1980	1990	2000
Rockdale	11,684	18,337	24,052
Unincorporated County	9,335	15,539	20,142
Conyers	2,349	2,798	3,910

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

Average household size in the City of Conyers is similar to that of the state (see **Figure II-6**). The differences in household types are significant. There was nearly half the rate of married families with children in Conyers than the county as a whole (18% versus 30%). There were substantially more single female householders with children at home in the city than the county (21% versus 12%). And there was a much higher incidence of householders living alone (26% city compared with 17% county).

Figure II-5: Selected Household Types

	Conyers	Rockdale
Married couple with children	18%	30%
Single female with children	21%	12%
Single person household	26%	17%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Figure II-6: Average Household Size

	1980	1990	2000
Georgia	2.84	2.66	2.65
Rockdale	2.87	2.92	2.87
Conyers	2.52	2.61	2.67

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

C. Age Distribution

The age distribution of Rockdale County as a whole is similar to that of Georgia. Among the more significant differences, Rockdale County contains a higher proportion of 10 to 19 year olds and 35 to 54 year olds. This is the result of having a higher concentration of families with children. Notably, the county has a lower incidence of 0 to 5 year olds, implying the county is more attractive to households with school age children.

The age distribution within the unincorporated county is substantially different from the City of Conyers. The City has such a small population that any variations in age are magnified when presented as a rate. Nevertheless, the City has a much higher concentration of residents aged zero to four (6.1% unincorporated county versus 7.8% city) and 21 to 34 (16.3% unincorporated county compared to 25.2% city).

In the unincorporated county there is a higher percentage of people in the 5 to 17 and 35 to 54 age groups than there are in the City of Conyers. This also holds true when comparing the percentage of people in those same age groups in the unincorporated county to the state. The unincorporated county also has a significantly greater share of residents aged 55 to 64 (9.2% versus 6.5% city).

Figure II-7 on the following page includes percent changes for each age group for the county as a whole, the unincorporated section of the county and the City of Conyers. For Rockdale County, the 5 to 17 and the over 35 groups grew at the fastest rates. The 0 to 4 and the 25 to 34 age groups actually declined countywide in the last decade, despite 30% growth in total population. The age groups between and 18 and 34 all grew at significantly slower rates in the past decade than they did during the 1980's. Meanwhile, the older age groups from 45 to 65 and over maintained a fairly steady growth rate similar to that of the 1980's.

Due to the unincorporated section of the county having the majority of the population, it is not surprising that the unincorporated part of the county has very similar age group growth rates to the county as a whole. The true use of this part of the table is its comparison to the city, which it differs from greatly. Both areas lost similar amounts of residents in the 0-4 age group, however, Conyers did not lose any population in the 25 to 34 age group, gaining 8.8%, while the unincorporated area lost 4.8%. In fact, when combining this age group with the 21 to 24 group, the unincorporated county lost 1.4% while the city grew by 14.5%, a sign that the city is becoming relatively younger than the county. Another more obvious sign that the unincorporated portion of the county is getting older in relation to the city comes from combining the three oldest age groups, in other words residents 45 and over. In the unincorporated part of the county these three groups increased by 66%, while only increasing by 10% in Conyers.

Figure II-7: Age Distribution, Rockdale, Unincorporated Rockdale and Conyers

Rockdale	Year			% Change	
	1980	1990	2000	80 to 90	90 to 00
0 to 4 years	3,427	5,000	4,480	45.9%	-10.4%
5 to 13 years	5,797	6,922	10,067	19.4%	45.4%
14 to 17 years	2,983	3,410	4,741	14.3%	39.0%
18 to 20 years	1,715	2,421	2,921	41.2%	20.7%
21 to 24 years	2,047	2,829	3,245	38.2%	14.7%
25 to 34 years	6,181	9,323	9,111	50.8%	-2.3%
35 to 44 years	5,493	9,269	12,281	68.7%	32.5%
45 to 54 years	3,730	6,469	10,664	73.4%	64.8%
55 to 64 years	2,807	4,105	6,145	46.2%	49.7%
65 years and over	2,579	4,344	6,456	68.4%	48.6%
Unincorporated	Year			% Change	
	1980	1990	2000	80 to 90	90 to 00
0 to 4 years	2,675	4,072	3,644	52.2%	-10.5%
5 to 13 years	4,758	5,786	8,590	21.6%	48.5%
14 to 17 years	2,413	2,925	4,136	21.2%	41.4%
18 to 20 years	1,304	1,986	2,393	52.3%	20.5%
21 to 24 years	1,480	2,202	2,429	48.8%	10.3%
25 to 34 years	4,837	7,602	7,238	57.2%	-4.8%
35 to 44 years	4,569	7,886	10,613	72.6%	34.6%
45 to 54 years	2,961	5,571	9,496	88.1%	70.5%
55 to 64 years	2,154	3,388	5,452	57.3%	60.9%
65 years and over	1,812	3,332	5,431	83.9%	63.0%
Conyers	Year			% Change	
	1980	1990	2000	80 to 90	90 to 00
0 to 4 years	752	928	836	23.4%	-9.9%
5 to 13 years	1,039	1,136	1,477	9.3%	30.0%
14 to 17 years	570	485	605	-14.9%	24.7%
18 to 20 years	411	435	528	5.8%	21.4%
21 to 24 years	567	627	816	10.6%	30.1%
25 to 34 years	1,344	1,721	1,873	28.1%	8.8%
35 to 44 years	924	1,383	1,668	49.7%	20.6%
45 to 54 years	769	898	1,168	16.8%	30.1%
55 to 64 years	653	717	693	9.8%	-3.3%
65 years and over	767	1,012	1,025	31.9%	1.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

D. Racial Composition

Racial diversity in Rockdale County increased dramatically during the 1990s, despite almost no change in the racial composition during the 1980s.

In 2000, 76% of the county's population was white, down from 90% white in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, the county grew by 16,000 persons. Of these 67% were non-white. The population of African-Americans tripled; the Asian population grew by two and a half times; and the Hispanic population increased by 600%. The area around Lithonia in DeKalb County has emerged as a popular area for middle class African Americans. The rapid growth in the county's African American population indicates this segment has continued to suburbanize westward into Rockdale County.

Rockdale's increasing Hispanic and Asian diversity is part of a region-wide trend of these two minority groups to relocate and immigrate to the suburbs.

Comparing the overall county to the unincorporated portion of the county in **Figure II-8**, the racial composition of the unincorporated county has a slightly higher proportion of white residents and a slightly lower percentage of all the other racial groups and Hispanic residents. The City of Conyers, by contrast, is composed of 58% white residents, 33% African-American residents, and 11% Hispanic residents.

Figure II-8: Racial Distribution, Rockdale and Unincorporated Area

Rockdale County	1980	1990	2000	Unincorporated County	1980	1990	2000
Total Population	36,743	54,091	70,111	Total Population	28,952	44,749	59,422
White	33,222	48,918	53,100	White	26,778	41,632	46,869
Black	3,185	4,355	12,771	Black	1,886	2,472	9,199
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	181	113	181	American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	160	95	147
Asian or Pacific Islander	89	506	1,397	Asian or Pacific Islander	70	383	1,114
Other race	46	191	1,776	Other race	39	159	1,372
Hispanic origin (of any race)	252	594	4,182	Hispanic origin (of any race)	212	488	3,029
Rockdale % of Total Population	1980	1990	2000	Unincorporated % of Total Population	1980	1990	2000
White	90.4%	90.4%	75.7%	White	92.5%	93.0%	78.9%
Black	8.7%	8.1%	18.2%	Black	6.5%	5.5%	15.5%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.9%	2.0%	Asian or Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.9%	1.9%
Other race	0.1%	0.4%	2.5%	Other race	0.1%	0.4%	2.3%
Hispanic origin (of any race)	0.7%	1.1%	6.0%	Hispanic origin (of any race)	0.7%	1.1%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

E. Education

Figure II-9 summarizes several common measures of public school performance for the 1998 to 2000 school years. Across the state, the dropout rate has hovered between 6.4% and 6.5%. In all three county high schools, the dropout rate was lower than the state's. The rate did increase dramatically between the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years, but remained relatively stable between the following two school years. The graduation rate was a second benchmark established by the CR Future Vision (see Introduction).

The percent of graduates entering Georgia Public Colleges was also higher than the state overall at all three high schools. Over the time frame included in the table, two high schools, Heritage and Salem, show an increasing trend in this rate, while Rockdale County High School shows a more significant decline.

The third measure of high school performance included here is average SAT scores. Rockdale County High School's scores remain slightly lower than the state average. The other two high schools have substantially better SAT scores; both are about 30 points higher than the state average.

Figure II-9: Public School System Performance

	Dropout Rate (9-12)			SAT Scores (highest average)			% of graduates entering Georgia Public Colleges		
	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
Heritage High School	0.6%	2.4%	2.5%	1039	1040	1026	42.6%	52.9%	44.7%
Salem High School	0.9%	4.0%	3.1%	1036	1022	1020	52.1%	55.9%	52.6%
Rockdale County High School	1.1%	5.2%	5.1%	967	985	960	46.4%	44.1%	38.5%
State of Georgia	6.5%	6.5%	6.4%	980	984	991	37.5%	37.3%	36.1%

Source: Georgia Department of Education

Figure II-10 summarizes educational attainment for Rockdale and surrounding counties in 2000. 82% of Rockdale County residents have a high school diploma or higher and 23% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Compared with its neighbors, the county has average educational attainment rates with equal numbers of counties having higher and lower rates. Compared with the state, more Rockdale residents are high school graduates, but the rate having earned at least a bachelor's degree is 1.1% lower than the state's. (The Community Facilities Element addresses educational facilities and future needs. The Economic Development Element addresses workforce training and higher educational needs)

Figure II-10: Educational Attainment, 2000

	Rockdale	DeKalb	Gwinnett	Henry	Newton	Walton	Georgia
Persons 25 years and over	44,794	429,981	372,628	75,501	39,144	38,527	5,185,965
Less than 9th grade	2,755	24,582	16,996	3,069	2,988	3,193	393,197
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5,125	39,978	30,376	8,838	6,912	7,021	718,152
High school graduate	13,152	87,359	81,979	25,901	13,601	13,725	1,486,006
Some college, no degree	10,735	96,268	89,224	17,907	8,341	7,945	1,058,692
Associate degree	2,566	26,005	27,146	5,026	1,610	1,619	269,740
Bachelor's degree	7,102	97,769	89,735	10,215	3,715	3,349	829,873
Graduate or professional degree	3,359	58,320	37,172	4,545	1,977	1,585	430,305
Percent high school graduate or higher	82%	85%	87%	84%	75%	74%	79%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	23%	36%	34%	20%	15%	13%	24%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

F. Income

Figure II-11 and **Figure II-12** compare average household and per capita income in Rockdale County to Georgia. Average household income in Rockdale County is higher than Georgia as a whole. In 2000 Rockdale County's average household income was 28% higher than Georgia's and 34% higher in 1990. By that measure, average household income declined slightly in relation to the state. In 1992 dollars, Rockdale County's average household income increased by \$9,280 between 1990 and 2000 compared with an \$8,899 increase for Georgia.

In 2000, per capita income for Rockdale County fell behind that of the state for the first time in three decades. This is due in part to a larger average household size in Rockdale County compared to the

Figure II-11: Average Household Income (1992 dollars)

	1980	1990	2000
Rockdale	\$20,845	\$44,508	\$53,788
Georgia	\$15,033	\$33,259	\$42,158

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002, U.S. Bureau of the Census

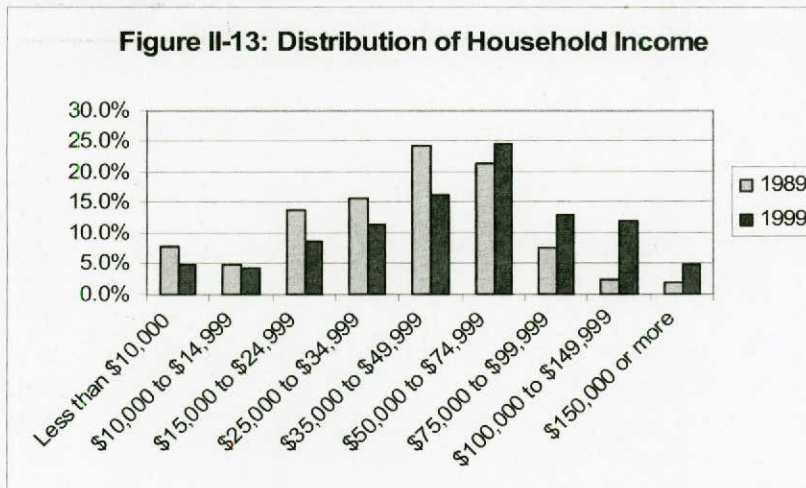
Figure II-12: Per Capita Income (1992 dollars)

	1980	1990	2000
Rockdale	\$17,628	\$21,504	\$24,613
Georgia	\$15,353	\$20,715	\$25,433

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

state, but is also the result of a weakening in Rockdale County income levels. This issue is addressed in greater detail in the Economic Development Element. The CR Future Vision effort (see Introduction) established per capita income as one of three "Key Benchmarks." The report cites the fact that the county's per capita income, when compared to the MSA, declined by 0.75% per year between 1985 and 1997. CR Future established the objective of closing the income disparity at a rate of 0.25% per year.

Figure II-13 compares the distribution of household incomes between 1989 and 1999 within the county. While the values are not adjusted for inflation, there is an across-the-board shift upward in household income. The income brackets above \$75,000 showed the highest levels of increase.



3. Projected Trends

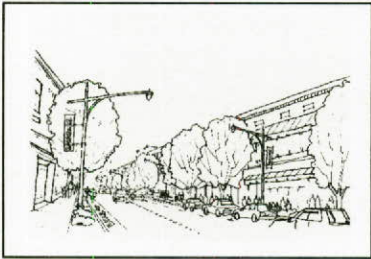
A. Population

Internal as well as external forces may influence the future population of an area. The development that takes place in another city or county can occasionally have a profound impact on an

the three-year planning process. Each of the subcommittees provided valuable insight into the issues facing the county. Specific recommendations were developed to be included in the Plan. Below is a list of the six subcommittees and a representation of some of the recommendations that each made.

Population and Housing

- Manage population growth so that its negative impacts are minimized.
- Protect the county against small-lot, low-quality subdivisions by increasing quality and amenity requirements as minimum lot sizes decrease.
- Incorporate life-cycle housing at the neighborhood level.
- Allow mixed-use developments in certain locations.



Transportation

- Update county roadway standards to match ITE standards and incorporate street trees and sidewalks into standards where appropriate.
- Promote nodal development over linear/strip development.
- Encourage pedestrian friendly corridors.

Stonecrest and Neighboring Counties

- Protect Honey Creek in the Stonecrest area.

Economic Base and Revitalization

- Revise ordinances to allow for overlay zoning districts in targeted areas in the county.
- Encourage more high tech industries in the county.
- Promote an appropriate balance between residential and commercial/industrial tax base.
- Develop bonus and incentive plans to encourage “quality” buildings.

Facilities (schools, jail, police, fire protection, institutional)

- Cluster public facilities whenever possible.
- Join with the City of Conyers on provision of public facilities. A current example is linking the Horse Park (city owned) with Randy Poynter Lake (county owned) via a greenway along Big Haynes Creek.
- Identify funding for future fire stations.
- Expand and build new facilities for the youth and elderly.

Infrastructure (water, sewer, utilities)

- Provide incentives to stimulate natural treatment of wastewater instead of mechanical treatment.
- Future development should capture stormwater and greywater for non-potable uses.
- Establish planning and design standards that protect infrastructure and promote desirable growth.
- Promote integrating walking paths into existing sites.

In addition to the six committees and the official public meetings, the county initiated two small area studies for rapidly changing areas of the county: the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor and the Stonecrest area. Each small area study included an intense two-daylong design workshop, a series of one-on-one interviews, and numerous follow-up meetings.

The design workshop for the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor was held on January 24 and 25, 2003 and was attended by approximately 80 residents, developers and stakeholders (not including county staff or consultants). The design workshop in the Stonecrest area investigated that portion of Rockdale County that will likely be influenced by the new Stonecrest Mall. The Stonecrest workshop was held on March 14 and 15, 2003 and was attended by 113 stakeholders (again, not including county staff or consultants). Both workshops built consensus on ways to manage the rapidly changing area and produced a detailed report, including a conceptual land use plan, policy recommendations and an implementation strategy. While both of the small area studies were locally specific, many ideas and goals developed during the workshops were applied to similar areas in the county throughout this Comprehensive Plan.



6. Vision

In the summer of 2000, the City of Conyers and Rockdale County jointly agreed on a long-range (20 year) vision. This vision, CR Future, addressed core values, established benchmarks by which progress toward achieving the vision can be measured, and addressed several local priority issues.

The vision focuses on eight core values, which together are intended to guide the daily decision-making process. These core values are: family values, excellence, integrity, citizenship, faith in God, innovation, responsibility and ethics.

The CR Future vision includes the following tenets:

- Conyers-Rockdale County will have equal opportunity preparation for life through use of qualified, well-compensated educational professionals, supported by

parents, the community, government and the business community.

- Conyers-Rockdale County will have a “sense of community” and retain the traditional values of “small town” America.
- Conyers-Rockdale County will grow and prosper while maintaining our “small town” feel.
- Conyers-Rockdale County will have infrastructure that supports and fosters our community Strategic plan.
- Conyers-Rockdale County governments will be representative, competent, responsive and working in unison for the common good of the citizens.
- Conyers-Rockdale County will be a community with enlightened, engaged and enduring private sector leadership, with strong influence in the local community, the region and the state.

As part of the visioning process, mid-term (five to ten year) strategies and priorities were established and short-term (one to five year) strategy benchmarks and action steps were formulated.

II. Population

1. Introduction

The Population Element and the data gathered within it create a basis upon which a community can evaluate and determine the structure of all the other planning elements. Historic population data illustrates a community's trends in age characteristics, sex and race distributions, and education attainment levels. Analysis of these numbers allows a community to see the changes that have occurred over time. Historic population trends provide the framework for making sound policy decisions in many of the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The population projections, beginning on page II-8, provide reasonable estimates of future population, household size, and age distribution within Rockdale County for the next twenty years. This Element takes into account recent projections produced by the North Georgia Metropolitan Water Planning District, the Atlanta Regional Commission, the United States Bureau of the Census, and those used by Rockdale County in the production of their Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Both the historic and projected population figures are used to evaluate whether the community's facilities and services are adequate and what types of improvements are needed. Housing stock and employment opportunities are also examined, comparing supply and demand and jobs-housing balance. This data also facilitates one of the primary functions of the planning process: to help communities set goals and policies and establish programs needed to ensure a high quality of life for existing and future residents. Recommendations based on this Element can be found in the Housing, Community Facilities, and Transportation Elements.

2. Current and Historic Trends

A. Population

Despite being the second smallest county in Georgia in terms of land area, Rockdale County ranks 27th in terms of total population. Of the county's 70,111 year-2000 residents, 85% lived in the unincorporated county and 15% lived within the City of Conyers. Between 1970 and 2000, Rockdale County added 52,000 new residents, with roughly 46,000 (89%) moving to the unincorporated county and 6,000 (11%) locating within the city (**Figures II-1 and II-2**).

area's future population. Examples of internal forces include an area's public education system, infrastructure capabilities, housing opportunities and economic development trends. External forces include the new Stonecrest Mall, development trends in Newton, DeKalb and other adjacent counties and state or federal transportation improvements.

Attempting to predict demographic changes with accuracy is always difficult. Utilizing previous and current demographic trends is beneficial in projecting future population totals. The integration of internal and external factors is also a component of the population projection. **Figure II-14** includes a range of projections. These four projections are illustrated in **Figure II-15**. The four projections provide a possible 2020 population ranging from 105,400 to 119,700, a difference of 14,300.

Figure II-14: Population Projections

	Rockdale County				
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Low (regression)	70,111	79,400	88,100	96,700	105,400
Medium-Low (ARC)	70,111	80,000	90,000	97,800	109,200
Medium-High (W&P)	70,111	81,000	91,500	102,100	113,000
High (MNGWPD)	70,111	79,700	89,300	104,500	119,700
	Unincorporated Rockdale County				
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Low	59,422	68,700	74,400	81,800	89,000
Medium-Low	59,422	69,300	76,300	82,900	92,800
Medium-High	59,422	70,300	77,800	87,200	96,600
High	59,422	69,000	75,600	89,600	103,300
	City of Conyers				
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
ARC	10,689	10,700	13,700	14,900	16,400

Source: Jordan, Jones and Goulding; Atlanta Regional Commission; Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002; Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

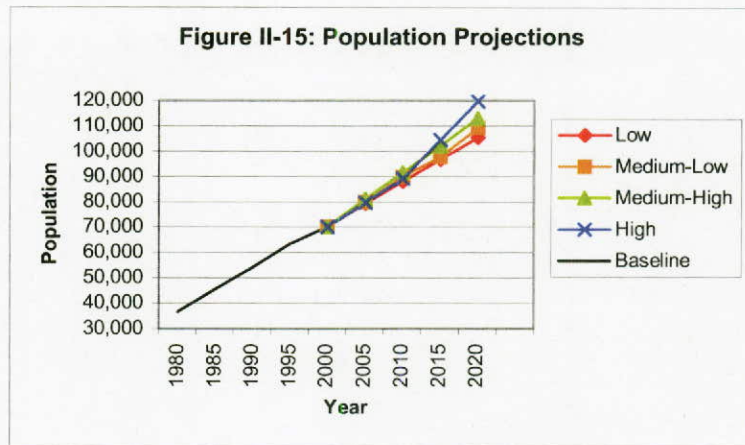
The high projection comes from the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. The District predicts the county's population will reach 119,700 by 2020, with the unincorporated county breaking 100,000. This calls for an average annual growth rate of 3.5%.

The medium-high projection comes from Woods and Poole Economics, 2002. Woods and Poole uses econometric projections, meaning they begin with economic trends such as job growth and then interpolate population projections. Woods and Poole forecasts a 2020 population for the county of 113,000.

The medium-low projection comes from the Atlanta Regional Commission, 2001. The ARC predicts Rockdale County will have a 2020 population of 109,200.

The low projection is a simple linear regression of 1970 to 2000 population data. This method predicts a 2020 population of 105,400 and an average annual growth rate of 2.5%.

Figure II-14 also includes the population projection for the City of Conyers. This projection also comes from the ARC, 2001. They assume that 15% of Rockdale County's population will live in the city, based on the ARC countywide forecast. The unincorporated projections were calculated by subtracting the city projection from the four county projections.



B. Households

The forecasts for household size and total households are included in **Figure II-16** below. Household size forecasts were taken directly from Woods and Poole Economics, 2002. The housing unit projections are based on the medium-high projection in **Figure II-14**. Total households are broken down between the City of Conyers and the unincorporated county. As shown, the vast majority of the county's growth is anticipated to occur within the unincorporated county. Of the 14,048 additional households, 12,258 will be located in the unincorporated county (87%) and 1,790 will be located in the City of Conyers (13%).

Figure II-16: Housing Units and Household Size Projections

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
<i>Housing Units</i>					
Rockdale County	24,052	27,600	31,400	34,300	38,100
Unincorporated	20,142	23,900	26,700	29,100	32,400
Conyers	3,910	3,700	4,800	5,200	5,700
<i>Average Household Size</i>					
Rockdale County	2.87	2.83	2.80	2.79	2.80

Source: Jordan, Jones and Goulding; Atlanta Regional Commission; Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

C. Age

Figure II-17 on the following page includes the projected total number of residents in each age group in the coming two decades. **Figure II-18** indicates the share of the total population that each group comprises. Between now and 2020, several significant changes in age demographics are anticipated. The largest increase is in the over 60 population. In 2000, they comprised 13% of the total population. By 2020, their share of the total population is projected to nearly double to 25%.

Two groups are expected to decline in share during the same period. The 10 to 24 year old group encompassed 22% of county residents and is expected to decline to 18% by 2020. More significantly, the 35 to 54 year old age group is expected to decline from its year 2000 share of 33% to a 2020 share of just 23%, a full one-third reduction.

These dramatic changes in age demographics have significant implications on the types and extent of different community facilities the county offers including senior centers, hospitals and schools. They will also have a profound effect on the demand for different housing types within the county. The Housing, Community Facilities and Transportation Elements address the future needs of Rockdale County's senior community in greater detail.

**Figure II-17: Projected Age Distribution, Count
Rockdale County**

Age	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total	70,111	80,998	91,455	102,100	112,928
0 to 4	4,481	5,213	5,874	6,514	7,224
5 to 9	5,342	5,097	5,841	6,539	7,224
10 to 14	5,940	6,004	5,652	6,409	7,160
15 to 19	5,553	6,718	6,602	6,207	6,968
20 to 24	4,134	5,796	6,810	6,645	6,276
25 to 29	4,217	4,739	6,425	7,469	7,255
30 to 34	4,891	4,646	5,145	6,941	8,045
35 to 39	6,118	5,333	4,985	5,501	7,381
40 to 44	6,179	6,661	5,704	5,311	5,824
45 to 49	5,618	7,020	7,400	6,291	5,834
50 to 54	5,052	6,295	7,713	8,076	6,846
55 to 59	3,609	5,507	6,698	8,123	8,459
60 to 64	2,527	3,706	5,592	6,811	8,249
65 to 69	2,059	2,667	3,842	5,801	7,051
70 to 74	1,656	2,068	2,630	3,785	5,709
75 to 79	1,296	1,633	2,024	2,558	3,688
80 to 84	817	1,019	1,269	1,569	1,993
85 & Over	623	876	1,249	1,550	1,742

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

**Figure II-18: Projected Age Distribution Percent
Rockdale County**

Age	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
0 to 4	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%
5 to 9	7.6%	6.3%	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%
10 to 14	8.5%	7.4%	6.2%	6.3%	6.3%
15 to 19	7.9%	8.3%	7.2%	6.1%	6.2%
20 to 24	5.9%	7.2%	7.4%	6.5%	5.6%
25 to 29	6.0%	5.9%	7.0%	7.3%	6.4%
30 to 34	7.0%	5.7%	5.6%	6.8%	7.1%
35 to 39	8.7%	6.6%	5.5%	5.4%	6.5%
40 to 44	8.8%	8.2%	6.2%	5.2%	5.2%
45 to 49	8.0%	8.7%	8.1%	6.2%	5.2%
50 to 54	7.2%	7.8%	8.4%	7.9%	6.1%
55 to 59	5.1%	6.8%	7.3%	8.0%	7.5%
60 to 64	3.6%	4.6%	6.1%	6.7%	7.3%
65 to 69	2.9%	3.3%	4.2%	5.7%	6.2%
70 to 74	2.4%	2.6%	2.9%	3.7%	5.1%
75 to 79	1.8%	2.0%	2.2%	2.5%	3.3%
80 to 84	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.8%
85 & Over	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

4. Summary of Key Findings

- In July 2002, the US Census Bureau estimated the total population of Rockdale County to be 73,558.
- The population of Rockdale County is expected to reach between 119,700 and 105,400 by 2020, implying an average annual growth rate between 3.4 and 2.4%. The unincorporated county is assuming the vast majority of the county's new housing units, about 80%. Meeting the needs of this growing population without eroding existing resident's quality of life is one of the central goals of this plan.
- There are significant differences in household types found within Conyers and the county as a whole. There was nearly half the rate of married families with children in Conyers than the county as a whole (18% versus 30%). There were substantially more single female householders with children at home in the city than the county (21% versus 12%). And there was a much higher incidence of householders living alone (26% city compared with 17% county).
- Between 1990 and 2000, Rockdale County grew by 30%. During the same decade, the 45 to 54 age bracket grew by 65%, and the 55 and older bracket grew by nearly 50%. This, the baby boomer generation, is by far the fastest growing segment of the population. Population forecasts predict the over 60 population will increase from its present share of 13% to 25% by 2020. Meeting the needs of this aging demographic in terms of housing, social and recreational services, and medical care is critical and is another of the key themes throughout this plan.
- Rockdale County diversified more during the 1990s than during any decade in its history. The percent of the population that is African American increased from 8 to 18%. The Hispanic population grew from 1 to 6%, and the Asian American and "other races" categories both more than doubled to a combined 4.5%. This raises the bar for the county's delivery of services; examples include multicultural education in the schools and the provision of services in languages other than English.
- The three Rockdale County High Schools outperform the state as a whole in most performance measures. The trends on most measures, however, show mixed results, with

schools improving on some indicators and declining on others.

- Income levels are declining in relation to Georgia as a whole and the Atlanta MSA. Arresting this decline is a key priority of the Conyers-Rockdale Chamber of Commerce.

III. Economic Development

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to identify local economic development trends, opportunities and resources, to determine economic needs and goals, and to develop a strategy for the economic well being of Rockdale County. This chapter examines the local economic base, labor force, economic programs, tools and resources available to promote economic development. This information is analyzed to determine the community's strengths and weaknesses. The economic assessment will determine the adequacy of local economic programs and the suitability of existing employment for the local labor force. The analysis identifies types of businesses that should develop in the community to strengthen the local economy. Finally, a strategy of goals and policies is presented to help direct the future economic development of the community.

It should be noted that much of the economic data in this Element is only available at the county level. While 85% of the county's residents live in the unincorporated county, a disproportionate number of county jobs are located within Conyers. Because the details of which jobs are located within the unincorporated county and which are in Conyers is not available, this assessment is almost entirely at the county level.



2. Economic Inventory

A. Sector Employment

Sector employment projections are general guides to future economic activity based on current industry and employment information. There are several internal and external factors that can influence the various employment sectors in the next 20 years, including globalization, automation, demographic influences and competitive pressures. The economic outlook for Rockdale County and Georgia will partially reflect the same economic and employment trends that influence the nation and world as technology reduces the communication/economic barriers of global distance.

Figure III-1 lists the ten largest employers in Rockdale County in 2002. The county's public schools are the largest employer. Lithonia Lighting, with 1,500 employees is the largest private-sector employer. They are one of five firms within the manufacturing sector on the top ten list. AT&T is the third largest employer with 1,300 employees and the only firm in the transportation, communications, and utilities (TCU) sector. The

III. Economic Development (continued ...)

D. Income by Type

Figures III-14 through III-17 present income data for Rockdale County and the State of Georgia. The first two tables include actual dollars of income by income type. The second pair of tables compiles the relative percentages each source of income contributes to total income, while the third pair reveals five-year growth rates by income source. For the sake of comparisons, all dollar values in Figures III-14 through III-17 are adjusted for inflation to 1996 dollar value.

In 2000 Rockdale County residents earned 1.7 billion 1996 dollars in total income. Of this sum 56% came from wages and salaries, 16% from dividends, rents and interest, and 10% from transfer payments. The state, by comparison, had 61% coming from wages and salaries, 17% from dividends, rents and interest, and 11% from transfer payments.

Transfer payments include Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the food stamp program, Social Security, as well as Medicare and Medicaid. This segment of Rockdale County income grew from 7.3 to 9.6% between 1980 and 2000, a 31% increase. This underscores, in part, the finding of the Population Element that the over 65 age bracket is increasingly taking up residence and/or aging in place within Rockdale County.

The residence-adjusted income is an important category that reveals the percentage of income earned outside the county by county residents. Figure III-16 shows that in 1985, Rockdale County residents earned 30% of their income from other counties, which decreased to a 2000 level of 11%. Woods and Poole predicts little change to this rate over the next two decades. This implies that despite the projected increase

Figure III-14: Income by Type in Rockdale County

Type of Income	Year				
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Personal Income (millions, 1996 \$)	\$650	\$894	\$1,175	\$1,435	\$1,736
Wages and Salaries	\$260	\$378	\$534	\$737	\$970
Other Labor Income	\$31	\$46	\$70	\$97	\$101
Proprietors Income	\$36	\$46	\$60	\$72	\$111
Dividends, Interest and Rent	\$67	\$119	\$178	\$207	\$276
Transfer Payments to Persons	\$48	\$63	\$89	\$137	\$166
Less Social Insurance Contributions	\$16	\$27	\$40	\$58	\$75
Residence Adjustment	\$224	\$269	\$284	\$243	\$187

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-15: Income by Type in Georgia

Type of Income	Year			
	1985	1990	1995	2000
Personal Income (millions, 1996 \$)	\$110,382	\$134,782	\$163,230	\$209,309
Wages and Salaries	\$68,599	\$81,356	\$96,423	\$128,049
Other Labor Income	\$9,626	\$11,702	\$14,092	\$14,308
Proprietors Income	\$7,695	\$9,584	\$12,999	\$18,105
Dividends, Interest and Rent	\$17,428	\$23,367	\$26,625	\$35,169
Transfer Payments to Persons	\$11,841	\$14,750	\$20,607	\$23,301
Less Social Insurance Contributions	\$4,528	\$5,840	\$7,270	\$9,398
Residence Adjustment	(\$280)	(\$137)	(\$245)	(\$225)

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

in population and employment, the share of residents who will work in other counties will remain stable.

Figure III-16: Share of Income by Type in Rockdale County

Type of Income	Year				
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Personal Income	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Wages and Salaries	40.1%	42.3%	45.4%	51.3%	55.9%
Other Labor Income	4.7%	5.1%	6.0%	6.7%	5.8%
Proprietors Income	5.5%	5.2%	5.1%	5.0%	6.4%
Dividends, Interest and Rent	10.3%	13.3%	15.2%	14.5%	15.9%
Transfer Payments to Persons	7.3%	7.0%	7.6%	9.6%	9.6%
Less Social Insurance Contributions	-	-	-	-	-
Residence Adjustment	34.4%	30.0%	24.1%	17.0%	10.8%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-17: Share of Income by Type in Georgia

Type of Income	Year			
	1985	1990	1995	2000
Personal Income	100%	100%	100%	100%
Wages and Salaries	62.1%	60.4%	59.1%	61.2%
Other Labor Income	8.7%	8.7%	8.6%	6.8%
Proprietors Income	7.0%	7.1%	8.0%	8.7%
Dividends, Interest and Rent	15.8%	17.3%	16.3%	16.8%
Transfer Payments to Persons	10.7%	10.9%	12.6%	11.1%
Less Social Insurance Contributions	-	-	-	-
Residence Adjustment	-0.3%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-0.1%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

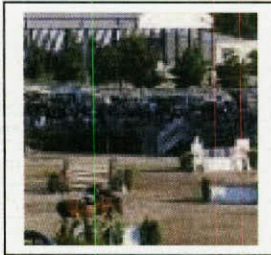
E. Recent Economic Activities

Within the county, Rockdale Hospital and Health System is currently more than doubling their emergency department. The new 21,000 square foot facility will have 21 rooms and is expected to open in 2004.

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission, Rockdale County has permitted three large scale projects since 1994. The Horse Park and equestrian village were permitted in advance of the Olympiad. Also, the large Torrey Homes subdivision in the Salem Road (SR 162) corridor was permitted in the late 1990s.

F. Special or Unique Economic Activities

The Georgia International Horse Park, owned and operated by the City of Conyers, is both special and unique to Rockdale County.



The venue hosted the 1996 Olympic equestrian events as well as the first ever mountain bike competition and the final two events of the modern pentathlon. Since the Olympiad, the venue hosts regular tourism and trade events. The 1,400-acre park includes a stadium/ amphitheater, a covered arena, a stable complex, pavilions, banquet facilities, conference rooms, a golf course, and resort hotel. There is also a nature preserve and hiking and horse trails. To further leverage this valuable asset, plans are underway to build a new conference center and new satellite campus of Georgia Perimeter College associated with the Horse Park.



3. Labor Force

A. Employment by Occupation

Figure III-18 shows the 1990 and 2000 percentages of residents from Rockdale County, Georgia and the United States employed in various occupations classifications. Overall, in 2000, Rockdale County's distribution of occupations closely resembles that of Georgia and the nation. The only remarkable difference was in the "precision production" category where the county led the state and nation by three and five percentage points respectively. In 2000, 73% of the employed residents of the county worked in "white collar" occupations; 27% held "blue collar" jobs.

B. Employment Status Characteristics

According to **Figure III-19**, which compares Rockdale County to Georgia and the nation in terms of workforce participation rates, Rockdale County experienced a dramatic decline in both male and female workforce participation. Nationally, female participation increased during the same period and male participation remained constant. These declines in overall participation reflect an aging population with longer life spans and are facilitated by the retiring Baby Boomer generation, which appears to be disproportionately choosing to locate in Rockdale County (see Population Element).

Figure III-18: Distribution of Occupations by Type

Type of Occupation	2000		
	Rockdale County	Georgia	United States
Employed persons 16 years and over	100%	100%	100%
Managerial and professional specialty occupations	34%	33%	34%
Technical, sales, and administrative support occupations	26%	27%	27%
Service occupations	12%	13%	15%
Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	0.1%	0.6%	0.7%
Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	14%	11%	9%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	15%	16%	15%

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census
 Note: Because of changes in the way occupation data is reported, 1990 data cannot be compared to 2000 data.

Figure III-19: Workforce Participation

For all residents over 16 years	1990			2000		
	Rockdale County	Georgia	United States	Rockdale County	Georgia	United States
Participation in labor force	73.2%	67.9%	65.3%	66.2%	66.1%	66.0%
Civilian labor force	99.9%	97.8%	98.6%	99.7%	98.4%	99.5%
Military labor force	0.1%	2.2%	1.4%	0.3%	1.6%	0.5%
Male participation rate	81.1%	76.6%	74.4%	73.2%	73.1%	73.7%
Female participation rate	65.7%	59.9%	56.8%	59.3%	59.4%	58.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

C. Employment Rates

For the past ten years, the unemployment rate in Rockdale County has hovered between 1.0 and 1.5% lower than the state rate (Figure III-20). Both the state and Rockdale County's unemployment rates declined throughout the 1990s. Since 2000, the unemployment rate has begun to climb slowly. Figure III-21 compares the rates in Rockdale County to its five neighboring

counties. The unemployment rate in Rockdale County has remained consistently

in the middle of the pack, ranking third out of the six counties in eight of the past ten years. During most years, the unemployment rates in Gwinnett and Henry Counties were lower than those in Rockdale, while Rockdale's rate was lower than DeKalb, Newton, and Walton Counties.

Figure III-21: Unemployment Rates

Area	Year										
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	
Rockdale	5.5%	4.4%	3.8%	3.4%	3.1%	3.2%	2.9%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	
DeKalb	6.6%	5.7%	5.4%	4.9%	4.4%	4.5%	4.1%	3.9%	3.6%	4.2%	
Gwinnett	5.3%	4.2%	3.7%	3.2%	2.8%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%	3.0%	
Henry	5.4%	4.1%	3.7%	3.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.3%	2.0%	2.1%	2.5%	
Newton	7.6%	5.9%	4.6%	4.4%	4.4%	4.7%	3.9%	3.4%	3.3%	3.5%	
Walton	7.7%	6.2%	4.3%	4.7%	4.1%	4.4%	3.2%	3.3%	3.0%	3.5%	
Georgia	7.0%	5.8%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	4.0%	
United States	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.8%	

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

D. Commuting Patterns

Figure III-20: Trends in Unemployment Rates

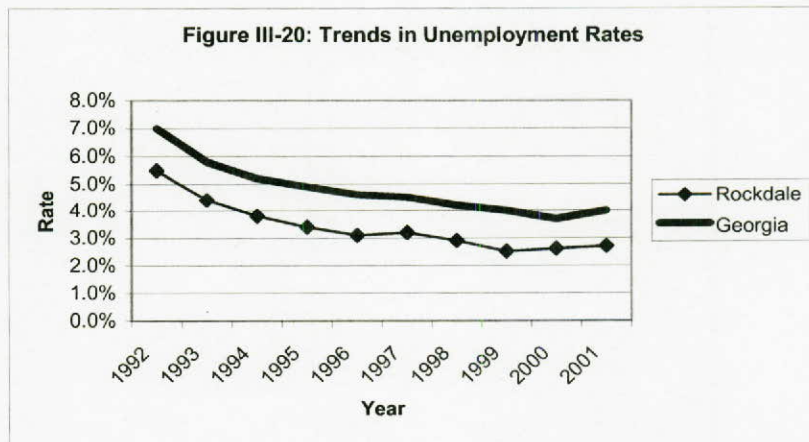


Figure III-22 presents place of work data for Rockdale County residents. The 1990s saw a substantial change in the work locations of Rockdale residents. In 1990, 60% of residents worked in another county. By 2000, that number dropped to 55%.

Figure III-23 breaks down trips to work by mode for residents of Rockdale County and the Atlanta MSA. The mode of choice in Rockdale County is unquestionably the automobile. With no public transit option and its expansive low density residential areas deterring walking and bicycle trips, over 96% of resident's trips to work are made in a car; this is 5% higher than the MSA.



Figure III-22: Place of Work

Place of Work	1990	2000
Workers 16 and over	100%	100%
Worked in state of residence	99%	99%
Worked in county of Residence	39%	44%
Worked outside county of residence	60%	55%
Worked outside state of residence	1%	1%

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census

Figure III-23: Mode to Work

Mode	Rockdale County		Atlanta MSA
	2000	%	2000%
Drive alone	26,254	79.7%	77.0%
Carpool	5,151	15.6%	13.6%
Public Transportation	203	0.6%	3.7%
Walked	147	0.4%	1.3%
Work at home	903	2.7%	3.5%

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census

4. Local Economic Development Resources

A. Economic Development Agencies

There are two principal economic development agencies in Rockdale County: the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Authority. The Chamber functions as a promotional agency for the county, serving existing businesses and courting prospective ones.

In 2000, the Chamber, in conjunction with the CR Future Task Force, published "CR Future-Creating Our Tomorrow" which was the result of a broad community visioning process. The CR Future Vision emphasizes an economic development focus on high paying jobs from the following sectors: technology, biotech, clean industry, regional medical facilities, business and professional consulting, computer/data processing, communications, and state and federal government agencies. These sectors, sometimes referred to as "industries of the mind," are mostly information and technology based, and require less space than traditional economic base jobs and place fewer demands on the county's limited infrastructure. (The Introduction to this Plan also discusses the CR Future visioning process.)

The Economic Development Authority is the county's financing conduit. It has the power to purchase land and resell it to prospective industries at a reduced cost. It can also negotiate tax and education packages for prospective employers.

Like CR Future, CR Pride is another Chamber of Commerce-related initiative. Still in its early stages, CR Pride is a beautification advocacy group, which hopes to spur aesthetic improvements throughout the county. Their "Interstate Gateway Initiative" seeks to beautify Highway 138 from Honey Creek to the Georgia International Horse Park via streetscaping and reconstruction landscaping.



Related to the CR Pride effort, Rockdale County recently received a one million dollar grant for the redesign of the Highway 138 bridge over the interstate while incorporating beautification elements within the corridor.

B. Economic Development Programs and Tools

The City of Conyers has an industrial park located east of Olde Town. The park can still accommodate some light industries, but is becoming increasingly full and there are no plans to expand or develop a new industrial park. The new focus on the

aforementioned “industries of the mind” lends itself to a technology park instead. Discussions for this facility have included co-locating it south of the horse park in conjunction with the prospective conference center and satellite campus of the Georgia Perimeter College.

C. Educational and Training Opportunities

Presently, there are numerous educational and training opportunities within the region for existing and prospective employers in Rockdale County. DeKalb Tech, Clayton State and Georgia Perimeter College are minutes away and cater to continuing education, evening students and new employee training. The region offers Georgia Tech, Georgia State, Emory and the University of Georgia as well.

Nevertheless, during the 2000 CR-Future visioning session, sponsored by the Conyers-Rockdale Chamber of Commerce, residents identified furthering workforce development as a key strategy for fulfilling their vision of the county. The CR Future vision document includes specific goals to create a “comprehensive Higher Education Center” within the county. At this time Georgia Perimeter College is considering a new satellite campus in eastern Rockdale County. The County does have the Rockdale Center for Higher Learning located on West Avenue.

5. Summary of Key Findings

- Rockdale County’s most important base sectors are Construction and Manufacturing.
- Construction employs about 5,000 people and comprises 11% of total employment. Its share of total employment has remained fairly constant over the past ten years.
- For decades, the Manufacturing sector supported the most employees. In 1991, it was surpassed by the Service sector. Roughly 63% of all county employees work within the three largest sectors: Service, Manufacturing and Retail Trade.
- These same three sectors yield 56% of the county’s earnings. The highest earnings per employee can be found in the TCU, Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade sectors.
- The Georgia International Horse Park is the county’s most important special or unique economic activity. The 1,400 acre park attracts thousands of visitors to an array of activities and events.
- After seven years of steady decline, Rockdale County’s unemployment rate increased to 2.7% over the last two

years. The rate remains substantially lower than the state's or the nation's, and is comparable to that of neighboring counties.

- Of those workers not working at home, 99% of them get to work via a car. One percent walk or take transit.
- Local economic development agencies include the Rockdale-Conyers Chamber of Commerce and the local Economic Development Authority.
- There is a broad range of job training opportunities within an easy drive of Rockdale County. The Rockdale Center for Higher Learning is the only institution of higher learning within the county.

6. Statement of Goals

Goal 1: Attract desirable businesses and industries to Rockdale County

Goal 2: Continue to attract the Baby Boomer generation.

Goal 3: Continue to attract middle and upper income families with children.

Goal 4: Make Rockdale County even more attractive to prospective residents.

Goal 5: Improve higher education within Rockdale County.

Goal 6: Promote infill and redevelopment

Goal 7: Improve the aesthetics of Rockdale County

7. Economic Development Implementation Strategy

Following is a list of economic development strategies tailored to achieve each of the identified goals. Many of the strategies identified in this plan reflect on-going efforts by the local government and economic development agencies. Some of these strategies also represent long-term strategies that should be considered as opportunity for action arises. On-going and long-range efforts are labeled below.

Goal 1: Attract desirable businesses and industries to Rockdale County

- Create a competitive incentive, tax and regulatory environment. (On-going)

- Focus recruitment efforts on businesses in the following fields and sectors: technology, biotechnology, clean industry, medical facilities, business and professional consulting, computer/data processing, communications, and state and federal agencies. (On-going)
- Expand industrial park westward as a technology park emphasizing Office, Distribution, and Technology (see also the Land Use Element). (Long-term)
- Leverage the regional retail center at Stonecrest Mall to attract class A office space to Iris Drive (SR 12) just inside the county line from DeKalb. (On-going)
- Support entrepreneurs and the development of small businesses through creative availability of financing, mentorships, business planning and technical assistance, small business incubators, creative incentives, and entrepreneur working groups. (On-going)

Goal 2: Continue to attract the Baby Boomer generation.

- Maintain a high quality of life and superior medical and senior services within the County. (On-going)
- Work with Rockdale Hospital and Health System to make Conyers a regional medical center. (On-going)

Goal 3: Continue to attract middle and upper income families with children.

- Maintain a high performing school system, excellent quality of life, convenient retail opportunities, and access to parks and open space. (On-going)

Goal 4: Make Rockdale County even more attractive to prospective residents.

- Improve the quality of life within the county by enlarging the parks system, creating a network of greenways and trails, and improving health care, senior services, and education. (On-going)

Goal 5: Improve higher education within Rockdale County.

- Work with Perimeter College of Georgia to develop a satellite campus near the Georgia International Horse Park.
- Partner with the new campus to offer job training as part of the incentive package to prospective businesses. (Long-range)

- Support existing and new job growth by providing job skills that will make Rockdale County competitive in the marketplace. (On-going)

Goal 6: Promote infill and redevelopment

- Targeting older and/or abandoned commercial and industrial areas, especially high visibility strip shopping centers. (On-going)
- Work to implement the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor, Stonecrest Mall Area and Blueprints small area study recommendations.

Goal 7: Improve the aesthetics of Rockdale County

- Beautify key gateways throughout the county.
- Enhance key commercial streets with street trees, landscaped medians, and wide sidewalks.
- Work with the City of Conyers to develop architectural and signage guidelines for the I-20 corridor.
- Increase landscaping on new and existing transportation infrastructure.

largest sector by total employment in the county is the service sector, yet the Rockdale Hospital is the only top ten employer representing the sector. Similarly, retail trade is the second largest sector with the ninth ranked Wal-Mart Supercenter the only retail employer on the top ten list.

Figure III-1: Top Ten Employers in Rockdale County

Rank	Employer	Employees	Sector	Description
1	Rockdale County Public Schools	1,945	Local government	Education
2	Lithonia Lighting	1,500	Manufacturing	Mfg. Lighting Fixtures
3	AT&T	1,300	TCU	Telecommunications
4	PRATT Industries	1,000	Manufacturing	Mfg. Corrugated Boxes
5	Rockdale Hospital	850	Service	Health Care System
6	Hill-Phoenix	800	Manufacturing	Mfg. Commercial Refrigeration Equipment
7	Rockdale County Government	650	Local government	Local Government
8	Sweetheart Cup Company, Inc.	525	Manufacturing	Mfg./Dist. Plastic Containers
9	Wal-Mart Supercenter	500	Retail Trade	Department Store
10	Bio-Lab, Inc.	400	Manufacturing	Dist. Pool chemicals

Source: Rockdale Conyers Chamber of Commerce, 2003

The next five tables summarize the key characteristics and anticipated changes in sectoral employment, both full- and part-time, within Rockdale County. **Figure III-2** lists the location quotients for Rockdale County in 2000. **Figures III-3** and **III-4** show the employment by sector for both Rockdale County and Georgia. **Figures III-5** and **III-6** show the share of employment by sector for the county and state. Throughout this Element, the forecasted numbers are from Woods and Poole Economics (W&P) unless otherwise specified.



Part of any economic base analysis, location quotients are measures of the relative specialization of a sector in an area. Location quotients take the share of local employment in a given sector and compare it to the state's share of employment in the same sector. (Location quotients can also be derived by comparing the local economy to the region or nation.) **Figure III-2** presents the 2000 location quotients for Rockdale County. Of the 13 sectors included in the table, the three with quotients greater than 1.2 are classified as "high," indicating a local specialization in that sector. The construction, manufacturing, and retail trade sectors are all locally specialized. Sectors with quotients between 0.8 and 1.2 are classified as "normal" and four sectors fall within this range. Six sectors have "low" location quotients, indicating the county's level of employment within these sectors falls well behind the state averages.

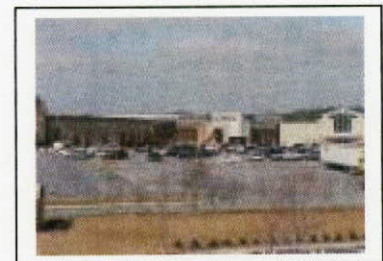
In 1991, service sector employment was the dominant sector for the first time in Rockdale County's history. For decades manufacturing held the largest proportion of jobs, but following national and state trends, the manufacturing sector's importance is declining. The number of service sector jobs increased by an astonishing 105% during the 1990s from 5,524 to 11,301. The service sector's share of total employment increased significantly as well from 21 to 27%. The growth of the health care system within the county was an important driver. Despite these gains, the location quotient for the county remains below average at 0.93. Woods and Poole predicts these trends will continue within the county over the next twenty years and the service sector's dominance will increase.

Figure III-2: Location Quotients - Rockdale County v. Georgia

	Location Quotient	Status
Farm Employment	0.21	Low
Agricultural Services, Other	0.69	Low
Mining	0.93	Normal
Construction	1.80	High
Manufacturing	1.29	High
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	1.05	Normal
Wholesale Trade	0.93	Normal
Retail Trade	1.21	High
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	0.64	Low
Services	0.93	Normal
Federal Civilian Government	0.16	Low
Federal Military Government	0.31	Low
State and Local Government	0.70	Low

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

The second largest sector by employment is retail trade. The third largest sector in 1990, retail trade, surpassed manufacturing in 1996. Both the service sector and retail growth signal a shift in the county to local provision of residential services that residents historically met in DeKalb, Fulton or Gwinnett Counties. Between 1990 and 2000, the county added 3,809 retail jobs and the sector's share of total employment increased by more than two full percentage points. Numerous large format retailers came to Rockdale County during the 1990s, including the Wal-Mart Supercenter listed on the top ten employers list. Most incoming retailers focus on neighborhood services such as groceries and home improvement, with a handful of regional retailers as well. In 2000, retail trade was one of three sectors where Rockdale County had a higher than normal concentration. Having a high share of retail jobs is good for Rockdale's tax base. Recently, the county began a revenue shift away from property taxes and towards a HOST (Homestead Option Sales Tax) tax, which increases dependence on sales tax revenue. The impact of the new Stonecrest Mall in DeKalb County remains to be seen. At the time this was written, local sales tax revenues were holding steady



Manufacturing is the third largest sector for employment within the county. The sector grew by 993 jobs during the 1990s, but its share of total employment declined by six percentage points. While the county still has a high location quotient, several factors indicate the manufacturing sector will decrease in importance in the coming decades. First of all, the economic downturn of 2000-2003 has been especially hard on this sector, as has been the high

value of the US dollar, which is just beginning to decline. Globalization, declining transportation costs and cheaper foreign labor are working against the sector as well. The industrial park within Conyers is filling up and there are no plans for a new one. Also, as the county builds out, land values escalate making land-intensive manufacturing less viable. According to the Chamber of Commerce, however, there is still space for some light industrial growth over the next twenty years. W&P predicts the county will add 1,238 new manufacturing jobs before 2020 and that the sector's share of total employment will continue to decline to 12%.

Construction is the fourth largest sector for employment and the last of the sectors comprising greater than 10% of total employment. According to the location quotients, this is also the county's strongest sector with a location quotient of 1.80. Construction employment grew by 50% between 1990 and 2000. Despite this, the share of employment slipped slightly to 10.9% in 2000.

The four largest sectors in Rockdale County comprised 74% of the county's employment in 2000 compared with 64% of the state as a whole for the same four sectors. By 2020, W&P projects the same four sectors will comprise 77% of total employment in Rockdale County compared with 66% statewide.

The nine remaining sectors comprise the remaining 26% of jobs in Rockdale County. State and local government, TCU, wholesale trade, and fire, insurance and real estate (FIRE) all have over 2,000 employees. These four make up 23% of the total employment leaving 3% of the total employment for the five lesser sectors. None of these nine sectors have strong location quotients.

Figure III-3: Employment by Sector in Rockdale County

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Employment	26,737	34,899	42,468	48,647	55,050	61,725	68,680
Farm Employment	163	137	125	126	124	121	117
Agricultural Services, Other	212	256	342	367	395	424	452
Mining	4	50	79	82	84	87	89
Construction	3,087	3,812	4,642	5,320	5,936	6,523	7,097
Manufacturing	6,001	6,572	6,994	7,403	7,735	8,007	8,232
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	1,064	2,845	2,646	3,254	3,865	4,467	5,033
Wholesale Trade	1,341	2,175	2,273	2,544	2,786	3,004	3,201
Retail Trade	4,722	6,421	8,531	10,266	12,137	14,106	16,165
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	1,410	1,519	2,005	2,096	2,190	2,280	2,367
Services	5,524	8,036	11,301	13,355	15,705	18,393	21,437
Federal Civilian Government	106	109	134	137	139	139	138
Federal Military Government	241	266	261	265	268	271	272
State and Local Government	2,862	2,701	3,135	3,432	3,686	3,903	4,080

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-4: Employment by Sector in Georgia

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Employment	3,690,607	4,229,292	4,859,969	5,235,631	5,623,647	6,029,159	6,451,324
Farm Employment	74,286	68,780	67,356	64,877	62,438	60,240	58,297
Agricultural Services, Other	31,487	44,659	54,829	60,079	65,359	70,538	75,465
Mining	10,590	9,408	9,522	9,645	9,813	10,047	10,324
Construction	212,342	236,159	296,572	316,876	333,895	349,870	365,279
Manufacturing	572,477	603,394	613,992	632,106	649,864	665,184	677,683
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	216,343	241,886	296,267	322,804	347,846	371,521	392,902
Wholesale Trade	228,213	242,508	276,326	300,312	322,310	344,504	367,022
Retail Trade	606,608	724,946	816,701	893,996	973,979	1,055,498	1,138,662
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	244,947	269,183	345,923	369,137	392,407	416,440	440,943
Services	876,597	1,125,359	1,391,461	1,532,287	1,692,630	1,873,376	2,074,955
Federal Civilian Government	102,981	98,336	92,262	91,889	91,883	92,089	92,439
Federal Military Government	90,745	94,733	93,789	95,235	96,403	97,224	97,709
State and Local Government	422,991	469,941	504,969	546,388	584,820	622,628	659,644

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-5: Share of Employment by Sector in Rockdale County

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Employment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farm Employment	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Mining	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Construction	11.5%	10.9%	10.9%	10.9%	10.8%	10.6%	10.3%
Manufacturing	22.4%	18.8%	16.5%	15.2%	14.1%	13.0%	12.0%
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	4.0%	8.2%	6.2%	6.7%	7.0%	7.2%	7.3%
Wholesale Trade	5.0%	6.2%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	4.9%	4.7%
Retail Trade	17.7%	18.4%	20.1%	21.1%	22.0%	22.9%	23.5%
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	5.3%	4.4%	4.7%	4.3%	4.0%	3.7%	3.4%
Services	20.7%	23.0%	26.6%	27.5%	28.5%	29.8%	31.2%
Federal Civilian Government	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Federal Military Government	0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
State and Local Government	10.7%	7.7%	7.4%	7.1%	6.7%	6.3%	5.9%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-6: Share of Employment by Sector in Georgia

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Employment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farm Employment	2.0%	1.6%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Mining	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Construction	5.8%	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	5.9%	5.8%	5.7%
Manufacturing	15.5%	14.3%	12.6%	12.1%	11.6%	11.0%	10.5%
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	5.9%	5.7%	6.1%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%	6.1%
Wholesale Trade	6.2%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%
Retail Trade	16.4%	17.1%	16.8%	17.1%	17.3%	17.5%	17.7%
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	6.6%	6.4%	7.1%	7.1%	7.0%	6.9%	6.8%
Services	23.8%	26.6%	28.6%	29.3%	30.1%	31.1%	32.2%
Federal Civilian Government	2.8%	2.3%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%
Federal Military Government	2.5%	2.2%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%
State and Local Government	11.5%	11.1%	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%	10.3%	10.2%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

B. Sector Earnings

Sector earnings are another important measure of economic health essential for analyzing an economy. The resulting information is an important tool in assessing which industries are financially important to the county. **Figures III-7 and III-8** present the earnings by sector for Rockdale County and then the State.

Figures III-9 and III-10 present the percent of earnings attributable to each sector. In addition, when a specific sector's earnings percentage is compared to its employment percentage, a sector's earnings strength or weakness can be assessed. This ratio of earnings to employment is presented in **Figures III-11 and III-12** for the county and state respectively. Earnings represent the total of wages, salaries and other earned income paid to persons working for the businesses or industries located in a given geographic area.

The three dominant sectors in terms of Rockdale County earnings are all from the top four in terms of employment: manufacturing, services, and construction. Retail trade is roughly tied for fourth with TCU. There is, however, substantial difference within the top four due to the fact that there are more earnings associated with manufacturing and construction jobs as compared with retail trade and services on a per job basis. Manufacturing, which ranks first in terms of earnings with 24%, ranks third in terms of employment with 17%. On the other hand, the service sector, which ranks first in terms of employment, ranks second in terms of earnings.

Figures III-11 and III-12 clarify this by compiling the ratio of earnings share to employment share. The sectors with ratios greater than one have a disproportionately larger share of earnings per job; in other words, within a given sector, the earnings per employee are higher than the state average earnings per employee. Alternatively, sectors with ratios less than one have below average earnings. In 2000, manufacturing and construction had ratios of 1.45 and 1.22 respectively, while services and retail trade had ratios of 0.75 and 0.58 respectively.

Compared with the state, Rockdale County has a higher proportion of its earnings tied up in the three largest sectors: 70% verses 52%. The sheer size of the state dilutes local specializations found at the county level. In other words, the county's economy is less diversified than the states. The state's three biggest sectors in terms of earnings are services (27%), manufacturing (15%), and state and local government (10.2%). The county shares the same top two sectors, services (20%) and manufacturing (24%), but local government ranks low in Rockdale County due to the absence of state employees.



Figure III-7: Total Earnings by Sector in Rockdale County
(All figures in millions, 1996 dollars)

Earnings by Sector	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Earnings	\$664.2	\$905.4	\$1,181.9	\$1,420.3	\$1,677.5	\$1,956.9	\$2,259.7
Farm Earnings	-\$0.2	-\$0.3	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7
Agricultural Services, Other	\$2.6	\$3.7	\$4.9	\$5.6	\$6.3	\$7.2	\$8.0
Mining	\$0.1	\$1.8	\$2.6	\$2.8	\$2.9	\$3.0	\$3.1
Construction	\$87.7	\$108.9	\$157.1	\$186.5	\$214.7	\$243.1	\$272.3
Manufacturing	\$200.4	\$243.7	\$282.5	\$320.2	\$356.9	\$392.8	\$428.1
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	\$53.9	\$141.3	\$139.8	\$182.9	\$230.2	\$280.7	\$332.6
Wholesale Trade	\$49.1	\$72.3	\$81.2	\$93.3	\$104.9	\$115.9	\$126.5
Retail Trade	\$66.9	\$87.3	\$138.1	\$170.4	\$206.4	\$245.8	\$288.6
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	\$24.6	\$25.7	\$35.7	\$40.7	\$46.0	\$51.5	\$57.1
Services	\$92.6	\$135.4	\$236.0	\$301.1	\$380.0	\$476.0	\$591.6
Federal Civilian Government	\$4.9	\$5.4	\$7.2	\$7.6	\$8.0	\$8.3	\$8.5
Federal Military Government	\$2.7	\$3.0	\$3.4	\$3.6	\$3.8	\$4.0	\$4.2
State and Local Government	\$79.0	\$77.2	\$92.6	\$105.0	\$116.7	\$128.0	\$138.4

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-8: Total Earnings by Sector in Georgia
(All figures in millions, 1996 dollars)

Earnings by Sector	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Earnings	\$102,642	\$123,514	\$160,462	\$180,866	\$202,919	\$227,019	\$253,253
Farm Earnings	\$1,391	\$1,734	\$1,566	\$1,683	\$1,803	\$1,933	\$2,076
Agricultural Services, Other	\$476	\$660	\$944	\$1,086	\$1,239	\$1,401	\$1,567
Mining	\$374	\$360	\$438	\$445	\$456	\$471	\$490
Construction	\$5,975	\$6,661	\$9,630	\$10,607	\$11,506	\$12,401	\$13,309
Manufacturing	\$17,974	\$20,801	\$23,849	\$26,144	\$28,511	\$30,855	\$33,129
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	\$8,981	\$11,644	\$15,868	\$18,060	\$20,305	\$22,610	\$24,909
Wholesale Trade	\$9,091	\$10,085	\$13,549	\$15,125	\$16,662	\$18,270	\$19,955
Retail Trade	\$9,414	\$11,217	\$14,426	\$16,215	\$18,126	\$20,145	\$22,277
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	\$6,601	\$8,476	\$12,154	\$13,863	\$15,688	\$17,666	\$19,784
Services	\$22,532	\$30,045	\$42,960	\$50,244	\$58,891	\$69,107	\$81,084
Federal Civilian Government	\$4,781	\$5,147	\$5,443	\$5,622	\$5,826	\$6,052	\$6,295
Federal Military Government	\$2,765	\$3,080	\$3,298	\$3,502	\$3,706	\$3,907	\$4,105
State and Local Government	\$12,288	\$13,603	\$16,338	\$18,271	\$20,199	\$22,201	\$24,272

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-9: Share of Earnings by Sector in Rockdale County

Earnings by Sector	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Earnings	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Farm Earnings	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Mining	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Construction	13.2%	12.0%	13.3%	13.1%	12.8%	12.4%	12.0%
Manufacturing	30.2%	26.9%	23.9%	22.5%	21.3%	20.1%	18.9%
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	8.1%	15.6%	11.8%	12.9%	13.7%	14.3%	14.7%
Wholesale Trade	7.4%	8.0%	6.9%	6.6%	6.3%	5.9%	5.6%
Retail Trade	10.1%	9.6%	11.7%	12.0%	12.3%	12.6%	12.8%
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	3.7%	2.8%	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%
Services	13.9%	15.0%	20.0%	21.2%	22.7%	24.3%	26.2%
Federal Civilian Government	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
Federal Military Government	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
State and Local Government	11.9%	8.5%	7.8%	7.4%	7.0%	6.5%	6.1%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-10: Share of Earnings by Sector in Georgia

Earnings by Sector	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Earnings	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Farm Earnings	1.4%	1.4%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Mining	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Construction	5.8%	5.4%	6.0%	5.9%	5.7%	5.5%	5.3%
Manufacturing	17.5%	16.8%	14.9%	14.5%	14.1%	13.6%	13.1%
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	8.8%	9.4%	9.9%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	9.8%
Wholesale Trade	8.9%	8.2%	8.4%	8.4%	8.2%	8.0%	7.9%
Retail Trade	9.2%	9.1%	9.0%	9.0%	8.9%	8.9%	8.8%
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	6.4%	6.9%	7.6%	7.7%	7.7%	7.8%	7.8%
Services	22.0%	24.3%	26.8%	27.8%	29.0%	30.4%	32.0%
Federal Civilian Government	4.7%	4.2%	3.4%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%
Federal Military Government	2.7%	2.5%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%
State and Local Government	12.0%	11.0%	10.2%	10.1%	10.0%	9.8%	9.6%

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-11: Earnings to Employment Ratio in Rockdale County

Earnings by Sector	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Earnings	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Farm Earnings	-0.05	-0.08	0.21	0.20	0.19	0.18	0.17
Agricultural Services, Other	0.50	0.56	0.52	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.54
Mining	0.91	1.38	1.20	1.16	1.13	1.09	1.07
Construction	1.14	1.10	1.22	1.20	1.19	1.18	1.17
Manufacturing	1.34	1.43	1.45	1.48	1.51	1.55	1.58
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	2.04	1.91	1.90	1.93	1.95	1.98	2.01
Wholesale Trade	1.47	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.24	1.22	1.20
Retail Trade	0.57	0.52	0.58	0.57	0.56	0.55	0.54
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	0.70	0.65	0.64	0.66	0.69	0.71	0.73
Services	0.67	0.65	0.75	0.77	0.79	0.82	0.84
Federal Civilian Government	1.84	1.92	1.93	1.91	1.89	1.88	1.88
Federal Military Government	0.44	0.43	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46
State and Local Government	1.11	1.10	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.03	1.03

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Figure III-12: Earnings to Employment Ratio in Georgia

Earnings by Sector	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Earnings	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Farm Earnings	0.67	0.86	0.70	0.75	0.80	0.85	0.91
Agricultural Services, Other	0.54	0.51	0.52	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.53
Mining	1.27	1.31	1.39	1.34	1.29	1.25	1.21
Construction	1.01	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.96	0.94	0.93
Manufacturing	1.13	1.18	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.23	1.25
Transport, Comm & Public Utilities	1.49	1.65	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.61
Wholesale Trade	1.43	1.42	1.49	1.46	1.43	1.41	1.39
Retail Trade	0.56	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.51	0.50
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	0.97	1.08	1.06	1.09	1.11	1.13	1.14
Services	0.92	0.91	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.98	1.00
Federal Civilian Government	1.67	1.79	1.79	1.77	1.76	1.75	1.73
Federal Military Government	1.10	1.11	1.06	1.06	1.07	1.07	1.07
State and Local Government	1.04	0.99	0.98	0.97	0.96	0.95	0.94

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Of the seven private industry sectors with more than 2,000 employees in Rockdale County, four have higher earnings to employment ratios than the state. These are construction, manufacturing, TCU, and retail trade. Services, wholesale trade, and FIRE have ratios below that of the state.

C. Average Weekly Wages

Figure III-13 compares the average weekly wages by industry for the state and the county. Generally, the sectors with the most employees are not among those with the highest wages. The service sector is the county’s largest employer but ranks tenth in terms of weekly wages. The retail trade sector, which ranks second in terms of employment, has the lowest sectoral wages. The third highest employer, manufacturing, ranks third in terms of wages. The highest wages can be found in the TCU and wholesale trade sectors. The top three sectors garner 28% of total employment.

Rockdale County wages are behind the state’s in eight of the sectors. In the TCU, manufacturing and agricultural services sectors, the county’s average wages exceed those of the state.

Figure III-13: Average Weekly Wages

Sector	Rockdale County			Georgia		
	1990	1995	2000	1990	1995	2000
Agricultural Services, Other	\$232	\$394	\$502	\$276	\$322	\$403
Mining	NA	\$787	NA	\$589	\$734	\$879
Construction	\$447	\$505	\$649	\$434	\$508	\$655
Manufacturing	\$482	\$604	\$771	\$449	\$555	\$720
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	\$774	\$862	\$1,034	\$603	\$737	\$934
Wholesale Trade	\$575	\$577	\$772	\$603	\$729	\$987
Retail Trade	\$218	\$244	\$319	\$236	\$275	\$350
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	\$462	\$486	\$637	\$543	\$693	\$967
Services	\$280	\$382	\$466	\$414	\$501	\$633
Federal	\$528	\$647	\$764	\$543	\$666	\$897
Local	\$381	\$445	\$491	\$386	\$440	\$544
State	\$440	\$480	\$508	\$450	\$493	\$578

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

IV. Natural and Historic Resources

1. Introduction

The Natural and Historic Resources Element assesses and inventories the natural and historic resources within Rockdale County, Georgia. It also covers the natural features of the county including physiography, topography, soils, slopes, and existing and historic land covers. Riparian resources including wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, water supply watersheds, floodplains and water quality are inventoried. Cultural resources including historic properties and structures, views, and scenic areas are inventoried as well.

These resources are valued within the county and region and their proper stewardship and edification are important to the residents of Rockdale County. This plan incorporates these values throughout the planning process. It also seeks ways to leverage the natural and historic resources to the benefit of the county's residents.

Following the inventory, an implementation strategy recommends ways to protect and restore various components of the natural and historic landscape of the county.

2. Natural Resources

A. Physiography and Topography

Rockdale County comprises 130.7 square miles and is located entirely within the Piedmont region of Georgia. Georgia's Piedmont includes the area between the Fall Line and the mountains at the northern edge of the state. The region is characterized by gently rolling hills, shallow bedrock and frequently exposed rock outcroppings. Rockdale County is an excellent example of this type of terrain.

Elevations in the county range from 620 feet above sea level near the South River to 980 feet near the intersection of Pleasant Hill and Hightower Roads. The City of Conyers rests at 900 feet above sea level.

The majority of Rockdale County is comprised of flat to gently sloping terrain with slopes less than 15%. Approximately 77%, 65,000 acres, of the county is in a soil class with slopes between 0 and 15%. Where slopes are between 10 and 15%, greater care must be taken to control erosion and sedimentation and developers may incur additional expense via grading and site preparation.

Approximately 23% of the county, or 19,000 acres, is classified in a soil group containing slopes steeper than 15%. They are also more expensive, and often cost-prohibitive, to develop.

Figure IV-1 (found at the end of the element) illustrates the locations of steeper slopes within the county. The largest concentration of steep slopes is within the South River basin in the vicinity of Panola Mountain. Other agglomerations of slopes steeper than 15% include the Honey Creek basin near the DeKalb County line, the Big Haynes Creek basin upstream from the reservoir and the Carr Branch basin in the vicinity of Rockdale Lake. In general the county's steep slopes remain undeveloped and covered with a protective forest. Preventing development on steep slopes in the future is a critical component of erosion prevention.

Rockdale County is bisected by a major ridgeline that separates the Yellow and South River drainage basins. The South River, whose headwaters are in the City of Atlanta, flows through the southern portion of DeKalb and Rockdale Counties. The portion of Rockdale County south of the major ridge drains into the South River principally by way of Honey Creek, Snapping Shoals Creek and Almand Branch. The Yellow River begins in Gwinnett County, runs through DeKalb and then through the northern portion of Rockdale County. Big Haynes Creek, also with headwaters in Gwinnett County, flows through Rockdale County just north of the Yellow River. The confluence of the Yellow River and Big Haynes Creek occurs along the eastern boundary of Rockdale County two miles north of I-20. Both the Yellow River and the South River flow into Jackson Lake and the Ocmulgee River, which leads to the Altamaha River and the Atlantic Ocean.

B. Geology and Soils

The northern portion of the county is underlain by Granite Gneiss while the southern portion is underlain primarily by Biotitic Gneiss-Mica Schist-Amphibolite rock. There are many significant rock outcroppings in the county. Most of these are scattered throughout the Yellow River basin. The largest rock outcrop in the county is Panola Mountain, which is protected by the state as a conservation park. All rock outcrops should be considered undevelopable and protected in future years.

Soils contain numerous properties affecting land use and productivity. Some soils in Rockdale County are not suitable for septic systems, therefore requiring a sewer line or prohibiting development altogether. About 20% of the county has bedrock within 60" of the surface. This imposes limitations on construction of sewer lines and increases the cost of some building types. Forest and crop productivity are directly related to soil quality. Further, certain soils are more susceptible to erosion, and therefore impose greater costs during development to limit sedimentation within wetlands and streams.

The Soil Conservation Service has identified eight soil associations in Rockdale County and Conyers. Each association usually contains a few major soils and several minor soils, in a pattern that is characteristic although not strictly uniform. For analysis purposes, these associations are combined into three groups. These three groupings combine soil associations by the type and degree of limitation. Severe limitation (Group 1) indicates difficulties or hazards in construction or maintenance of a development project due to soil conditions that will be costly or impossible to overcome. Moderate limitation (Group 2) indicates difficulties or hazards in construction or maintenance of a development project due to soil conditions, which can be overcome but may be cost prohibitive. Slight limitation (Group 3) indicates soil conditions are well-suited to development.

The county should continue to consider soil limitations in evaluating individual development proposals and in future amendments and updates to this comprehensive plan.

Group 1: Soils with Severe Limitations for Development

Rock Outcrop

This land type consists of areas where hard rock is at the surface. The slopes range from nearly level to almost perpendicular.

Alluvial Lands – Chewacla-Wehadkee Association

Well-drained, somewhat poorly and poorly drained nearly level floodplains. This association is characterized by broad to narrow, nearly level floodplains of recent alluvium along streams that overflow more often than once every 5 years. The slopes range from 0 to 2%.

Rock outcroppings are generally scattered in small geographic areas around the county, mostly in the South River and Big Haynes Creek Basins. The one relatively large area of rock is Panola Mountain. Alluvial soils occur along streams with well-defined channels. There is no large concentration of such soils but rather they are found in consistently narrow bands along waterways in the city and county.

The county should continue to protect and not allow development on areas with these characteristics. They have severe limitations to all types of development.

Group 2: Soils with Moderate Limitations for Development

Madison-Pacolet-Gwinnett Association

Moderately deep to deep soils with red to dark red clayey or rock subsoils on moderately steep to steep short side slopes. The landscape is characterized by numerous drainageways that join in a dendritic pattern; narrow floodplains; and moderately steep to steep short side slopes adjacent to the drainageways. Slopes range from 10 to 25%. Where slopes are moderate these soils can support residential development with public

sewerage. These soils have limited ability to accommodate on site sewage absorption.

Louisburg-Wedowee-Pacolet Association

Somewhat excessively drained to well drained upland soils with clayey to sandy subsoils on moderately steep to steep side slopes. This soil association is characterized by moderately steep to steep short side slopes that have a stoney sandy loam surface layer in many places. Slopes range from 10 to 45%.

Pacolet-Gwinnett-Louisburg Association

Moderately deep to deep, well drained to somewhat excessively drained soils with red, dark red or yellowish-brown subsoils on moderately steep to steep upland. This soil association is characterized by short, moderately steep to steep side slopes, and many well-defined drainageways. Slopes range from 10 to 45%.

In Rockdale and Conyers these soils are found mainly adjacent to alluvial soils. These soils are spread fairly evenly throughout the area, supporting mixed forests. Areas with these soils are usually suitable for residential development and other low intensity use; however, rock may limit public sewerage and on site sewage absorption.

Group 3: Soils with Slight Limitations for Development

Madison-Pacolet-Gwinnett Association

Deep, well drained upland soils with red, dark red, or dusky red clayey subsoils. This association is characterized by fairly broad to narrow, very gently sloping to gently sloping interstream divides. Slopes range from 2 to 20%.

Appling-Louisburg-Pacolet Association

Well drained to somewhat excessively drained upland soils with clayey to sandy subsoils on very gently sloping to gently sloping ridges. This soil association includes interspersed rock outcrops. Slopes range from 2 to 10%.

Appling-Pacolet-Louisburg Association

Well drained to somewhat excessively drained upland soils with gently sloping broad uniform ridges. Slopes range from 2 to 10%.

Areas with these soil conditions occur between stream and river corridors and along ridgelines. Soils in these associations comprise most of the land area in the city and county. The I-20 corridor, including Conyers, has mostly Appling-Pacolet-Louisburg Association soils. A large area of Appling-Pacolet-Louisburg Association soils is located in the Big Haynes Creek Basin. Madison Association soils are spread rather evenly throughout the remainder of the county. These soils have slight limitations for urban, suburban and rural uses.

C. Prime Agriculture and Forest Land

Rockdale County has an economic history grounded in agriculture and forestry. Since its original settlement around 1820 through the 1950s, agriculture was an important component of the county's economy. Cotton was the most important crop until the arrival of the boll weevil in 1921. As well, the old growth forests were harvested in earnest in the second half of the 19th century. Today, agriculture and silviculture are not as important to the local economy as they once were. Some dairy and beef cattle farms remain along with a limited degree of silviculture. Hay and grass farming is the most common crop while a handful of farms still produce row crops. In 1964 there were 361 farms. By 1997, that number had dropped to 102 farms with just 1,783 acres producing crops.

Even though there is significant growth forecasted for Rockdale County over the next twenty years, there will likely continue to be land in active agricultural use. These lands, while not economically significant, are culturally important. Further, their existence enhances resident's perception of their community and quality of life. This in turn increases the attractiveness of Rockdale County to prospective employers and residents. Thus, it is within the county's interest to seek the preservation of the few remaining farms and forests within the county. Numerous legal, taxation and land use tools are available to the county to facilitate preservation; these are discussed in the implementation strategy at the end of this element.

D. Wetlands

Wetlands are areas covered or saturated by water all or part of the time. Under normal conditions, plants adapted to saturated soils prevail, although standing water may not be visible. Some wetlands are small pieces of land where the wetland designation would not be apparent to the layperson. Wetlands provide critical breeding, nesting and feeding habitats for many species of mammals, reptiles, birds and fish. Wetlands protect and improve water quality by moderating surface runoff, recharging groundwater supplies and by trapping and filtering sediment, nutrients, and pollutants. They act as natural flood control areas. Some wetlands offer opportunities for observing nature, hunting, fishing and canoeing.

In Rockdale County, wetlands occur in floodplains, along stream banks and at the edges of ponds and lakes (**Figure IV-2**, found at the end of the element). Extensive swamps and bogs occur on Almand Branch east of Highway 20 at the confluence of Haynes Creek and the Yellow River and at the confluence of Honey Creek

and Jackson Creek. Wetlands also line the South and Yellow Rivers. Along Honey Creek, wetlands cover much of the Monastery of the Holy Spirit's property.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency goal (as applied to United States Army Corps of Engineers "Section 404" permits required before filling wetlands and waterways) is to allow no long-term degradation and no net loss of wetlands. A 404 permit may be required for any discharge of dredged or fill material in wetlands of over one acre in size. Penalties for beginning work without a permit are severe. The Clean Water Act requires that developers request a determination of jurisdiction for any work that would result in altering the bottom of over one acre of wetland.

As stated in the Georgia Planning Act of 1990 (Part 5 Rules) certain land uses are acceptable in wetlands, while other uses are unacceptable. The designated acceptable uses are timber production and harvesting, wildlife and fisheries management, wastewater treatment, recreation, natural water quality treatment and purification, and other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Unacceptable uses include receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste or other contaminants, hazardous or sanitary waste landfills, and other uses unapproved by local governments.

E. Floodplains

A floodplain is land susceptible to inundation by water that overflows the usual banks of a river or stream. In this plan, "floodplain" refers to the area subject to about one percent chance of flooding in any one year, the "one hundred year" or "intermediate regional" flood. The extent of the one hundred year floodplain is defined by the National Flood Insurance Program. Rockdale County's floodplains are indicated in **Figure IV-3** (found at the end of the element). Floodplains and wetlands cover some of the same areas, but they have different boundaries. As indicated, most substantial waterways are bordered by floodplains. The South River, Yellow River, Honey Creek, Almand Branch and Big Haynes Creek all have significant floodplain systems.

When development obstructs the flow of a stream or developments with extensive impervious surface are built along a stream beyond natural or historic levels, they can cause the velocity and quantity of water in the stream to dramatically and rapidly increase, causing extensive damage from erosion and flooding. Increased erosion and runoff pollute the streams, weakening or killing stream life, decreasing the stream's viability as a water supply source and

silting in downstream impoundments. Urbanization can actually exacerbate flooding and may affect the area defined as floodplain.

In addition to state and federal regulations, the floodplains of Rockdale County are regulated under the county's existing floodplain ordinance. The regulations allow development within the floodplain, requiring anchoring or other protections to minimize flood damage.

F. Water Quality

Clean water is vital to the residents of Rockdale County. Protecting drinking water supplies ensures good health among the county's residents. Keeping streams and rivers clean allows locals to fish and swim without danger of illness. As well, maintaining a reputation of having clean water is important for economic development and growth. **Figure IV-4** (found at the end of the element) illustrates the locations of streams and rivers within Rockdale County.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, via the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), identifies nine Rockdale County streams and rivers and the new Big Haynes Creek Reservoir as "not supporting" or "partially supporting" the Clean Water Act (CWA) mandate of being "fishable and swimmable." The list of waterways not meeting the CWA mandate is referred to as the 303(d) list, referring to the section of the CWA requiring the list. **Figure IV-5** below summarizes the 303(d) listed streams and rivers in Rockdale County.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency identified nonpoint source pollution as the most serious threat to domestic water quality. As indicated by the "Potential Causes" column in **Figure IV-5**, urban runoff and nonpoint source pollution is the primary polluter of Rockdale County streams. Nonpoint source pollution, which comes from an array of sources such as farms, cars, fertilizers, construction sites and atmospheric deposition, is carried by stormwater into local streams. The level of imperviousness within a watershed is a key indicator for how much nonpoint source pollution will contaminate streams. Studies indicate that a stream is considered "impacted" when approximately 10% of the watershed is covered with impervious surfaces and considered "degraded" at 30%. Standard suburban development, both residential and commercial, typically has impervious surface rates approaching or in excess of 30%. Without changes in development regulations, the impact and severity of urban runoff and nonpoint source pollution will increase in the coming decades.

In 2002, Rockdale County completed a Watershed Management Plan. In conjunction with a stakeholder group, Rockdale County

assessed its streams and watersheds and evaluated three different management options. The planning team and stakeholder group evaluated the plans based on water quality and flooding concerns; but they also considered an array of decision criteria including maximizing citizen acceptance, minimizing cost, optimizing open space management, and increasing public stewardship. The preferred alternative addresses both existing and anticipated problems and includes five general management techniques:

1. New Development Site Management. Improved evaluation of site plans based on water quality performance standards. Also includes widening the mandatory stream buffer to 75'.
2. Monitoring and Enforcement. Enhanced monitoring and enforcement of regulations governing wastewater, stormwater, and septic systems.
3. Education/Citizen Stewards. Programs to increase citizen and developer awareness and involvement.
4. Point Source Controls. Commitments to phase out and upgrade older wastewater facilities.
5. Restoration Projects. Includes watershed rehabilitation such as bank stabilization and point source controls.

To demonstrate the potential of best management practices, the county worked with a private developer on a demonstration project. Completed in 2002, the environmentally sensitive pilot project included a set of best management practices designed to meet hypothetical performance standards, be compatible with the county's infrastructure, as well as be aesthetically pleasing and cost effective.

During the spring of 2003, Rockdale County hired two new staff to implement better stormwater management and the watershed management plan. These new staff are working with the development community to improve stormwater performance of new developments, drafting a 5-year capital improvement program for stormwater infrastructure, investigating a stormwater utility for the county, and seeking additional funding mechanisms for stormwater improvements.

Figure IV-5: Impaired Waterways in Rockdale County

Basin/Stream (Data Source)	Location	Water Use Classification	Criterion Violated*	Potential Cause(s)	Actions to Alleviate	Miles	Priority
Not Supporting							
Yellow River	Hwy 124 to Big Haynes Creek	Fishing/ Drinking Water	FC, Cu, Pb	Urban runoff	Urban runoff is being addressed in the EPD Stormwater Management Strategy for metropolitan Atlanta. An areawide stormwater permit was reissued for DeKalb County in 1999. EPD will address nonpoint sources in Rockdale County through a watershed protection strategy.	16	Medium
Partially Supporting							
Almand Branch	Downstream Almand Branch WPCP	Fishing	FC, DO	Urban runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	3	Medium
Big Haynes Creek	Rockdale County	Fishing	FC	Urban runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	14	Low
Boar Tusk Creek	Rockdale County	Fishing	FC	Urban runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	3	Low
Honey Creek	Rockdale County	Fishing	FC	Nonpoint runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	13	Low
Little Haynes Creek	Rockdale County	Fishing	FC	Urban runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	11	Low
McClain Branch	Rockdale County	Fishing	FC	Urban runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	3	Low
Snapping Shoals Creek	Almand Branch Creek to Bethany Road	Fishing	FC	Urban runoff	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy.	7	Low
South River	Pole Bridge Creek to Hwy 20	Fishing	FC, Cu, Pb, Zn, FCG	Urban runoff and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)	EPD will address nonpoint sources through a watershed protection strategy. The South River is impacted by Atlanta CSOs discharging upstream. Consent Decree requires compliance with water quality standards by 2007. Fish consumption guidelines due to PCBs. PCBs have been banned in the U.S. and levels have been declining.	15	Medium
Lakes and Reservoirs							
Big Haynes Reservoir	Rockdale County	Drinking water	FCG	Nonpoint runoff	NA	650 acres	Low

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 303(d) list

* Criterion Violated: FC is fecal coliform bacteria, Cu is copper, Pb is lead, DO is dissolved oxygen, and Zn is zinc.

The county is in the process of meeting Phase II NPDES requirements, the federal regulations governing stormwater runoff. Phase II regulations require the implementation of the following six levels of pollution control:

1. Public Education
2. Public involvement
3. Identify and eliminate illicit polluters (discharges not composed entirely of stormwater)
4. Construction site controls (temporary controls at the construction site)
5. Permanent structural controls (designed to reduce long-term impacts of developments)
6. Municipal pollution prevention (what Rockdale County does to reduce pollution such as cleaning streets and keeping wastewater lines free of leaks)

G. Protected River Corridors

The Department of Natural Resources has developed minimum planning standards and procedures for the protection of river corridors in the state and requires local governments to use these minimum standards in developing and implementing local comprehensive plans. The method given to protect these rivers is the establishment of a vegetative buffer along the river. Local governments are required to develop river corridor protection plans that will maintain the integrity of this buffer area to the minimum standards established by DNR. There are no state-designated "protected rivers" within Rockdale County.

H. Water Supply Watersheds

There are two water supply watersheds within Rockdale County. The Big Haynes Creek Watershed is the largest and covers most of the northern quarter of the county (see **Figure IV-6**, found at the end of the element, for locations of major watersheds). The water intake within this watershed is the county's primary source of drinking water. The recently constructed Big Haynes Creek Reservoir lies at the center of this watershed. Presently the watershed is protected within Rockdale County by a special WP (Watershed Protection) zoning district limiting uses and lot sizes. Residential development within this area must have at least three acres per unit and nonresidential development is excluded. A watershed protection agreement between all municipalities and counties within the watershed offers inter-jurisdictional protection of the water supply. This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the jurisdictions establishes recommended watershed

management criteria and suggests each local government adopt the ordinances necessary for implementation. The MOA also creates a Watershed Council and Technical Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the MOA. Despite these efforts, the Reservoir and Big Haynes Creek are both on the 303(d) list of impaired waterways that are “partially supporting” Clean Water Act water quality standards. As a result, additional restorative actions are required within this watershed to improve the quality of the county’s primary source of drinking water. The 2002 Watershed Management Plan described above laid the framework for needed restorative actions within the watershed.

The second water supply watershed within Rockdale County lies on the county’s western border with Henry County between Highway 138 and East Fairview Drive. A small portion, approximately one quarter of a square mile in size, of the Big Cotton Indian Creek drainage basin falls within the county. Clayton County has a supplemental water supply intake on that creek, classified under DNR Rules as a large watershed with no impoundment. The current land use is residential or agricultural with small convenience commercial. The future land use plan for Rockdale County is the same. No additional protections are required within this area, although the county could consider an overlay protection district.

The state of Georgia has established “Environmental Planning Criteria” for the protection of water supply watersheds (Part 5 Rules). In short, the rules require a water supply reservoir management plan, establishment of minimum stream buffers, and prohibition of certain uses, such as hazardous waste treatment facilities. Through the MOA covering the reservoir on Big Haynes Creek and the WP zoning district, Rockdale County is in full compliance with the Part 5 rules.

I. Groundwater Recharge Areas

Several thousand Rockdale County households depend on wells for their household water needs. Well water is drawn from aquifers, which are recharged via groundwater infiltration. Groundwater recharge areas are any portions of the earth’s surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. An aquifer is a system of rock and bedrock that contains groundwater. Within the State of Georgia, the Fall Line loosely delineates the boundary between two different types of aquifers. Below the Fall Line in the Coastal Plain region, groundwater is plentiful and easily accessible. Above the Fall Line, where Rockdale County is situated, groundwater is less accessible and often scarce. This is evidenced by the fact that all of Rockdale County falls within the “Low Pollution Susceptibility” category, meaning its soils and

geology are less prone to contamination from human activity at the Earth's surface.

Significant recharge areas have been mapped by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources at the state level. **Figure IV-7** (found at the end of the element) shows the locations of five areas where significant groundwater recharge may occur. The map is based on the Georgia Department of Natural Resource's Hydrologic Atlas 18 "Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas of Georgia" (1989). The largest area is partly in the watershed protection zone for the Big Haynes Creek Reservoir and extends into DeKalb County between the Yellow River and Big Haynes Creek. A second area occurs in the low-density area south of the South River in the county's panhandle along Fairview Road. This area includes the wetlands around Jackson Creek, extending into Henry County. A third fairly small area occurs where Interstate 20 enters Rockdale County from the west. A fourth small area occurs roughly in the Old Salem Road (SR 162)/Underwood area north of where Snapping Shoals Creek flows across the Newton County line. The fifth occurs around the intersection of Flat Shoals and Smyrna Roads.

Designated groundwater recharge areas must comply with the Official Code Georgia Annotated 12-2-8 and the Environmental Planning Criteria (Part 5 Rules). This Code outlines restrictions on citing landfills and hazardous waste facilities, above ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks, agricultural waste, impoundment sites, septic tank drain fields, slow rate land treatment, stormwater infiltration basins, and waste treatment basins.

The State of Georgia keeps an inventory of the most significant contaminated sites throughout the state. The Hazardous Site Inventory (HSI) includes six sites within Rockdale County that have contaminated the groundwater in a significant way. These are compiled in **Figure IV-8**. The contaminants from all six sites are very serious. While they are not located in designated groundwater recharge areas, the pollution may threaten or contaminate local wells or leach into nearby streams. Clean up or monitoring of these sites should occur to minimize the threat of drinking water contamination. Numerous additional sites pollute area groundwater as well. Old gas stations and dry cleaning establishments are among the most common.

Figure IV-8: Significant Sources of Groundwater Contamination

Site	Address	Contaminant
Conyers Battery Exchange	1796 Old Covington Hwy	Lead
Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corp - Conyers M & R	1/2 mile east of GA Hwy 138 on Covington Hwy	Mercury
Eltra Corp - C&D Battery Division	1835 Rockdale Industrial Blvd.	Lead
Miller Bottom Road Landfill	Miller Bottom Road	Benzene
Carolina Commercial Heat Treating	1690 Hwy 138 NE	Tetrachloroethene
Bestline Doors	1531 Dogwood Drive	Tetrachloroethene

Source: GA Department of Community Affairs, HSI List

J. Air Quality

Air quality has a direct and far reaching impact on public health and well being. Maintaining a high level of air quality is especially important because of the mobile nature of the air in the atmosphere and the difficulty in controlling and cleaning polluted air once it has been contaminated. Young children, the elderly, and people with asthma and other respiratory ailments are especially vulnerable to polluted air conditions.

Air quality is affected by a number of factors, including dust, pollen, temperature, humidity, smoke and chemical emissions. Generally speaking, any type of particulate matter suspended in the air lessens the overall air quality. Natural sources of air pollution, such as weather conditions and seasonal changes are difficult to control. However, the greatest amount of polluting emissions released into the atmosphere come from man-made sources.

Ground level ozone is the most serious threat to the ambient air quality in Rockdale County. Ground level ozone is formed by a chemical reaction that combines nitrogen oxide (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the presence of sunlight. Ground level ozone, the principal component of smog, is a major irritant to the mucous membranes and causes burning and irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, and often causes coughing and choking. Repeated exposure to high ozone levels can cause what is sometimes described as “sunburn of the lungs” and can cause permanent lung damage. Ground level ozone should be distinguished from the “ozone layer” found in the upper atmosphere of the earth. This layer of ozone in the stratosphere acts as a protective shield filtering out damaging ultraviolet radiation known to cause skin cancer. Although ground level ozone is produced from natural sources, the majority of ground level ozone found in urban areas can be traced to mobile sources of air pollution, such as automobiles, trucks and buses.

Rockdale County is one of 13 counties that together comprise the Atlanta area's urban air quality basin. Overall, air quality in this 13 county area is measured and compared against the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. This is a method used to evaluate the air quality in the nation's urban areas. The Atlanta area is currently considered to be a "non-attainment area" for air quality, meaning that levels of ozone and particulate matter exceed current federal standards for urban areas. This non-attainment status directly affects the region's ability to expand its system of regionally significant roadways, since automobile emissions are directly linked to these high levels of air pollution. Due to federal regulations, the current non-attainment designation directly impacts the county's road improvement program and its ability to add additional travel capacity to regionally significant roads, such as through street widening. There is an air quality monitoring station in southern Rockdale County.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is attempting to develop solutions to the area's air quality problems that can be implemented at local and regional levels. These include efforts aimed at reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled, reduction in the number of vehicle trips, and exploring new technologies that would reduce the severity of mobile sources of air pollution, such as electric and natural gas powered vehicles. The ARC's policies are addressed in the Land Use and Transportation elements of this plan.

K. Plant and Animal Habitats

As a result of the growing concern over the conservation of the nation's native plant and animal life, the United States Congress passed the Endangered Species Act of 1973, which provides for the conservation of endangered and threatened species of wildlife, fish and plants. Shortly after the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 was enacted, the State of Georgia passed the Wildflower Preservation Act of 1973 and the Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973. As required by these acts, the Department of Natural Resources initiated an effort to list native species of plants and animals that were considered endangered, threatened, rare or unusual and designate these as "protected species." The Department of Natural Resources Georgia Heritage Inventory lists and describes habitats of threatened and endangered species. Endangered plant species are listed in Georgia's protected plants.

Figure IV-9 includes the listed species relevant to Rockdale County. Most of these species make their homes on granite outcroppings common within the county. The primary mission of Panola Mountain State Conservation Park is to provide an undisturbed area for the survival of some of these species. The

Figure IV-9: Listed Species in Rockdale County

Species	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat	Threats
Bird				
Bald eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Threatened	Endangered	Inland waterways and estuarine areas in Georgia. Active eagle nests were located in Rockdale county in 2000.	Major factor in initial decline was lowered reproductive success following use of DDT. Current threats include habitat destruction, disturbance at the nest, illegal shooting, electrocution, impact injuries, and lead poisoning.
Plant				
Black-spored quillwort <i>Isoetes melanospora</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Shallow pools on granite outcrops, where water collects after a rain. Pools are less than 1 foot deep and rock rimmed.	
Flatrock onion <i>Allium speculae</i>	No Federal Status	Threatened	Seepy edges of vegetation mats on outcrops of granitic rock	
Granite rock stonecrop <i>Sedum pusillum</i>	No Federal Status	Threatened	Granite outcrops among mosses in partial shade under red cedar trees	
Open-ground whitlow-grass <i>Draba aprica</i>	No Federal Status	Endangered	Shallow soils on granite outcrops, especially beneath eastern red cedar	
Pool Sprite, Snorkelwort <i>Amphianthus pusillus</i>	Threatened	Threatened	Shallow pools on granite outcrops, where water collects after a rain. Pools are less than 1 foot deep and rock rimmed	
Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2002				

Georgia Heritage Inventory identified two additional rock outcroppings in Rockdale County supporting some of the protected species. One is the Hi Rock and Rockdale Lake outcrop area. The other is around Bald Rock along the Yellow River and Big Haynes Creek. In addition to the protected species it supports, the Bald Rock/Big Haynes Creek area includes pristine wetlands, rushing creeks and beautiful cliffs. This is a natural area deserving preservation for future generations.

The State owns two parks in the county. One is the Panola Mountain State Conservation Park. Panola Mountain is a 617-acre park in the panhandle of the county along the South River and was Georgia's first conservation park. Near the center of the park is a 100-acre granite monolith, often compared to Stone Mountain.

But unlike Stone Mountain, Panola still shelters rare plants and animals of the Piedmont region. Nature programs and guided hikes are offered by the State. Because of its particular natural features, the National Park Service designated Panola Mountain as a National Natural Landmark.

The other state owned park is the Big Haynes Creek Nature Preserve. In 1968, 136 acres along the Creek was bequeathed to the State for a nature preserve. In 1975, the State acquired 259 acres in an adjoining area. The 395-acre nature preserve is located in the extreme northern portion of the county. It is a unique and beautiful natural area. In 1999, the county developed a Master Plan for the reservoir which included guidelines on developing the area as parks and recommendations on maintaining water quality.

The South River corridor, from Panola Mountain State Conservation Park to the Henry County line, is another prime candidate for a linear conservation and recreation area. Many acres are already in a protected or semi-protected status and the corridor could be connected with the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve in DeKalb County.

In addition to the county's natural areas are thousands of acres of urban and suburban forests. Protecting these forests provides critical habitat, reduces urban heat island effect and improves air quality. They also increase property values and reduce summer cooling bills. Sensitive site development and subdivision design can help preserve the county's tree canopy. It can also provide resident's with day-to-day access to natural areas. Increasing tree and canopy conservation within developed and developing areas is critical to the conservation of plant and animal habitats within Rockdale County. This points to the importance of Rockdale County's tree protection and landscape ordinances.

Rockdale County is in the process of revising their Tree Protection and Landscape Ordinances. The new ordinances will expand protection for new subdivisions, increasing protection and inventory of specimen trees. It will also increase tree requirements in parking lots and add protection for trees in construction areas. Additionally, the revised ordinance will include enforcement and penalty provisions.

L. Scenic Views

Rockdale County is fortunate to have scenic views and places that should be considered in all developmental decision making. Some of the scenic views include:

- Views within stream corridors, in particular, the South and Yellow Rivers and Big Haynes, Little Haynes and Honey Creeks.
- Views within the Panola Mountain State Conservation Park as well as views of the park, particularly from Georgia Highway 155.
- Views within the Monastery of the Holy Ghost as well as views of the Monastery from Georgia Highway 212.
- Views of the rural landscape from roads in the northern and southern parts of the county.
- Views within the Big Haynes Creek Park.
- Views of Stone Mountain from various parts of the county.

3. Historic Resources

A Brief History of Rockdale County and Inventory of Historic Sites

Rockdale County has a rich and varied history. The historic cemeteries, residences, mills, institutional and commercial structures throughout the county are vital to preserving the county's legacy and giving context to the lives of current residents. Preservation of the county's historic structures and places is an important component of protecting the county's sense of place and uniqueness within the Atlanta region. Rockdale County's historic resources are indicated on **Figure IV-10** (found at the end of the element).

The historic village of Milstead lies three miles north of downtown Conyers. The village was established in 1885 as Long Shoals with the genesis of the Rockdale Paper Mill. In 1902, the Milstead Manufacturing cotton mill was erected on the site and by 1904 1,000 people lived in the village. Although the mill closed in the 1960s and no longer stands, most of the original village remains intact. The Milstead Baptist and Methodist churches still mark the center of the community. Several parks, ball fields and a swimming pool are nestled within the community. Several hundred employee houses line the streets and two large foreman houses remain. Milstead residents are interested in preserving and capitalizing on the historic aspects of the community. To facilitate preservation, Rockdale County is pursuing a new overlay zoning ordinance for the village and its environs. There has also been

discussion of redeveloping the former mill site as a regional park. The site fronts the Yellow River and includes an abandoned railroad right-of-way, which could connect the park to downtown Conyers with a multi-use path.

Near the northeast corner of the county at the confluence of Big Haynes and Little Haynes Creeks, settlers built a community in the first part of the 1800s. Today the Dial Mill (constructed in 1830) remains, along with Salem Baptist Church (c. 1820), the ruins of the Costley Mill race and about a dozen of the oldest residences and outbuildings in the county. Dial Mill is the only building in Rockdale County, outside of Conyers, on the National Register of Historic Places.

The rural community of Pleasant Hill in the northern tip of the county is the location of a Baptist Church with a cornerstone dated 1873. It is surrounded by about 25 houses and barns around 100 years old along Pleasant Hill, Hightower and Bethel Roads. Hightower Trail was a Creek Indian trade route leading to the confluence of Peachtree Creek and the Chattahoochee River where different tribes exchanged goods. Numerous archaeological sites are located along the county's streams and rivers and along this trail. This part of the county is the watershed for the Big Haynes Creek Reservoir, so extensive land disturbance will be minimized. However, the potentially rich archaeological record should be explored and documented. Over 15 sites have been discovered in the area dating from as early as 3000 BC through 500 AD.

At the intersection of Smyrna Road and Georgia Route 138 is the Smyrna campground, the first Presbyterian campground in Georgia, hosting camp meetings now for 173 years. A church built in 1947, a manse, auxiliary buildings, a swimming pool and a cemetery are also located on the site. The camp consists of a central open-air tabernacle, with simply built and bare cottages surrounding. Early settlers organized camp meetings for annual religious gatherings. The camp meeting was a regional movement, begun in Kentucky during the great revival of 1787 to 1805. The cottages were constructed so people coming from long distances could stay overnight.

The rest of Rockdale County developed in a rural pattern and scattered old farmhouses line roads throughout the county. In 1977, the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources prepared a survey of all the oldest buildings in the county and those built before 1935 with potential historic or architectural significance. This survey includes photos of almost all surveyed buildings. The original survey is housed in the GDNR Historic Preservation section archives.

The decade of the 1940s brought another important religious institution to Rockdale County – the Trappist Monastery of the Holy Spirit. Monks cut trees on the site and built the first structure by hand because of wartime shortages of supplies, and in 1946 the pastoral Monastery became an Abbey. In 1958, the monks completed the permanent monastery and chapel. The Monastery owns about two thousand acres along the South River, with small farming and timbering operations.

South central Rockdale in the Honey Creek area north of the Monastery attracted prosperous residents and farmers whose large homes intersperse with smaller and more basic farmhouses. For example, in the 1930's a silent movie star, Coleen Moore, built "Plantation Manor," a large brick home with a grand swans neck pediment over the entrance. It is now a children's home on Tucker Mill Road.

In addition to the county's historic structures are a number of old cemeteries located throughout the county. These are a popular destination for genealogical researchers. While most of the sites are preserved, several remain unprotected. Permanent protection for all Rockdale County cemeteries is needed.

In 1999, Rockdale County began a comprehensive inventory of its historic sites and structures. This assessment remains incomplete due to lack of funding.

4. Statement of Goals

Goal 1: Implement watershed management strategies that restore Rockdale County's impaired waterways.

Goal 2: Create land development regulations that re-orient development towards a pattern of sustainability while protecting developer interests.

Goal 3: Design the necessary programs and regulations to protect and preserve open space and sensitive lands throughout the county in a coordinated way.

Goal 4: Implement the necessary ordinances and policies that lead to cleaner air for Rockdale County citizens and workers.

Goal 5: Preserve Rockdale County's historic and cultural sites and structures.

5. Implementation Strategy

Following is a list of natural and historic resource strategies tailored to achieve each of identified goals. Many of the strategies identified in this plan will be accomplished through the major revision to the county's Zoning Ordinance and Development

Regulations that is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2004. A couple of the strategies identified in this plan reflect on-going efforts, and are labeled as such.

Goal 1: Implement watershed management strategies that restore Rockdale County's impaired waterways.

- Widen minimum stream buffer requirement to 75' or establish a variable standard based on topography and soils.
- Develop ordinance revisions for water quality performance standards as identified by the 2002 Watershed Management Plan.
- Develop ordinance revisions for low impact development guidelines to protect floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, steep slopes, and rock outcroppings.
- Create developers' training workshop: Designing to Meet Water Quality Performance Standards.
- Increase and train staff to conduct watershed monitoring for evaluation of development designs and performance standards, and long-term water quality monitoring.
- Develop stormwater policies to improve and protect stream water quality by retention and detention of stormwater and limited impervious surfaces. Consider creating a stormwater authority. Consider the use of regional stormwater facilities.
- Revise local ordinances regarding septic tank inspections.
- Create septic tank inspections program.
- Create inspection and maintenance program for storm drainage and sanitary sewer systems.
- Enhance construction, site inspection, and enforcement programs.
- Initiate performance reviews on developments above certain thresholds.
- Initiate education program for homeowners and lawn care industry on responsible fertilizer and pesticide application.
- Continue to support Adopt-A-Stream and general watershed education programs. (On-going)
- Initiate a tree planting program.
- Decommission or modernize older wastewater treatment plants. Construct and expand other plants to accommodate the county's growth and infill redevelopment. (On-going)

- Develop a stream corridor restoration master plan to identify priority projects, local partnerships, and funding sources. Coordinate this effort with the Greenway Master Plan.

Goal 2: Create land development regulations that re-orient development towards a pattern of sustainability while protecting developer interests.

- Widen minimum stream buffer requirement to 75' or establish a variable standard based on topography and soils.
- Develop ordinance revisions for water quality performance standards as identified by the 2002 Watershed Management Plan.
- Develop ordinance revisions for low impact development guidelines to protect floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, steep slopes, and rock outcroppings.
- Adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Goal 3: Design the necessary programs and regulations to protect and preserve open space and sensitive lands throughout the county in a coordinated way.

- Adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance
- Develop a Greenway Master Plan. Evaluate options for developing a coordinated system of greenways and explore funding options. Identify key corridors giving special attention to:
 - The South River Corridor connecting the confluence of Honey Creek and the South River with Panola and Arabia Mountain Conservation Areas.
 - Big Haynes Creek Corridor connecting the Georgia International Horse Park with the conservation and recreation areas adjacent to the reservoir.
- Develop ordinance revisions for low impact development guidelines to protect floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, steep slopes, and rock outcroppings.
- Re-apply to the Georgia Greenspace Program.

Goal 4: Implement the necessary ordinances and policies that lead to cleaner air for Rockdale County citizens and workers.

- Implement commuter bus service to major employment centers in Atlanta.

- Evaluate additional transportation alternatives including local transit service and car and vanpooling programs.
- Designate some areas of the county as mixed use activity centers. These areas should have a mixture of uses with densities higher than in other areas of the county. They should also be pedestrian friendly, and include civic and recreational amenities.
- Adopt a connectivity ordinance regulating block lengths and block sizes. Evaluate other means to improve street connectivity including revisions to the subdivision regulations or the adoption of an Official Street Map.
- Improve the bicycle and pedestrian networks throughout the county. Consider requiring sidewalks within new subdivisions and in front of new businesses. Consider revising street design standards to include pedestrian and bicycle amenities. As part of the greenway master plan, explore ways to create an off-street network of trails for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Update parking standards to include maximums as well as minimum allowable spaces for new developments.
- Revise and strengthen tree ordinance.

Goal 5: Preserve Rockdale County's historic and cultural sites and structures.

- Complete the inventory of the county's sites and structures begun in 1999.
- Adopt ordinances protecting historic resources.
- Adopt specific ordinances for historic districts such as Milstead.
- Develop a historic heritage map and exhibit for newcomers and visitors as well as residents

V. Community Facilities

1. Introduction

Determining whether to maintain or enhance the quality and availability of Rockdale County's community facilities and how to tailor them to county growth patterns is an important part of the comprehensive planning process. Services such as law enforcement, fire protection, sanitary sewerage and education are integral to a safe community and an enjoyable standard of living. The community facilities listed below are described in detail in this element.

Section 2 – Public Safety

- A. Law Enforcement
- B. Fire Protection
- C. Emergency Medical Services

Section 3 – Public Water Supply and Treatment Systems

Section 4 – Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

Section 5 – Solid Waste Management

Section 6 – Health Care Services

Section 7 – Parks and Recreational Facilities

Section 8 – General Government Facilities

Section 9 – Libraries and Cultural Facilities

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan and this element of the plan are limited in scope. The plan provides a picture of how the community as a whole is growing and how it is planning for the future. The capital projects that it can directly influence, however, are limited to the powers exercised by the county government. Under the home rule provision of the State Constitution, the county was given powers to provide such services as police and fire protection; street and road construction and maintenance; parks, recreation areas, programs, and facilities, sewage collection and disposal systems; development, storage, treatment, purification and distribution of water; and codes, including those which cover building, housing, plumbing, and electrical standards.

One of the resources the county has used successfully to finance infrastructure improvements is the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). In 1989, voters passed a SPLOST that financed a new impoundment on Big Haynes Creek, known today as Randy Poynter Lake. In 1992, a

SPLOST was passed to fund general transportation improvements and passed again in 1996 for additional transportation projects and a new multi-use recreational facility. The current SPLOST, which was voted on in 1999, will fund the new water treatment facility on Randy Poynter Lake. The SPLOST is scheduled to sunset in June of 2004, but is projected to achieve the county's goal by March of 2004. Currently, the Board of Commissioners is considering a continuation of this SPLOST for voters to consider in November 2003. Possible SPLOST items include transportation improvements, recreation upgrades, public safety facilities and community beautification projects.

The Rockdale County Board of Commissioners is responsible for legislation, policy formulation, and overall direction for the government. The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners serves as the chief executive officer of the county government and generally supervises, directs, and controls the day-to-day operations of the county. The directors of all county-run departments, with the exception of those headed by the other elected officials, report to the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. Among the services provided by the county government are public safety, planning and zoning, parks and recreation, public works, senior services, code enforcement, library and water and sewer.

In addition to County Commissioners, the following local positions are elected by Rockdale voters: Superior, State, Magistrate and Probate judges; Clerk of Court; District Attorney; Sheriff; Tax Commissioner and Coroner. **Figure V-1** shows an organizational chart of the county government.

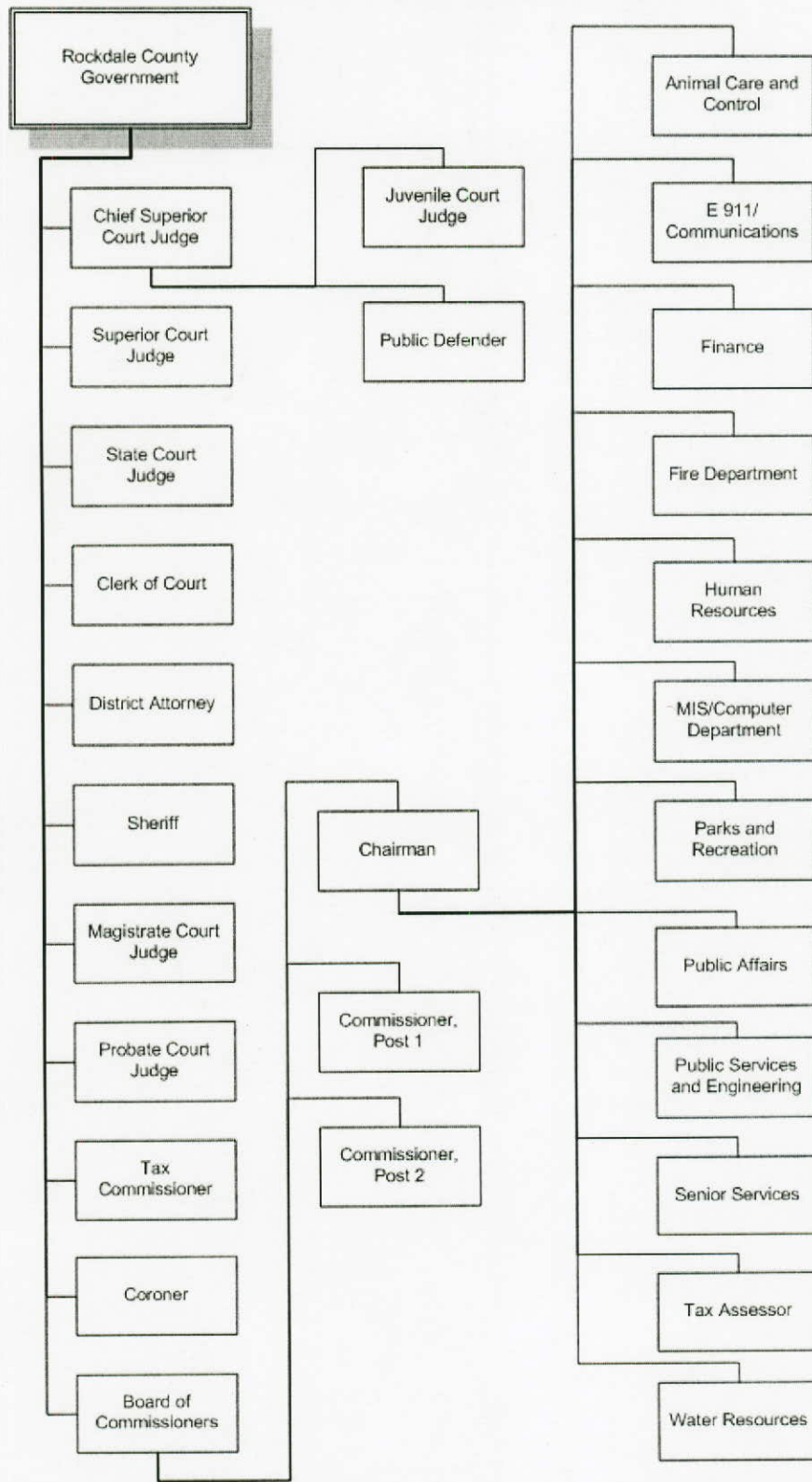
2. Public Safety

A. Law Enforcement

In August 2002, the Rockdale County Sheriff's Department moved to a new facility located at 911 Chambers Drive in Conyers. The Department has added three precincts, one in the City of Conyers and the other two located in the north and south ends of the county. The Southern Precinct is located in the Honey Creek Shopping Center and the Northern Precinct is located in the Lakeview Estates Mobile Home Park. **Figure V-2** at the end of this section shows the location of the public safety facilities in the county.

The Sheriff's Department has a staff of 196 employees divided into five divisions: Jail, Uniform, Court Services, Warrant and Civil and Criminal Investigations. In order to keep pace with future growth and the recent increase in crime statistics, the

Figure V-1: Rockdale County Organizational Chart



Sheriff's Department has identified a need to add administrative positions and several Deputy positions to serve the general community and to continue adequate response times. Additionally, there will be a need to add several Detention Deputy positions at the jail.

The Rockdale County Jail is also located on Chambers Drive. The second floor of the facility was the previous central location for the county law enforcement staff and now houses the jail administration staff and has room for future courtrooms, medical offices and other administrative offices. Male and female inmates are housed in different buildings at the facility. Currently, the daily population of male and female inmates is 350. This exceeds capacity at the facility, which is designed to house 208 males and 100 females. There is excess room in the female facility, but obvious overcrowding for the male facility. A plan was completed in 1999 for the addition of a 400-bed addition to the male facility, but this is yet to be completed. According to the Sheriff's Department, with an increasing population and an increase in crime statistics, there is a serious need for more space to house male inmates. A future plan to expand jail facilities should also include room for juvenile offenders. Currently, there are no juvenile detention centers in the county and all youth offenders are transported to neighboring counties.

The department utilizes several military surplus vehicles for specialized assignments. These vehicles include armored vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and large trucks. There are approximately 100 standard squad cars in the department's fleet. Some of these vehicles are used specifically for a vehicle take home program that gives the appearance of an increased patrol force, thus increasing the visibility of law enforcement in communities throughout the county. This increased visibility is meant to have a deterring effect on crime, especially in residential neighborhoods.

The Sheriff's Department recently received an \$800,000 federal grant to implement an in-car computer system for patrol vehicles. This money will also be used to add two x-ray machines in order to increase court security. The department also has identified a need for a crime analyst in the near future to allow the county to better recognize trends in criminal activity and to allow the department to be more proactive in law enforcement efforts.

B. Fire Protection

The Rockdale County Fire Department serves the county through seven fire stations. These stations are staffed with just over 100 personnel. The services administered by the fire department include fire suppression, fire prevention, hazard control, public education and emergency medical services. Each station is equipped with one engine, except for the Rockbridge Road Station. This station serves as the department’s headquarters and houses two engines. Two of the eight trucks in the county are equipped with ladders. Ambulances are located at Stations 2 and 7. All stations are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. **Figure V-3** below provides the address of each fire station and an inventory of the major resources located at each station. **Figure V-4** at the end of this section shows the location of each of the county’s fire stations.

Figure V-3: Fire Station Locations and Resources

Station Number	Location	Resources
Station 1	1831 Conyers Station Road	Rescue Squad, Engine and Aerial Platform
Station 2	4089 Troupe Smith Road	Engine and Ambulance
Station 3	2450 Old Salem Road (SR 162)	Engine, Water Rescue and Dive Team Equipment
Station 4	3601 Union Church Road	Engine and Tanker
Station 5	2100 Hightower Trail	Engine and Brush Truck
Station 6	1164 Scott Street	Engine
Station 7	1496 Rockbridge Road	2 Engines, Aerial Ladder and Ambulance

Source: Rockdale County Fire Department

Only minor changes in the fire department have occurred over the past decade. In the early 1990s, the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating was a four. This rating included structures within 1,000 feet of a hydrant and within five miles of a station. For other areas in the county, the ISO was a nine. The goal for 2000 was to lower those areas with a rating of four to a one. This goal has not been met. However, substantial progress has been made with installing fire hydrants in the county. This has helped lower most all of the county to an ISO rating of four. Only small pockets remain in the extreme southern part of the county, near the Henry County line, where ISO ratings are still a nine.

The fire department has recently received a \$159,000 grant for the development of a HAZMAT Response Team. This grant is a result of the nation's Homeland Security initiative. Once this Response Team is in place, Rockdale County will be a regional resource for HAZMAT response.

As the county continues to grow, new fire stations will be needed to serve the increasing population. Currently, a new fire station is planned in southern Rockdale County near Turner Road and McDaniel Mill Road. Also, the Fire Chief foresees a need to begin identifying land for a ninth fire station in the Walker Road area in the southern part of the county. The county should consider clustering new fire stations with other county facilities whenever possible. This helps reduce costs and begins to establish a node for other suitable types of development.

C. Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Rockdale County is provided by a private firm, National EMS, through a contract with the county. Staffing within the EMS system includes a total of 74 employees. National EMS provides an Advanced Life Support System (ALS) on all 911 calls within Rockdale County. Four ALS units operate 24-hours a day with extra units added during peak times. National EMS has a total of 11 emergency vehicles within the county. Emergency medical calls average about 600 per month with an average response time of eight minutes for Priority 1 calls.

In order to provide quick response times, National EMS uses a system status management plan that places units at various areas within the county. Currently, units are located at Fire Station 2 on Troupe Smith Road, at Fire Station 7 on Rockbridge Road and EMS Headquarters located on Culpepper Drive. Rockdale County Fire Services responds with the EMS teams on all Priority 1 calls. This system allows for the quickest response times and care by qualified first responders.

Rockdale Emergency Operations Center (EOC) dispatches all 911 calls directly to National EMS units. This allows for the quickest and most accurate dispatch possible. Rockdale EOC uses a detailed CAD system with Pre-Arrival Instructions that apply directly to Rockdale's Community EMS Plan. Rockdale Hospital acts as Medical Control for National EMS. In order to assure the highest level of services within the community, ER physicians, paramedics, nurses and medical control approve all protocols annually.

National EMS maintains its accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). Currently, EMS levels of service are adequate, but as the county grows there will be a need to construct and staff one additional EMS unit within the county.

3. Water Supply & Treatment Systems

In 1996, Rockdale County purchased the City of Conyers' water and wastewater systems. Rockdale Water Resources (RWR) is the operator of the utility system in the county that provides water and wastewater services to residents and businesses. It is estimated that RWR provides water service to approximately 85 percent of the county's population. Until 2002, Rockdale County purchased water from DeKalb, Gwinnett and Newton counties, adding to an interbasin transfer. Now that the new water treatment plant is in operation and drawing water from Big Haynes Creek, all of the interbasin transfers were eliminated within the Ocmulgee River Basin. Formerly, an interbasin transfer occurred with water withdrawn from the Chattahoochee River.

The Rockdale County water system consists of a 450-mile network of water lines ranging in size from 2 to 48 inches in diameter and includes five water storage tanks. Each of the tanks holds 500,000 gallons, three of which are elevated and two are underground. Both of the underground tanks are equipped with 1,050 gallon-per-minute (gpm) and 2,100 gpm booster pumps to compensate for insufficient system pressure. The system currently serves 19,000 water customers, with an average daily demand of 11 million gallons per day (mgd).

Figure V-5 shows the growth in the number of water customers over the past five years, 1999–2003. Also, **Figure V-6** at the end of this element shows the location of the county's water system.

Figure V-5: Water System Customers: 1998-2002

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
N/A	20,896	21,561	22,435	22,805

Source: Rockdale Water Resources

Upon passing the 1999 SPLOST, the county has been aggressive in extending water service throughout the county. The county estimates that since 1999, water lines have been extended along 75 percent of the roads in the county that did not have water service. It will likely take an additional five to ten years to extend water lines to all areas of the county. Additional water system projects the county has recently

completed include the installation of 18 miles of major transmission lines, a new water storage tank and a new water treatment plant. An important improvement the county would still like to make is the construction of a new 1 million gallon water tank in the southern part of the county.

The principal source of raw water for the system is Randy Poynter Lake, which is a reservoir located on Big Haynes Creek. The reservoir stores approximately 5.4 billion gallons of water with a surface area of 640 acres. The reservoir regulates the average flow in the creek, thus allowing more uniform withdrawal of raw water downstream of the reservoir. Raw water that is withdrawn from the creek is treated at the Big Haynes Creek Water Treatment Plant located off Gees Mill Road. The estimated available yield for the reservoir is approximately 27 mgd. The total available capacity for the treatment plant is 22 mgd.

In consideration of long-term water supply needs, Rockdale County is currently working with the US Geological Survey (USGS) to determine if groundwater recharge areas in the county can provide water supply for the county. The county is in the second year of an annual cooperative agreement with the USGS to study the potential of using groundwater recharge areas for water supply. The areas identified in the study that could provide water to the county should be protected for future use.

Currently, Rockdale County has a number of programs in place to encourage water conservation. According to the Water Conservation Plan, prepared in 1999, RWR focuses on three primary areas to promote water conservation including:

- Minimization of water losses;
- Water demand management; and
- Long-range planning.

RWR is currently involved with several water quality initiatives including wetlands mitigation, water quality monitoring, USGS gauging along streams throughout the county and public education. The county has completed a Watershed Assessment that includes recommendations for sediment loads, erosion control, stream protection, zoning or regulatory modifications, education, stormwater controls and a septic tank program. The county's Building Department is implementing some of these recommendations through their inspections.

Another initiative the county has embarked on is the

completion of a vulnerability assessment of their water system. RWR has hired a consultant to perform the assessment, which is now a federal requirement. Due to the sensitivity of this information, specific details on the study cannot be released.

Projections for water demand are shown in **Figure V-7**. The demand for water is dependent upon a number of factors including population growth, average per capita usage, extension of water service to existing residents, demands for additional water by existing and new industries, the cost of water and water conservation efforts. According to the Needs Assessment for 2030, prepared by Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc. (JJG) for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, Rockdale County will need 25-29 mgd by 2030. The County should begin to consider its long-range options.

Figure V-7: Projected Water Demand (mgd)

2005		2010		2020	
Average Day	Maximum Day	Average Day	Maximum Day	Average Day	Maximum Day
11.6	18.6	14.1	33.2	16.5	28.1

Source: Rockdale Water Resources, Water and Wastewater Master Plan, December 1998

4. Wastewater Collection & Treatment System

Like the water system, the public wastewater system is managed by RWR. The wastewater system serves approximately 25% of the county's population, with most customers located in the City of Conyers. **Figure V-8** below shows the growth in the number of sewer customers.

Wastewater service is provided in the central portion of the Lower Yellow River subbasin and part of the Upper Yellow River subbasin. Service is also provided in significant portions of the Snapping Shoals Creek and Almand Branch subbasins. Wastewater service is provided in limited portions of the Lower Honey Creek and South River subbasins.

Figure V-8: Sewer System Customers: 1998-2002

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
N/A	8,299	8,553	9,168	9,399

Source: Rockdale Water Resources

The county's system consists of both privately and publicly owned gravity sewers, pumping stations and force mains. There are currently five community wastewater treatment systems in the county. These systems are at least 25 years old each. RWR believes community systems should be well planned and used only on a temporary basis.

There are approximately 120 miles of gravity and force main sewers and 23 pumping stations. The gravity lines range from 6 to 48 inches in diameter, while the force mains range in size from 2 to 16 inches in diameter.

RWR owns and operates seven wastewater treatment facilities. There are two additional privately owned treatment plants located at J.H. House School and the Lakeview Estates subdivision in northwest Rockdale County. The combined flow of these facilities is less than 1% of the county's flows, resulting in a minimal impact on the future of the wastewater system.

Figure V-9 provides a list of the wastewater treatment facilities in the county and pertinent information about each. **Figure V-10**, located at the end of this element, shows the location of the sewer system's coverage area in the county and the location of the wastewater treatment plants.

RWR's focus now for their sewer system is rehabilitation and replacement. An Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) examination of

Figure V-9: Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Facility Name	Discharge Stream	Flow Discharged in 2001 (mgd)	Peak Month Flow in 2001 (mgd)	Maximum Monthly/ Permitted Capacity (mgd)
Almand Branch WWTP	Almand Branch	.99	1.64	1.25
Honey Creek WWTP	McClane Branch	.205	.302	.3
Lakeridge Estates WWTP	Almand Branch	.024	.032	.09
Quigg Branch WWTP	Yellow River	3.16	4.0	6.0
Scott Creek WWTP	Scott Creek to South River	.104	.139	.22
Snapping Shoals WWTP	Snapping Shoals Creek	.27	.347	.45
Stanton Woods	Almand Branch	.069	.09	.15
Total for Facilities		4.82	6.55	8.46

the system has mapped out needed improvements for the next 20 years. These improvements have been prioritized based on operating experience and evaluation. RWR has committed to spending \$1 million per year to upgrade the sewer system.

Currently, plans are being developed to upgrade the Quigg Branch plant to a capacity of 8 mgd. This improvement would bring the county's total capacity to nearly 11 mgd. This treatment capacity is adequate for the county's short-term

needs, but additional treatment capacity will be needed to meet long-term needs. As a result, the county is planning to construct a new wastewater treatment plant in southern Rockdale County. Current plans indicate this project would begin in 2008 and take more than five years to complete. Additionally, JJG estimates that the county's projected 2030 wastewater flow will be 25 mgd.

No sewer service area expansions are currently planned. However, a new Water and Sewer Master Plan will be completed next year, which may detail some service area expansions for the system.

5. Solid Waste Management

In 1993, Rockdale County closed the Miller Bottom Road Landfill, leaving no active landfill in the county. Since that time, solid waste has been hauled by a private firm to DeKalb County and disposed of in two landfills: the Rogers Lake Road Landfill and the Scales Road Landfill. According to the Solid Waste Management Report for 1999-2000, the Scales Road Landfill has an estimated fill date of January 2011, while the Rogers Lake Road Landfill is estimated to reach capacity in March 2005. Both of these facilities are privately operated, as is solid waste pickup service throughout Rockdale County.

According to the Solid Waste Management Report, Rockdale County was assigned an "adequate effort" designation in terms of solid waste management in 1998 and improved its status to an "extra effort" county in 1999. In order to earn this designation, Rockdale County had to meet the following criteria:

- Local government has complied with State solid waste planning criteria by adapting and updating as required an approved solid waste management plan, which outlines current and future solid waste collection and disposal practices, waste reduction strategies, and solid waste education activities;
- Local government provides or arranges for solid waste collection services for citizens and/or businesses, either directly, through franchise agreements, or by contract with other local governments, authorities, or private vendors;
- Local government requires yard trimmings to be separated from solid waste prior to collection;
- Yard trimmings collection options available to citizens;
- Local government has a program in place for educating local residents about solid waste management; and

- Recycling services are available to residents and/or businesses.

In addition to complying with these criteria, the county had to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Local government charges residents for solid waste collection based on the amount of waste they throw away;
- Residents have access to curbside recycling service;
- Residents have access to a staffed drop-off recycling facility;
- Local government's solid waste education program is part of the Keep America Beautiful system;
- Yard trimmings collected are composted; and
- Local government has a written policy requiring the purchase of recycled products when available.

The Rockdale County Recycling Center is located off Sigman Road (SR 20) and opened in 1993 following the closure of the Miller Bottom Road Landfill. The center is operated by Rockdale County and accepts a number of recyclables, some free of charge and others for a fee.

The following materials are accepted at the recycling center free of charge:

- Newspapers, magazines, catalogs, corrugated cardboard and telephone books;
- Tin, steel, and aluminum cans;
- Glass jars and bottles;
- Plastic bottles (#1 PETE), plastic milk and water jugs (#2 HDPE Natural, Colored);
- Scrap metal and appliances;
- Wet cell batteries;
- Motor oil; and
- Small and large yard waste (clippings, leaves, branches).

The following materials are accepted for a fee:

- Furniture;
- Electronics;
- Paints (not all types); and
- Tires (not commercial).

In order to provide additional solid waste services to county residents, the county is planning to add another recycling center in the south end of the county. The goal is to have this facility in operation by 2008.

6. Health Care Services

Rockdale Hospital is located at 1412 Milstead Avenue (SR 20) in Conyers and provides inpatient and outpatient services in addition to monthly wellness programs. The fifth largest employer in the county, Rockdale Hospital is a full-service facility with more than 300 physicians representing 35 specialties. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Organizations, which signifies commitment to patient care and quality improvement.

Rockdale Hospital first opened in the mid-1950s, undergoing expansions in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and in 2001. The hospital has recently been approved for a \$60 million expansion that will add 31 new beds and 173,000 square feet of space. A new three-story building is being constructed that will house enhanced outpatient and inpatient services including mother-baby, medical-surgical and intensive care units. This expansion brings the hospital's total bed count to 138.

This new construction is part of the hospital's 10-year expansion plan. The project will get underway late in 2003 and is expected to take 16 to 18 months. Phase one of the expansion plan began in October 2002 with the expansion and renovation of the hospital's emergency department.

The plans for upgrading the hospital's facilities and services will help maintain the high level of service provided by the hospital. One of the needs identified during the public involvement process is the need for satellite offices of the hospital to be located throughout the county.

One of the most pressing needs highlighted in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan was an expansion of the Health Department Clinic on Oakland Street. This facility included only 2,500 square feet of space. In 1992, the health department moved to a larger facility at 1329 Portman Drive where they occupy two suites and a converted warehouse totaling approximately 5,000 square feet. In 2002, the health department expanded into a third suite occupying an additional 1,000 square feet.

Despite these improvements there is still a need for additional space as well as health-related capital improvements. New health information protection (HIPPA) requirements are not met at the current facility. At the present time there is a need for locked storage for records, reception desks that allow for the sharing of confidential health information, interview rooms for laboratory patients, barriers to protect computer screens that display health information and many other significant

structural requirements that are lacking at the clinic. Efforts are currently on hold for acquiring a new building with 10,000 square feet of space.

There are three additional health related programs in the County addressing environmental health, mental health and senior services.

The Environmental Health Department is located in the Administrative and Services building in Conyers and is charged with preventing illness and injury and protecting the general health of all Rockdale residents. In order to carry out this mission, the Department carries out a number of services including permitting and inspecting food services, septic tanks and drainfields, tourist accommodations, public swimming pools and personal care homes. In addition to permitting and inspecting, the Department also responds to calls regarding various forms of environmental pollution and complaints including air pollution, drinking water pollution and an assortment of bug and animal bites.

The Mental Health Department is located inside the J.P Carr Complex on Taylor Street in Conyers. This service is part of a larger program including Gwinnett County, Rockdale County and the Newton County Community Service Board (CRN), whose headquarters are located in Lawrenceville. The Department provides services to residents who are developmentally challenged or those who have persistent behavioral health care needs. Services available at the Rockdale facility include comprehensive evaluation, crisis intervention, medication monitoring, service coordination, individual, family and group training, counseling and case coordination.

The Senior Services Department provides basic support services to the older population of Rockdale County. Located in the Olivia Haydel Senior Center on 1240 Dogwood Drive in Conyers, the Department carries out a number of services for seniors at least 60 years of age. Service is administered both at the building and in-home for seniors who are not able to travel. The Department provides professional case management services to assess the needs of seniors and arrange appropriate services. Transportation services are provided to and from the center, to medical appointments, to social service agencies and limited trips to shopping and social events. Congregate meals at the center are provided Monday through Friday and "meals on wheels" are provided for the elderly lacking mobility. Additionally, homemaker services and home repair/chores are

provided as necessary. The Senior Center needs to begin planning for additional space.

The Rockdale Coalition for Children and Family Services identified a need for a facility within the county. Currently, if children are removed from their homes they are placed outside of the county. The Coalition hopes that a facility could be built or acquired to house children locally, keeping them near their families, friends and schools.

7. Parks and Recreation

Over the past decade, the amount of publicly owned parks and recreational lands has increased substantially, keeping pace with the population growth. **Figure V-11** below shows the publicly owned park acreages along with population statistics. While recreational standards are no longer strongly endorsed by the National Parks and Recreation Association, this table indicates a positive trend over the past decade. Rather than showing another large decline in acres of park space per 1,000 residents, the decline was small, at only 2.1 acres lost per 1,000 residents. It is important to note that the total park acreages presented in **Figure V-11** include one or both of the county's state parks: Panola Mountain State Conservation Park (617 acres), and the Big Haynes Creek Nature Preserve (395 acres). Both of these parks are not intended for active recreational purposes, but provide needed greenspace in a rapidly growing metropolitan county.

Figure V-11: Total Park Acreage			
Year	Acres in Public Parks	Population	Acres Per 1,000 People
1975	957	26,800	35.7
1990	1,107	56,500	19.6
2002	1,224	70,111	17.4

Source: Rockdale County Parks and Recreation Department

Rockdale County owns and operates 12 park and recreational facilities including eight parks, three gym and recreation centers and a public pool. Five of these facilities have been added since 1990 and the J.P. Carr Gym is now publicly owned rather than leased. The new facilities include the Parker Recreation Center, Black Shoals Park, Earl O' Neal Sports Complex, South Rockdale Community Park and the Grimes Street Park.

The Black Shoals Park is the most substantial addition in terms of acreage, with 650 acres of park land. This park, located adjacent to Randy Poynter Lake, includes a boat launch, pavilion and picnic tables. The county plans to add walking trails and additional pavilions during the next phase of work at the park. Additionally, work has begun on the Georgia Veterans Memorial Park, which is located within Black Shoals Park. Long-term plans include a visitor's center with a souvenir shop and memorials for every armed conflict involving the United States. Currently, work has begun on the Vaughn-Jones Botanical Garden that will be a part of the Memorial Park.

The Earl O' Neal Sports Complex provides 140 acres of recreation fields used for softball, football and soccer. At nearly three times the size of Legion Field it is a significant addition to the county's stock of active recreational land. The Maxell Recreation Center adds two tennis courts, a general recreation center and a pavilion, while the South Rockdale Community Park contains a one-mile nature trail and picnic areas with grills. The Grimes Street Park is a small one-acre park with a playground and basketball court. Additionally, Johnson Park has added a gym/recreational facility.

These facilities are a considerable improvement over 1990 when the most heavily developed park for active recreation was Legion Field, a facility owned and leased by the American Legion. Legion Field is still leased by the county and contains 52 acres of recreational fields including 16 baseball fields and four concession stands. The county also has plans to add an additional 120-acre park along the South River known as the deCastro property. This property will be a passive park, but will include some trails. The site is owned by the county, but is not yet open to the public. **Figure V-12** on the next page provides a complete list of park and recreational facilities in the county and **Figure V-13** at the end of this element shows their locations.

At the time of the development of the previous comprehensive plan in 1991, one of the most important recreational needs was an increase in the amount of "close-to-home" public space. Close-to-home public space typically refers to facilities within a two-mile radius and is meant to serve neighborhoods or small communities. In 1994, this need was partially met through a joint use agreement between the Board of Commissioners and the Rockdale County Board of Education. This agreement established all existing elementary school recreational facilities as neighborhood parks. Currently, nine elementary schools

Figure V-12: Inventory of Parks and Recreational Facilities

Name	Location	Acres	Facilities
Pine Log Park	1451 Pine Log Rd.	14	6 tennis courts, 1 mile nature trail, fitness trail, covered picnic pavilion w/tables and grill, 1 outdoor basketball court, 2 playgrounds
Johnson Park	1781 Ebenezer Rd.	53	4 softball fields, concession stand, offices and meeting rooms, restroom facilities and storage, playground, gym/recreational complex, meeting rooms/rooms for programs, administrative offices, indoor pool, picnic areas
Black Shoals Park	3001 Black Shoals Rd.	650	Pavilions, restrooms and storage, boat ramps
Richardson Park	Union Church Rd.	4	Multi-use practice field for baseball, softball, soccer, 2 lighted tennis courts
First Shady Grove Park	Old Covington Rd.	1	Outdoor basketball courts, playground, picnic tables and grills
Lakeview Estates Park	Lakeview Estates	2	Outdoor basketball court, playground, multi-purpose field, backstop, soccer goals
South Rockdale Community Park	3909 East Fairview Rd.	176	Pavilion (reservation only), restrooms, picnic tables and grills, 1 mile nature trail, swinging bridge
Grimes Street Park	1792 Grimes St.	1	Rocking horse, slide, swing set, 1 basketball court, picnic table and grill
Milstead Pool	Main St. in Milstead	3	Pool w/concession stand, bathhouse, sun deck, playground, restrooms
Maxell Recreation Center	1400 Parker Rd.	46	2 tennis courts, 1 pavilion, recreational center
Earl O'Neal Sports Complex	Softball Complex (2709 Old Covington Rd.) Football Complex (2711 Old Covington Rd.) Soccer Fields (2730 Old Covington Rd.)	140	8 softball fields, 8 soccer practice fields, football fields, concession stand, storage, scorekeeper building, RGSA boardroom/facilities, RYFA boardroom/facilities
J.P. Carr Gym	986 Hardin St.	9	1 gym, 1 multi-purpose field, 2 outdoor basketball courts
Legion Field	Main St.	52	11 baseball fields w/lights, 5 baseball fields w/o lights, 4 concession stands, 1 boardroom, restrooms

Source: Rockdale County Parks and Recreation Department

serve their surrounding neighborhoods, opening up new recreational opportunities throughout the county.

Currently, the county is not operating under a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. One of the needs identified during this planning process is the development of a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Presently, the county conducts public surveys to determine parks and recreation needs. A new Master Plan would help organize and prioritize both facilities and program needs and goals for the county. The county should coordinate this effort with the City of Conyers.

Another identified need is the implementation of the trails that are already planned for the county. One critical trail consideration is connecting the Georgia International Horse Park with Randy Poynter Lake via a trail following Big Haynes Creek or a multi-use system parallel to the existing network of roads.

Plans do exist for additions to the Maxell Recreation Center and Johnson Park. Also, the county has secured funding to develop a Greenspace Plan.

8. Educational Facilities

Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) have a high reputation among other school systems in the State of Georgia. Statistics and test results from the elementary to high school level continually show that RCPS outperforms state and national averages. Since the Georgia Schools of Excellence Program was created in 1984, 11 different county schools have received state awards and four different schools have received national awards for educational achievement.

With a total of 17 school buildings, the school system has grown considerably over the past decade adding three elementary schools, one middle school and a high school. The system now consists of 11 elementary schools, three middle schools and three high schools.

Three additional schools in the county include the Alpha School, Evening Academy and Magnet School for Science and Technology. The Alpha School, which opened in 1994, sits on the campus of the Administrative Office and serves as an alternative school for middle and high schools students. Currently, the school has 54 students. The Evening Academy is located on the campus of Salem High School and offers high school-level classes in the evening, catering mainly to adults seeking a high school degree. The Evening School began operation in 1999. Finally, the Magnet School for Science and

Technology opened in 2000 and is housed at Rockdale County High School. It was created as part of a partnership between RCPS and Georgia Tech and serves as an accelerated learning environment for elementary-aged children in the fields of math, science and technology. Currently, there are 113 students attending the school.

Sports facilities are provided at varying levels to all schools in the county. Each elementary school is equipped with physical education facilities, while each middle school has a gymnasium and tennis courts. Each of the three high schools has a gymnasium, tennis courts and track facilities. Two other important sports facilities include Reid Memorial Stadium located at Rockdale County High School and Evans Memorial Stadium at Heritage High School.

As shown in **Figure V-14** on the next page, the school system is almost at full capacity, with 97.2% of the design capacity of all facilities utilized. This is an improvement over enrollment numbers in 1991 when total student enrollment was 108% of facility capacity. There are few schools that are overpopulated and none that are sorely lacking students. Shoal Creek Elementary is currently the most overcrowded school in the system with 12% more students than capacity dictates. This statistic is also an improvement over 1991, when Sims Elementary and Honey Creek Elementary were at 121% and 116% of total capacity, respectively.

The county has envisioned the need for a new elementary school as well as classroom upgrades to current elementary schools. Also, the county has identified a need for a middle school and a high school in the near future. Approximately \$22 million has already been appropriated for the county's fourth high school, the location of which has yet to be decided. The new high school is intended to provide education for students interested in high-tech careers. The school has already been tagged with the nickname "Career High School." The new elementary school and current school upgrades are projected to cost \$13.5 million, while the new middle school is estimated to cost \$16 million.

Figure V-14: Rockdale County Schools

School	Year Constructed	Design Capacity	Current Capacity	Percentage of Capacity Used
Elementary Schools				
Barksdale	1979	675	606	89.8%
Flat Shoals	1972	675	632	93.6%
C.J. Hicks	1969	450	456	101.3%
Hightower Trail	1988	550	550	100.0%
Honey Creek	1974	775	570	73.5%
J.H. House	1967	550	556	101.1%
Lorraine	1997	750	668	89.1%
Peek's Chapel	2002	550	525	95.5%
Pine Street	1957	475	445	93.7%
Shoal Creek	1993	550	618	112.4%
Sims	1988	550	570	103.6%
Middle Schools				
Conyers	1978	1,250	1,111	88.9%
Edwards	1978	1,250	1,263	101.0%
Memorial	1993	1,100	1,148	104.4%
High Schools				
Heritage	1976	1,400	1,493	106.6%
Rockdale	1962	1,400	1,294	92.4%
Salem	1991	1,375	1,415	102.9%
Totals		14,325	13,920	97.2%

Source: Rockdale County Public Schools

Funding sources for these improvements will come from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), passed on November 5, 2002. The referendum will collect a one-cent tax until \$80 million is raised or five years has passed, whichever comes first. The proceeds from this tax will be used in four ways, shown in **Figure V-15** on the next page. Each of these four priorities is meant to address three areas of concern: accommodating student growth, leaving the school system debt free in five years and maintaining quality schools.

Another need the county has identified is a secondary education facility. Currently, both Perimeter College and DeKalb Technical College are considering locating satellite campuses in the county. Either of these institutions would serve the county well, providing opportunities for higher education and providing the county with a better-equipped labor force, which would in turn attract more industry to the county.

Maps showing the location of all county schools are presented in **Figure V-16** at the end of this section. **Figure V-17** at the end of this section provides a map of the elementary school districts.

9. Libraries

The Conyers-Rockdale Library System owns and operates one main building in Old Town Conyers. The current Nancy Guinn Memorial Library building opened in 1990 with a collection of 56,000 items and a capacity for 100,000 items. It was financed through a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds and supplemented by a state grant.

The collection of books, videos and other items at the end of 2002 was 103,500, exceeding the capacity of the original building design and creating overcrowded conditions. In addition, the building has begun to show its age through problems with the roof and the HVAC system and general deterioration of carpeting and furniture.

Due to the substantial growth in the county's population since 1990, the current library does not meet accepted standards for collection size, public seating and number of employees. The 2002 population of Rockdale County was 75,980. Minimal standards for library materials would be two items per capita, or 151,960 items to serve the current population. This number far exceeds the capacity of the existing building.

The Library Board of Trustees has begun a space needs assessment to look at the degree of library development required to meet the continuing population growth in Rockdale County. It is clear from the initial data that there is a need for a substantial increase in the size of the Conyers-Rockdale Library System, either through expansion of the current building, the addition of a branch library or a combination of the two.

10. General Government Facilities

Rockdale County's government facilities are concentrated in the heart of downtown Conyers. The majority of the county's facilities are located in the Rockdale County Courthouse Complex, which is home to seven county facility buildings. **Figure V-18** on the following page lists the buildings found within the complex along with their address, approximate size, and uses. **Figure V-19** at the end of this element shows the location of the facilities, including the county's library.

Four buildings contain multiple uses, most notably the Courthouse, which houses all but the Magistrate Court, and the

Administrative and Services Building. This building contains the majority of public services including planning, engineering, administration, water resources, environmental health, finance and the Rockdale 23 Studio (Rockdale County's cable channel).

In 2000, the county expanded its Maintenance and Fleet Services building to accommodate eight additional vehicle bays. The facility is located at 2570 Old Covington Road and now contains a total of 11 bays. With the recent improvements to this facility, it is adequate for the county's needs.

Needs that have been identified for general government facilities include:

- Secure centralized document storage area with proper humidity control;
- Additional State Court facilities;
- Additional space requirements for Juvenile, Probate and Magistrate needs; and
- Parking for any new facilities.

11. Statement of Goals

- Closely monitor growing areas of the county, in order to provide needed public safety facilities and personnel.
- Create a facility plan for each community facilities' element.
- Cluster community facilities into nodes, which would serve as activity centers in the county. Also, the clustering of facilities is more financially feasible than providing numerous separated locations.
- Maintain the high level of service provided by Rockdale County Hospital.
- Continue adding park land and facilities as the county continues to grow. Create a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the county.
- Foster intergovernmental coordination so all interested parties can be a part of the planning process for new educational facilities.
- Provide adequate support for the county's library and cultural facilities so the quality of these resources stays high, especially with the growing population.

12. Implementation Strategy

Following is a list of community facility strategies tailored to achieve each of identified goals. All of these strategies refer to the construction of capital facilities or the undertaking of long-range

planning efforts that are later identified in the Short Term Work Program.

Goal 1: Closely monitor growing areas of the county, in order to provide needed public safety facilities and personnel.

- Complete the expansion of the county's jail facility, which would add between 200 and 400 beds.
- Purchase the land and construct Fire Station #8 near Turner Road and McDaniel Mill Road in the southern part of the county.
- Begin identifying property for a ninth fire station in the Walker Road area of southern Rockdale County.

Goal 2: Provide adequate water supply and expand public sewer to identified growth areas of the county.

- Construct a new water tower in the southern part of the county.
- Secure the permit, then construct a new wastewater treatment plant on the South River.
- Begin considering long-term water supply needs, beyond 2030.
- Determine how best to expand sewer to targeted growth areas in the county.
- Develop a new Water and Sewer Master Plan for the county.

Goal 3: Cluster community facilities into nodes, which would serve as activity centers in the county. The clustering of facilities is more financially feasible than providing numerous separated locations.

- Work with Rockdale County Public Schools, the county's Fire Department, Parks and Recreation and other agencies to coordinate the development of new facilities in the county in order to promote clustering of facilities.

Goal 4: Maintain the high level of health care services offered in the county.

- Complete the planned projects that are part of Rockdale Hospital's 10-year expansion and renovation plan.
- Identify potential locations for satellite offices for the hospital in the county.
- Acquire additional space for the Health Department.
- Begin planning for additional space for the Senior Center.

- Work with the Rockdale Coalition for Children and Family Services to identify options for a facility to house children who have been removed from their homes.

Goal 5: Continue adding park land and facilities as the county continues to grow.

- Create a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the county.
- Complete a Greenspace Plan for the county.
- Secure funding and complete improvements at Black Shoals Park, the Georgia Veterans Memorial Park, Johnson Park and the Maxell Recreation Center.
- Develop plans for the recently acquired 120-acre site along the South River known as the DeCastro property.

Goal 6: Continue expanding and updating educational facilities, technology and curriculum.

- Complete all projects that are part of the five-year education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) including a new high school, middle school and elementary school. Other improvements include facility additions, new equipment, additional buses, athletic facility enhancements and technology upgrades.
- As population growth continues, begin long-range planning for new and upgraded facilities.

Goal 7: Provide adequate support for the county's library and cultural facilities so the quality of these resources stays high, especially with the growing population.

- Develop plans from the results of the library's Space Needs Assessment. Determine whether to expand the existing facility, create new branch libraries or work with the county schools for a possible joint use of their library facilities. A combination of these solutions may work best.

VI. Transportation

1. Introduction

The purpose of this element is to inventory components of the local transportation network, to assess their adequacy for serving both the current and future population and economic needs of Rockdale County and the City of Conyers, and to articulate community goals and an associated implementation program for providing the desired level of transportation facilities and services.

An effective transportation system is critical to the economic and social well being of a community. It is the circulatory system that brings people, products, and services into the county and allows them to move from one activity to another.

Land use planning and transportation planning are interrelated. The location, type, and intensity of land uses play an important role in determining traffic flows and volumes. However, it is also true that the provision of transportation services (road network, availability of transit, etc.) plays a critical role in land use decisions.

2. Related Plans and Studies

The following section provides a brief overview of the various plans and studies that affect transportation planning efforts for Rockdale County and the City of Conyers.

A. Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21)

On a regional context, Rockdale County is one of the ten counties that make up the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Atlanta region.

The transportation planning responsibilities of MPO's are defined under the Federal Highway Act of 1962 and subsequent amendments. The latest is The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century or "TEA-21." This federal legislation requires urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more to conduct a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated process for the development of transportation improvements.

TEA-21 authorized the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 6-year period from 1998-2003. With the current legislation due to expire in September 2003, the reauthorization of TEA-21 as TEA-3 is currently under review.



TEA-21
fhwa.dot.gov/tea21/

TEA 3
fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization/index.htm

Atlanta Regional Commission
atlreg.com/

Georgia DOT
dot.state.ga.us/

Georgia Regional Transportation
 Authority
grta.org/

Rockdale County
rockdalecounty.org

City of Conyers
govhost.com/conyers-ga/

B. Georgia DOT Statewide Transportation Plan 2001-2025

The Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) as developed by the Georgia Department of Transportation. GDOT updates the SWTP every five years and maintains a 20-year or greater planning horizon. The current SWTP covers the period from 2001 to 2025.

The purpose of the SWTP is to study the existing transportation systems, forecast future economic conditions and projected travel demand for each transportation mode.

C. Georgia DOT Six-Year Work Program

The GDOT Six-Year Work Program is a list of projects that are currently programmed to be designed and/or constructed by GDOT. These projects are typically derived from the SWTP and are associated with state routes for which GDOT has maintenance responsibility.

D. ARC 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The ARC is responsible for developing and coordinating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Atlanta region. The RTP is a long-range plan covering a wide range of transportation projects and programs such as roadway construction and improvements, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian modes, and transportation demand management (TDM) initiatives. Projects in the RTP must conform to federal air quality requirements. The next update of the RTP, called "Mobility 2030" is currently being developed.

E. ARC 2003-05 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The ARC is also responsible for developing and coordinating the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The annually updated TIP is a short-term, financially constrained list of projects or project phases from the RTP to be implemented over the next three fiscal years.

F. Rockdale County and City of Conyers Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

Rockdale County and the City of Conyers are currently developing a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The purpose of the CTP is to evaluate the existing transportation system and provide recommendations to improve mobility and accessibility within the county as well as to neighboring counties. As part of this effort, the county has also developed the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor Study and the Stonecrest Area Study to address specific transportation issues in those small areas.

G. Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor Study Summary Report (May 23, 2003)

Rockdale County undertook a small area study of this important corridor to review land use and transportation issues in this corridor and to develop a set of recommendations to manage future development patterns following the principles of smart growth and context sensitive highway design. The study was prepared following a two-day workshop that incorporated the views of many residents and stakeholders who attended the workshop, including representatives of Newton County. The recommendations are summarized in Section 4 of this element.

H. Stonecrest Small Area Study Summary Report (July 2003)

Rockdale County undertook a small area study of this important area, split between DeKalb and Rockdale Counties, to review land use and transportation issues in this corridor and to develop a set of recommendations to manage future development patterns following the principles of smart growth and context sensitive highway design. The study was prepared following a two-day workshop that incorporated the views of many residents and stakeholders who attended the workshop, including representatives from DeKalb County. The recommendations are summarized in Section 4 of this element.

3. Transportation Policy Recommendations from Small Area Studies

Small Area Studies are important ways to refine transportation and land use policies that are needed in the Comprehensive Plan and demonstrate them in a specific context. Therefore Rockdale County elected to perform two small area studies in 2003 in preparation for updating the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor

The study area extended from I-20 to Brown Bridge Road in Newton County. This corridor contains a cross-section of land uses, beginning with older strip commercial uses near I-20, two private golf courses, and several older residential neighborhoods. The southern end of the corridor in Newton County has a considerable amount of vacant, developing land.

The corridor has been stressed by significant increases in traffic, with forecast traffic volumes exceeding 40,000 vehicles per day within ten years. The Georgia DOT has proposed to widen the highway to six lanes, based on this forecast. Since the study area includes portions of Newton County and much of this future traffic

will be generated by development that will occur in Newton County, the study was done with their participation. Rockdale County continues to seek cooperation with its neighbors in Newton County and the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center to agree on projects that offer consistency in land use and transportation across jurisdictional boundaries. Consequently, Newton County has joined Rockdale County in opposing widening in excess of four lanes, and recognizes that there needs to be an investigation of alternative patterns of both land use and transportation. The goal is to develop an interconnected network of streets that provides alternative routes, space for transit, sidewalks and multi-use trails, and plan for redevelopment of current land uses to ensure more walkable and interconnected development patterns.

B. Stonecrest Area

This largely undeveloped area is within two miles of the new Stonecrest regional mall that opened in DeKalb County in 2002. The study area extends from McDaniel Mill Road south to GA 212 and includes portions of DeKalb County south and east of Stonecrest Mall. Recommended transportation improvements would require cooperation with DeKalb County and their staff participated in the study.

Much of the study area consists of prime land in the I-20 corridor that is well located for future development, but lacks transportation infrastructure. Most of the existing roads have operational deficiencies such as inadequate sight distances, drainage, and alignment. Current zoning would allow for 5,400 housing units and 1.2 million square feet of commercial space there.

However, the study area has few continuous surface routes in the north-south or east-west directions for motorists, bikes, or pedestrians. The current street network is very sparse and disconnected. Without identifying an interconnected network for multiple modes, to provide several potential continuous corridors for connections from I-20 to SR212 and from Turner Hill Road to McDaniel Mill and Sigman Road (SR 20), future residential development will fill all available voids with residential cul-de-sac development and traffic circulation will become tortuous.

The vision for the area features the application of context-sensitive transportation planning principles to a gridiron pattern of two-lane collector streets stretching between the I-20/Turner Hill Road and I-20/Sigman Road (SR 20) interchanges, and identifying several potential routes for interconnecting Sigman Road (SR 20) with Turner Hill Road, McDaniel Mill Road, and SR 212.

Both of these planning efforts featured energetic, hands-on workshops with active public participation that provided the overall vision and planning concepts that drove the planning recommendations. Both studies examined transportation, land use, and urban design options for their respective study areas and produced a set of detailed recommendations to map out future locations for a hierarchy of interconnected multi-modal routes and to provide alternative transportation design standards that exchange the current auto-dominated thoroughfare classification design standards for standards that require access management and traffic calming and promote a balance of pedestrian and bike access.

This transportation system is designed to complement community-oriented mixed-use development and open space conservation neighborhoods designed with pedestrian friendly landscaped sidewalks, multi-use trails, and greenspace, consistent with the principles of context-sensitive transportation system design. The detailed recommended master plans and development standards for transportation improvements in the study areas are documented in the study report submitted to the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners as official development guides for these study areas.

The Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element incorporates these development guides by reference to the following reports available in the Rockdale County Department of Public Services and Engineering:

- *Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor Study Summary Report*, May 23, 2003.
- *Stonecrest Area Study Summary Report*, July 30, 2003.

C. Recommendations

Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor Study

A six-lane highway is not desirable, but a properly designed four-lane, median divided boulevard on Salem Road (SR 162) with wide sidewalks lined with street trees and streetlights would provide the necessary balance of local and through access in the corridor. There should be parallel two-lane routes on each side of Salem Road (SR 162). These would consist of the existing Financial Parkway on the west and a new two-lane street that could be constructed through redevelopment of the existing golf courses into mixed-use neighborhoods.

In the long run, a new major arterial should be planned on new alignment in a corridor intersecting I-20 east of Salem Road (SR 162) in Newton County. This would relieve future regional traffic on Salem Road (SR 162). In addition a new park and ride lot should be located in the corridor and there should be transit shelters and safer crosswalks to make future transit use more comfortable and safe in this corridor.

Flat Shoals Road and the access roads parallel to Salem Road (SR 162) would serve as collector streets for inter-neighborhood trips. A network of platted streets should form more easily accessible blocks and establish a connective pattern between the primary activity center and surrounding neighborhoods. Safe, convenient, multi-modal connections along these routes with frequent pedestrian crosswalks would then tie the district together and provide good access throughout.

The small area studies contain a recommended Conceptual Transportation Plan and a set of design standards, cross-sections, and intersection designs for a street network that includes appropriate locations for bike lanes, sidewalks, bulb-outs and on-street parking. The new classified street pattern would include:

- Boulevards
- Collector streets
- Local streets
- Alleys
- Multi-use paths

In order to ensure coordination of land use and transportation plans as envisioned in the small area study, the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners enacted an Interim Development Control on May 16, 2003 that suspended acceptance of new re-zonings, subdivisions, building permits, and land disturbance permits for nine months while these plans are under public review.

Stonecrest Area Study

In a developing area it is critical to plan in advance for an appropriate transportation network, rather than having it develop piecemeal on a site-by-site basis. The elements of the transportation plan for the Stonecrest Study area include:

- Maximum utilization of existing roadways
- Effective use of existing Interstate highway access
- Improved east-west connectivity
- Improved north-south connectivity

- Accommodation of multiple travel modes (walking, biking, and transit, as well as automobile-based travel) in higher intensity areas
- Pedestrian-friendly streets with wide sidewalks and safe crosswalks at frequent spacing
- Pedestrian and bike route continuity
- Future transit service, including local bus service and commuter bus service
- Intergovernmental cooperation with DeKalb County.

In the north end of the study area, several new multi-modal streets need to be planned on a modified grid pattern. The master plan recommends straightening Iris Drive (SR 12) and constructing an underpass at Sigman Road (SR 20). Sigman Road (SR 20) should be realigned to be continuous with Abbott Lake Road to provide a more direct east-west connection across the subarea.

North-south connectivity should be enhanced by improving Abbott Road from Turner Road to Iris Drive (SR 12) and McDaniel Mill Road and extending Turner Hill Road south to Hurst Road and east to McDaniel Mill Road. New alignment will be necessary to re-design the intersection of Hurst, Klondike, and McDaniel Roads to form a safe system of collector streets for the area.

Sidewalks and bike paths are specified for many new and existing streets in the study area. The small area study includes a map of the general location of these streets and the design standards associated with a new classified street pattern of:

- Collector streets
- Storefront streets
- Local streets
- Alleys
- Multi-use paths

This plan and the standards it contains are incorporated here by reference.

4. Existing Conditions and Recommendations

This section contains a brief inventory of the various elements that make up Rockdale County's transportation system, including:

- A. Roads and highways
- B. Public transportation
- C. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities

- D. Signalization and signage
- E. Bridges
- F. Freight railroads

Each element concludes with a brief assessment and a table, which lists recommended improvement projects from the Rockdale CTP and the Rockdale Short Term Work program. These projects are also illustrated on **Figure VI-11** at the end of this section.

A. Roads and Highways

Roadway Mileage

There are approximately 535 miles of roadways in Rockdale County, which are distributed in three broad systems as follows:

- City Streets 34 miles 6.4 percent
- County Roads 447 miles 83.5 percent
- State Routes 54 miles 10.1 percent

Figure VI-1 summarizes mileage by both system and functional class (arterial, collector, local). The mileage is further subdivided into rural and urban categories. Most of the roadway mileage (83.2%) is concentrated in the urban area of Rockdale County along Interstate 20 and in the City of Conyers.

Figure VI-1: Miles of Roadway by Functional Classification and System

Rural:	State	County	City	Total
Principle Arterial	1.84	0.00	0.00	1.84
Minor Arterial	1.89	0.00	0.00	1.89
Major Collector	7.28	3.81	0.00	11.09
Minor Collector	0.00	13.18	0.00	13.18
Local	0.00	61.98	0.00	61.98
Rural Total:	11.01	78.97	0.00	89.98
Urban:	State	County	City	Total
Interstate	8.67	0.00	0.00	8.67
Principle Arterial	15.65	0.00	0.00	15.65
Minor Arterial	17.92	37.45	2.60	57.97
Collector	0.00	17.75	0.59	18.34
Local	0.33	312.90	30.98	344.21
Urban Total:	42.57	368.10	34.17	444.84
Totals:	53.58	447.07	34.17	534.82

Source: Georgia DOT 400 Series Reports 12/31/2001

Vehicle Miles of Travel

A common method of assessing how the roadway system is being utilized is by examining the Vehicle Miles of Travel or VMT. VMT is simply a measurement of the total miles traveled by all vehicles. It is calculated by multiplying the number of vehicles times the miles traveled on a particular roadway segment. **Figure VI-2** below shows the VMT categorized in the same fashion as the previous table. As is the case with roadway mileage, most of the VMT (88.9%) occurs in and around the urban area.

**Figure VI-2: Average Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
by Functional Class and System**

Rural:	State	County	City	Total
Principle Arterial	30,544	0	0	30,544
Minor Arterial	30,950	0	0	30,950
Major Collector	63,672	25,869	0	89,541
Minor Collector	0	78,053	0	78,053
Local	0	41,736	0	41,736
Rural Total:	125,166	145,658	0	270,824
Urbanized:	State	County	City	Total
Interstate	711,272	0	0	711,272
Principle Arterial	257,621	0	0	257,621
Minor Arterial	289,510	261,775	23,352	574,637
Collector	0	85,113	3,741	88,855
Local	515	488,291	48,329	537,135
Urban Total:	1,258,918	835,179	75,422	2,169,519
Urban and Rural Totals:	1,384,084	980,837	77,422	2,440,342

Source: Georgia DOT 400 Series Reports 12/31/2001

Major Roadways

Most of the major roadways in Rockdale County radiate like spokes from the City of Conyers. Major regional routes that connect to external destinations include:

- **Interstate 20** I-20 follows a roughly east-west path through Georgia from the Alabama state line through Atlanta to the South Carolina state line at Augusta. Approximately nine miles of I-20 passes through the center of Rockdale County. There are four I-20 interchanges in Rockdale County:
 - Exit 78 Sigman Road (SR 20) (CR 66)
 - Exit 80 West Avenue (CR 437)
 - Exit 82 SR 20/138/Stockbridge Highway (SR 138)
 - Exit 84 SR 162/Salem Road (SR 162)

In 2000, the Georgia DOT converted the exit numbering system from a sequentially numbered system, to a mile log system, where the exit numbers correspond to mileposts.

- **GA 20** This route connects Gwinnett County and the City of McDonough (Henry County) via Conyers.
- **GA 138** This route connects the City of Stockbridge (Henry County) with Walton County via Conyers.
- **GA 212** This route, Scott Highway (SR 212), connects Newton County with DeKalb County via Southern Rockdale.
- **GA 162** This route, Salem Road (SR 162) connects I-20 with Newton County.

Several major roadways serve as internal connectors among destinations within the county. These roads include:

- **Sigman Road (SR 20)** This route forms a northern arc around Conyers, terminating at I-20 on both ends.
- **Flat Shoals Road** This route runs parallel to I-20 on the south passing through Southern Conyers.
- **Old Covington Highway (SR 12)** This route runs parallel to I-20 on the north passing through downtown Conyers as Main Street,
- **Dogwood Drive and Iris Drive (SR 12)** These two routes serve as access roads on both sides of I-20 - Dogwood Drive to the north and Iris Drive (SR 12) to the south.

Major Traffic Generators

The major traffic generators in the county are listed in **Figure VI-3**.

Figure VI-3: Top Ten Employers in Rockdale County

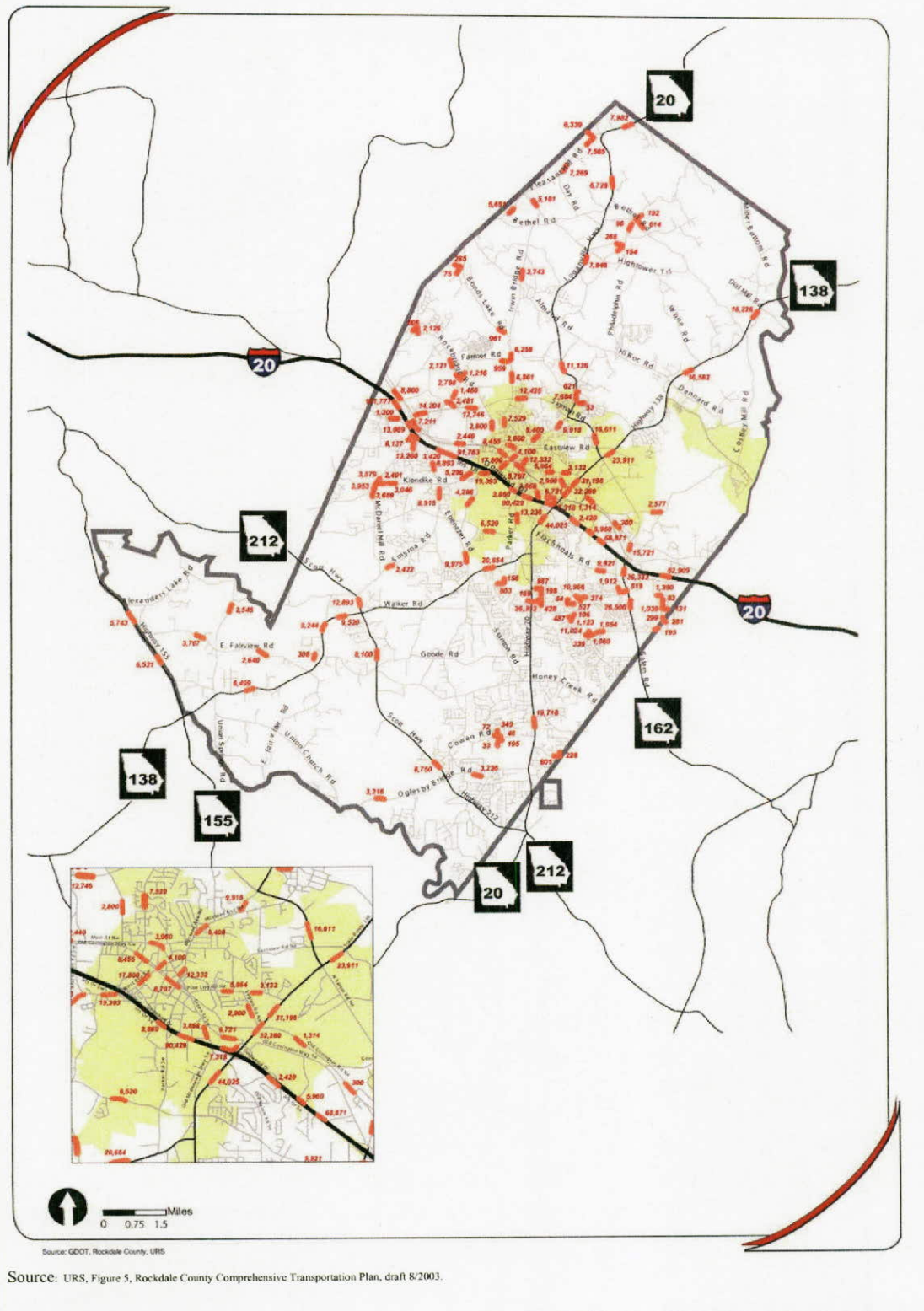
Rank	Employer	Employees	Sector	Description
1	Rockdale County Public Schools	1,945	Local government	Education
2	Lithonia Lighting	1,500	Manufacturing	Mfg. Lighting Fixtures
3	AT&T	1,300	TCU	Telecommunications
4	PRATT Industries	1,000	Manufacturing	Mfg. Corrugated Boxes
5	Rockdale Hospital	850	Service	Health Care System
6	Hill-Phoenix	800	Manufacturing	Mfg. Commercial Refrigeration Equipment
7	Rockdale County Government	650	Local Government	Local Government
8	Sweetheart Cup Company, Inc.	525	Manufacturing	Mfg./Dist. Plastic Containers
9	Wal-Mart Supercenter	500	Retail Trade	Department Store
10	Bio-Lab, Inc.	400	Manufacturing	Dist. Pool chemicals

Source: Rockdale Conyers Chamber of Commerce, 2003

Average Daily Traffic Counts and High Congestion Areas

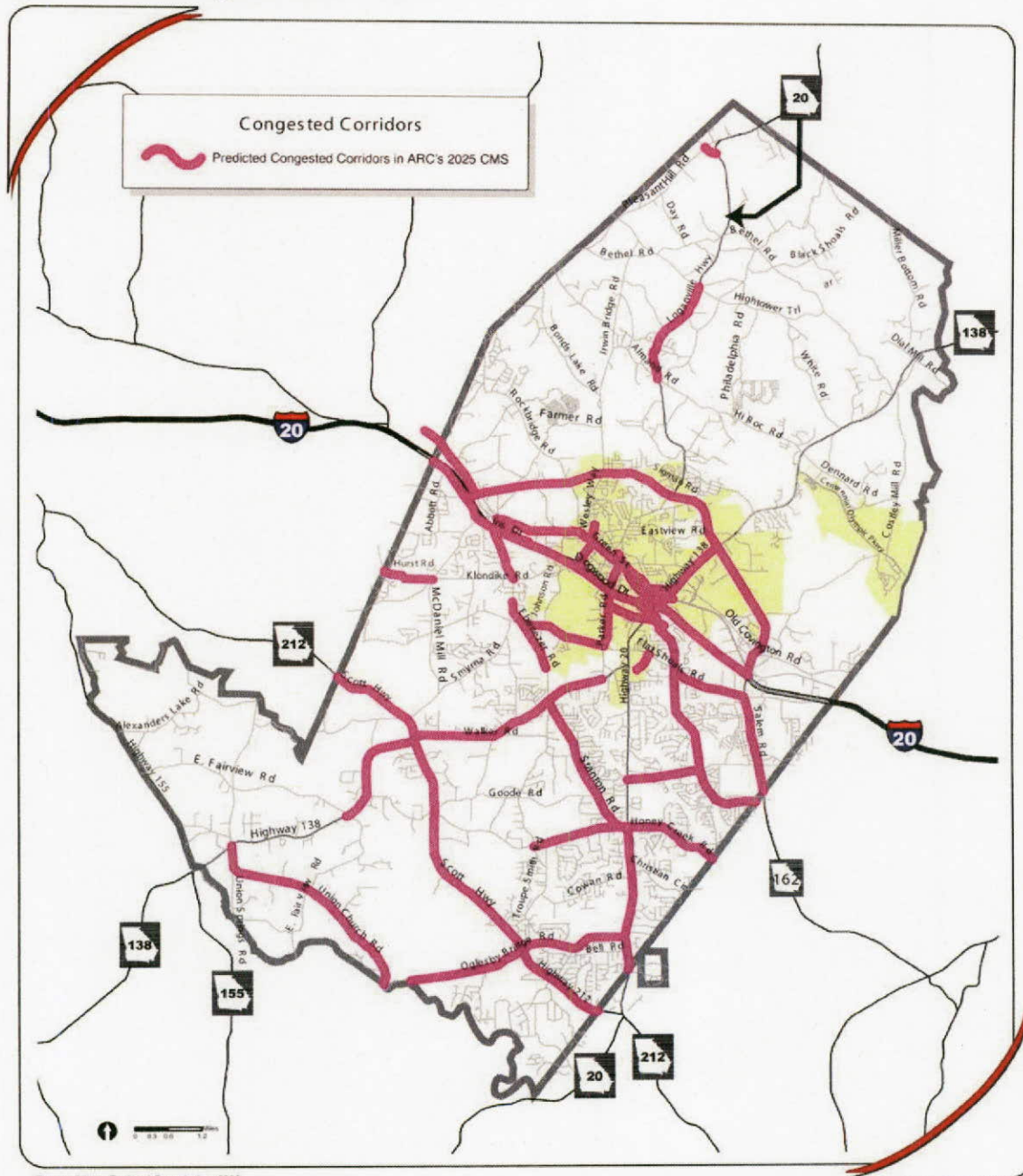
The average daily traffic counts and high congestion areas on the major roadways are illustrated on **Figures VI-4** and **VI-5** on the following pages.

Figure VI-4: Existing Daily Traffic Counts



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Figure VI-5: Congested Corridors



Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, 2002

Source: URS, Figure 6, Rockdale County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, draft 8/2003

Assessment and Recommended Improvements

In general, the heaviest congestion problems in the area are concentrated around the City of Conyers and I-20. In the rural areas, congestion is more prevalent in the south, although there are also a few congested routes to the north (GA 138 and Bethel Road).

The recommended projects, listed in **Figure VI-6** below, address the major highway capacity issues, and the projects in **Figure VI-7** address the major operational issues. These improvements should adequately provide for acceptable levels of service through the horizon year of the Comprehensive Plan.

Figure VI-6: Recommended Roadway Capacity Improvements

ID	Description	Status
R-1	SR 12-COVINGTON HWY (From Turner Hill Road to Rockdale County)	RTP 2025
R-2	SR 138/20 (From North of I-20 East to Sigman Road (SR 20))	RTP 2007
R-3	SIGMAN ROAD (SR 20) (From East of Lester Road to Irwin Bridge Road)	RTP 2011
R-4	SIGMAN ROAD (SR 20)-SR 20 (From Irwin Bridge Road to SR 138)	RTP 2007
R-5	PARKER ROAD - PHASE II (From Flat Shoals Road to Culpepper Drive)	RTP 2006
R-6	PARKER ROAD - PHASE III (From Millers Chapel Road to Flat Shoals Road)	RTP 2008
R-7	DOGWOOD DRIVE CONNECTOR (Covington Highway (SR 12) @ Rockdale IND Blvd	TIP 2005
R-8	FLAT SHOALS RD (From Salem Road (SR 162) to Old Salem Road (SR 162))	RTP 2008
R-9	SR 20 SOUTH (From SR 212 to Honey Creek Road)	RTP 2012
R-10	SIGMAN RD (From I-20 East to SR 20/138)	RTP 2013
R-11	OLD COVINGTON HIGHWAY (SR 12) (From Green Street to SR 138/20)	RTP 2007
R-12	SALEM ROAD (SR 162)-SR 162 (From Flat Shoals Road to Old Salem Road (SR	RTP 2008
R-13	LAKEFIELD DR EXT (From SR 20 to Flat Shoals Road)	RTP 2010
R-14	OLD COVINGTON HWY (From Sigman Road (SR 20) to DeKalb Co. Line)	NA
R-15	HONEY CREEK RD (From Ebenezer Road to Newton County)	NA
R-16	OLD SALEM RD (From SR 20/138 to Flat Shoals Road)	RTP 2015
R-17	SR 212-SCOTT HWY (From DeKalb Co. Line to Newton Co. Line)	RTP 2025
R-18	E. FREEWAY DR EXT, PHASE 2 (From Old McDonough Hwy to Parker Road)	RTP 2025
R-19	E. FREEWAY DR EXT, PHASE 3 (From Parker Road to Johnson Road)	RTP 2025
R-20	LENORA CHURCH RD RELOCATION/EXTENSION (From Pleasant Hill Road to SR 20)	RTP 2020
R-21	OGLESBY BRIDGE RD (From South River to SR 20)	NA
R-22	SR 138 widening, 4 to 6 Lanes from Sigman Road (SR 20) to White Road	NA
R-23	SR 138 widening, 2 to 4 Lanes from White Road to Newtown Road	NA
R-24	Old Salem Road (SR 162) extension over I-20	NA

Source: Rockdale County and City of Conyers Comprehensive Transportation Plan – URS Corporation

Figure VI-7: Recommended Operational Improvements

ID	Description	Status
O-1	I-20 EAST ITS-COMMUNICATION AND SURVEILLANCE (From I-285 to City of Conyers)	RTP 2011
O-2	SR 138/20 at I-20	RTP 2008
O-3	KLONDIKE ROAD (Smyrna Road to Johnson Spur)	RTP 2007
O-4	SMYRNA ROAD (From Klondike Road to Iris Drive (SR 12))	RTP 2006
O-5	EBENEZER ROAD (From Stanton Road to Smyrna Road)	RTP 2010
O-6	STANTON ROAD (Between Highway 138 and Honey Creek Road)	RTP 2016
O-7	DOGWOOD DR (ACCESS ROAD N OF I-20 EAST)	RTP 2010
O-8	IRIS DRIVE (SR 12) (ACCESS ROAD S OF I-20 EAST), PHASE 1	RTP 2010
O-9	West Avenue at Green Street	CTP
O-10	IRIS DRIVE (SR 12) (ACCESS ROAD S OF I-20 EAST), PHASE 2	RTP 2010
O-11	OLD SALEM ROAD (SR 162) RELOCATION at I-20 East and SR 138/20	RTP 2008
O-12	SR 20	RTP 2011
O-13	SR20/Oglesby Bridge Road intersection improvement	TIP 2003
O-14	SR 212 at Oglesby Bridge Road	TIP 2004
O-15	SR 162 at McCalla/Fairview Road	TIP 2004
O-17	FLAT SHOALS RD, PHASE 3 (Between Smyrna Road and Parker Road)	RTP 2015
O-18	OLD COVINGTON HWY (Between Gees Mill Road and Dogwood Drive)	RTP 2015
O-19	SOUTH MAIN STREET (From Pine log Road to GA Highway 138)	RTP 2010
O-20	SR 138 (Between Ebenezer Road and Parker Road)	RTP 2015
O-21	OLD SALEM RD (From Flat Shoals Road to Newton Co. Line)	RTP 2020
O-22	SR 138 (From East Fairview Road to County Line)	NA
O-23	HURST ROAD (From DeKalb Co. Line to McDaniel Mill Road)	NA
O-24	SR 20 at Cowan Road	TIP 2004
O-25	IRIS DRIVE (SR 12) at McDaniel Mill Road	RTP 2006
O-26	LENORA CHURCH ROAD at Pleasant Hill Road	RTP 2006
O-27	OLD SALEM ROAD (SR 162) at McCalla Road	RTP 2006
O-28	SIGMAN ROAD (SR 20) at Gees Mill Road	RTP 2008
O-29	UNION CHURCH ROAD (From SR 138 to Henry Co. Line)	RTP 2020
O-30	Klondike Road at McDaniel Mill Road and Hurst Road	NA
O-31	West Avenue at Green Street	NA
O-32	American Legion Road and Pine Log Road	NA
O-33	Scott Street at Green Street	NA
O-34	SR 138 at Pine Log Road	NA
O-35	Scott Street at O'Kelly Street	NA
O-36	Sigman Road (SR 20) at East Park Drive	NA
O-37	SR 138 at East View Parkway	NA
O-38	Iris Drive (SR 12) at McDaniel Mill Road	NA
O-39	Ebenezer Road at SR 138	NA
O-40	Loganville Highway (SR 20)(SR 20) at W.Hightower Road East View Parkway	NA
O-41	SR 20 at Honey Creek Road	NA
O-42	Milstead Avenue (SR 20) at Woodland Road	NA
O-43	Milstead Avenue (SR 20) at North side Drive and McCalla Street	NA
O-44	Pine Log Road at Rowland Road	NA
O-45	Milstead Avenue (SR 20) at East View Road	NA
O-46	Milstead Avenue (SR 20) at College Avenue and Turner Street	NA
O-47	Green Street at Old Covington Highway (SR 12)	NA
O-48	Pleasant Hill Rd. @ W. Hightower	CTP
O-49	Old Salem Rd @Underwood/Benji	CTP
O-50	SR 138 @ Tucker Mill Rd/Walker	CTP
O-51	SR 138 @ Tucker Mill Road (West)	CTP
O-52	SR 212 @ Smyrna/O'Neal Rds	CTP
O-53	Honey Creek Rd @ Underwood/Spring	CTP
O-54	SR 20 @ Ralph Road	CTP
O-55	SR 20 @ Marthas Way/Lost Valley	CTP
O-56	SR 20 @ Millers Chapel/Jimson W	CTP
O-57	SR 20 @ Renaissance Drive	CTP
O-58	SR 20 @ Christian Circle (S)	CTP

Figure VI-7: Recommended Operational Improvements

ID	Description	Status
O-59	SR 20 @ Brookfield Drive	CTP
O-60	SR 20 @ Bethel Road/Field Rd	CTP
O-61	SR 162 @ Old Salem Road	CTP
O-62	Old Covington Hwy @ Plunkett Rd	CTP
O-63	SR 138 @ East Fairview Road	CTP
O-64	SR 138 @ Union Church Road	CTP
O-65	East Fairview @ Union Church Rd.(S)	CTP
O-66	Pleasant Hill Rd @ Mink Livey	CTP
O-67	SR 138 @ Amherst	CTP
O-68	Ebenezer Road @ Troupe Smith Rd	CTP
O-69	Pleasant Hill Road @ Rosetta Lane	CTP
O-70	Ellington Road @ Financial Blvd.	CTP
O-71	SR 212 @ Bailey Road	CTP
O-72	SR 138 @ Old Parker Road	CTP
O-73	Granade Road @ Smyrna Road	CTP
O-74	SR 20 @ J.H. House Elementary Sch.	CTP
O-75	Lester Road @ Plunkett Road	CTP
O-76	Milstead Avenue @ Milstead Road	CTP
O-77	Bethel Rd/N.Hightower Rd/White Rd	CTP
O-78	Old Covington Road @ Gees Mill Rd	CTP
O-79	E. Fairview Road @ Williford Branch	CTP
O-80	Sigman (N. Salem) @ Old Covington R	CTP
O-81	College Avenue from Main Street to Milstead Avenue	CTP
O-82	SR 212 @ Crowell Road	CTP
O-83	McDaniel Mill Rd (Smyrna -Flat Shls)	CTP
O-84	Sigman @ Eastview Parkway	CTP
O-85	SR 20 @ Bell Road	CTP
O-86	SR 20 @ Sugar Creek Drive	CTP
O-87	Smyrna Road @ Flat Shoals Road	CTP

Source: Rockdale County and City of Conyers Comprehensive Transportation Plan – URS Corporation

B. Public Transportation and Commuter Rail

There are currently no public transportation services in Rockdale County. In the past, a privately operated express shuttle provided service to Hartsfield International Airport and downtown Atlanta. This service is no longer in operation.

In the short-term, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) has recently purchased 54 buses to provide commuter service throughout the metro Atlanta area, including Rockdale County. This service is expected to be in place in 2004. The busses will run from one of Rockdale County's two park and ride lots located at the intersection of I-20 and Sigman Road. Phase II of the service is planned to run from a proposed park and ride lot at the intersection of I-20 and Salem Road.

In the longer term, the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA), Georgia DOT and GRTA are currently studying potential rail passenger corridors and operating scenarios for a system in the metropolitan Atlanta region. The "Commuter Rail Plan" has identified six feasible routes, one of which passes through the City of Conyers.

There are no transit projects in the current Rockdale CTP.

C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

While transportation planning in the past has primarily been focused on accommodating the single occupant vehicle, a strong preference exists in the community to provide options to residents for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that can serve both recreational and transportation needs.

As concerns about traffic congestion and air quality increase, there is an emerging realization that bicycling and walking are often legitimate alternatives to motorized modes of transportation.

The *1999 Master Trails Plan* for Rockdale County calls for an extensive system of trails, which would serve bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian uses.

Figure VI-8 lists the recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects from the Rockdale CTP.

Figure VI-8: Recommended Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

ID	Description	Status
P-1	Sidewalks on Milstead Avenue (SR 20) from College Avenue to Sigman Road (SR 20)	TIP 2003
P-2	Stanton Road (From SR 138 to Honey Creek Road)	RTP 2011
P-3	Abbott Lake, Signage and Property	RTP 2010
P-4	Parr Road @ Honey Cr. To Stanton Road	CTP
P-5	Oglesby Br. Rd. (South River to SR 20)	CTP
P-6	Rockbridge Road from Main Street to Sigman Road	CTP

Source: Rockdale County and City of Conyers Comprehensive Transportation Plan – URS Corporation

D. Traffic Signals

There are approximately 93 traffic signals currently in use in Rockdale County. As is typical, the majority of the signals are concentrated in and around the urban area. **Figure VI-9** below briefly summarizes the signals by type and maintenance responsibility.

Figure VI-9: Traffic Signals

Type of Signal	Maintenance Responsibility			Total
	State	County	City	
Traffic Signals	40	16	12	68
Flashing Beacons	2	3	0	5
School Signals	3	14	3	20
Total:	45	33	15	93

Source: Rockdale County and City of Conyers Comprehensive Transportation Plan – URS Corporation

E. Bridges

According to the CTP and data provided by the Georgia DOT, all of the bridges in Rockdale County are in good condition and need only minor repair. GDOT recently changed the maximum allowable weight a bridge can carry. This policy has not changed the design standard for bridges. However, as a result, two bridges have now been posted with weight restriction, including:

- Flat Bridge Road over South River, and
- Irwin Bridge Road over Yellow River.

Figure VI-10 lists the recommended upgrades from the CTP.

Figure VI-10: Recommended Bridge Upgrades

ID	Description	Status
B-1	Sigman Road (SR 20) Grade Separation at CSX R/R	TIP 2003
B-2	Hurst Road at Honey Creek	RTP 2007
B-3	SR 212 at Honey Creek	RTP 2008
B-4	Flat Bridge Road over South River	NA
B-5	Irwin Bridge Road over Yellow River	NA

Source: Rockdale County and City of Conyers Comprehensive Transportation Plan – URS Corporation

F. Freight Railroads

CSX Transportation owns and operates a large freight rail network in the southeastern United States. The *New Orleans Gateway* is a Class I route which extends from Montgomery, Alabama to Greenwood, South Carolina. This route passes through Rockdale County, paralleling I-20 to the north. In addition to providing rail freight service to Rockdale County, this is also one of the routes that is being considered for future commuter rail service.

There are no freight rail projects in the current Rockdale CTP.

5. Statement of Goals

The following transportation policy objectives were suggested as part of the Rockdale CTP:

- Provide a safe, efficient and effective transportation infrastructure to support existing and planned development;
- Increase the safety of streets and intersections through the use of medians, sidewalks, signalized crosswalks, limited curb cuts or other appropriate measures;
- Support the creation of a more balanced multi-modal transportation system that offers alternatives to the automobile;
- Improve transportation planning by describing existing conditions, identifying future needs, including the community in long-range planning, prioritizing immediate improvements and actively acquiring appropriate right of way in developing areas.
- Closer coordination with adjoining counties’ land use and transportation plan.

In addition, the following “Best Practices,” which have enjoyed success in other communities, are included for consideration.

- Design and maintain the street network with multiple connections and relatively direct routes.

- Space through-streets no more than a half-mile apart, or the equivalent route density in a curvilinear network.
- Use traffic calming measures liberally. Use short streets, sharp curves, center islands, traffic circles, textured pavements, speed bumps and raised crosswalks.
- Keep speeds on local streets down to 20 mph and speeds on arterials and collectors down to 35 mph (within communities).
- Keep all streets as narrow as possible.
- Avoid using traffic signals except when warranted and always space them for good traffic progression.
- Provide for pedestrians and bicyclists and provide alternatives to travel along high-volume streets.
- Incorporate transit oriented design features. All transportation modes should support commuter rail, while maintaining “neighborhood scale” design.
- Establish TDM programs for local employees including ridesharing, modified work hours, telecommuting and others.

6. Implementation Strategy

Goal 1: Provide a safe, efficient and effective transportation infrastructure to support existing and planned development.

- Implement the recommended roadway capacity improvements listed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, See Figure VI-6.

Goal 2: Increase the safety of streets and intersections through the use of medians, sidewalks, signalized crosswalks, limited curb cuts or other appropriate measures.

- Implement the recommended operational improvements listed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, See Figure VI-7.

Goal 3: Utilize context sensitive design principals in the planning, design and constructions of transportation infrastructure within applicable zoning districts.

- Implement context sensitive design principles as part of the revision to the county’s Unified Development Ordinance in 2004.

Goal 4: Implement corridor guidelines for project development, implementation and construction of the road infrastructure.

- Follow the recommendations of the Salem Road and Stonecrest Small Area Studies
- Incorporate corridor guidelines into the revision to the county's Unified Development Ordinance in 2004.

Goal 5: Support the creation of a more balanced multi-modal transportation system that offers alternatives to the automobile.

- Support the establishment of the GRTA commuter bus service through Rockdale County
- Support the study of a potential rail passenger service by GRPA, and establishment of a rail station in Conyers.
- Implement the recommended Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects listed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. See **Figure VI-8**.

Goal 6: Improve transportation planning by describing existing conditions, identifying future needs, including the community in long-range planning, prioritizing immediate improvements and actively acquire appropriate right-of-way in developing areas.

- Support ongoing long-range transportation planning efforts in the county, such as the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and include an active public outreach effort in such efforts.

Goal 7: Coordinate Transportation Plan with county's land use plan, development standards, zoning standards, codes and regulations.

- Incorporate the CTP recommendations into the revision to the county's Unified Development Ordinance in 2004.

Goal 8: Provide close coordination with the adjoining counties of Newton, Walton, Henry, Gwinnett, and DeKalb land use and transportation plans.

- Actively participate in Atlanta Regional Commission transportation planning efforts.
- Additionally, the Georgia DOT has plans for new Georgia Navigator ITS display signs along I-20 from I-285 to the

city of Conyers. The signs provide real time congestion, accident and construction information to motorists. This project is part of the Regional Transportation Plan and is scheduled to begin construction in 2011.

VII. Housing

1. Introduction

This Housing Element examines the existing housing stock in Rockdale County to determine future housing needs. The housing inventory includes the types of housing, number, age and condition, occupancy and tenure, and the cost of housing units. The assessment determines the adequacy and suitability of the housing stock to serve current and future population and economic development needs. The housing projections will assist the county in preparing for an adequate housing supply. The primary source of information for this chapter is the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Residential parcels are displayed on the Existing Land Use Map included in the Land Use Element of this plan. Land areas that are appropriate for future residential development are shown on the Future Land Use Map, also located in the Land Use Element.

2. Types of Housing Units

The categories of housing units identified by the U.S. Census in 2000 were single-family homes, multi-family homes and mobile homes. The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines mobile homes as houses to which there is no permanent foundation. The mobile home classification includes manufactured homes and modular homes.

Figure VII-1 summarizes the distribution of housing types in Rockdale County. In 2000, County residents occupied 96% of all housing units in the county. Countywide, most homes are single family (80%). Multi-family units make up 16% of the county's housing stock with the remaining 4% as mobile homes.

Figure VII-1: Types of Housing - 2000

Housing Type	Rockdale County		Unincorporated		Conyers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	25,082	100%	20,687	100%	4,395	100%
Occupied Units	24,052	96%	19,993	97%	4,059	92%
Single-Family Units	20,009	80%	18,024	87%	1,985	45%
Multi-Family Units	4,000	16%	1,687	8%	2,313	53%
Mobile Homes	1,073	4%	976	5%	97	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Of the 25,082 housing units in Rockdale County, 4,395 are located in the City of Conyers. While the county is majority single-family, the city is majority multi-family. Single-family units account for 45% of all units, while multi-family units account for 53% of the total number of units in the City.

3. Trends in Types of Housing: 1980 – 2000

Figure VII-2 shows the trends in housing in Rockdale County over the past 20 years. From 1980 to 2000, the total number of housing units more than doubled. During the 1980s, Rockdale County’s total housing stock grew by 64%. Multi-family units increased by 155% during the 1980s, while single-family units increased by 58%.

During the 1990s, single-family units increased at a rate slightly higher than multi-family units. Single-family units increased 29%, while multi-family units increased 27%. Also, the number of mobile homes in the county dropped 18% during the 1990s.

Figure VII-2: Trends in Types of Housing

Housing Type	1980	1990	2000	Change 1980-1990	Change 1990-2000
Total Housing Units	12,142	19,963	25,082	64%	26%
Occupied Units	11,592	18,337	24,052	58%	31%
Single-Family Units	9,875	15,497	20,009	57%	29%
Multi-Family Units	1,240	3,162	4,000	155%	27%
Mobile Homes	1,027	1,304	1,073	27%	-18%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

4. Age and Condition of Housing

Figure VII-3 outlines the age and condition of housing in the county between 1980 and 2000. Two indicators of substandard housing are included in Figure VII-3, the number of units built before 1939 and the number of units without plumbing facilities. Between 1980 and 2000, there has been a substantial decline in the number of remaining units built prior to 1939 and units lacking complete plumbing facilities.

One of the reasons the County’s percentage of substandard units has decreased over the past two decades is the high number of new homes built in the county during that period. In 2000, the median age of housing units countywide was 18 years old. The percentage of houses lacking complete plumbing facilities declined sharply during the 1980s and held steady during the 1990s. The construction of new homes, combined with the rehabilitation,

Figure VII-3: Age and Condition of Housing in 2000

	1980	1990	2000	Change 1980- 1990	Change 1990- 2000
Units Built Before 1939	938	589	650	-37%	10%
Percent of Total Built Before 1939	8%	3%	3%	-5%	0%
Median Year Structure Built	N/A	1978	1982	--	--
Units Lacking Plumbing Facilities	199	73	88	-63%	21%
Percent Lacking Plumbing Facilities	2%	0.3%	0.4%	-1.7%	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Note: The U.S. Census Bureau bases its estimate of units built before 1939 on sample data. Thus the seemingly impossible increase between 1990 and 2000 in the number of units built before 1939 is due to a statistical error.

conversion and loss of older homes are the primary factors contributing to the decline in substandard units.

Rockdale County has a lower percentage of homes built before 1939 and a lower percentage of housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities compared to the state of Georgia, see **Figure VII-4**. Comparing these same categories to surrounding counties that are a part of the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), Rockdale County has approximately the same percentages of units built before 1939 and units lacking complete plumbing facilities. Age and condition of housing are not serious problems in Rockdale County.

Despite the promising statistics, there are isolated areas of the county in need of rehabilitation assistance. One of the most urgent areas is a manufactured home park around Lake Rockaway northwest of Conyers. Widely acclaimed when initially constructed the development is nestled on a lake and includes a package wastewater treatment plant. Unfortunately the area has fallen into serious decline. Many units are vacant and abandoned, or have serious repair needs.

Another neighborhood in need of rehabilitation assistance is the

Figure VII-4: Comparisons of Age and Condition of Housing in 2000

	Rockdale	Atlanta MSA	Georgia
Units Built Before 1939	650	66,937	192,972
Percent of Total Built Before 1939	3%	4%	6%
Median Year Structure Built	1982	1982	1980
Units Lacking Plumbing Facilities	88	6,751	17,117
Percent Lacking Plumbing Facilities	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Fieldstone Estates subdivision in the Salem Road (SR 162) corridor. Within the past few years, the neighborhood has experienced a dramatic level of decline and increase in criminal activity. Built around 1980, the neighborhood includes a mixture of duplexes, triplexes and multiplexes in an array of architectural styles. Working with the residents of both of these neighborhoods to administer needed rehabilitation assistance is a key to successful improvement.

Rockdale County does not have a housing authority and there are no rehabilitation assistance programs.

5. Occupancy, Tenure and Median Costs of Housing – 2000

This section addresses the number of owner and renter-occupied housing units, vacant units and the median costs of housing in Rockdale County.

The majority of occupied units in Rockdale County are owner-occupied units, accounting for 75% of all occupied units (**Figure VII-5**). The vacancy rate for owner occupied units is 1.2% and the median value of owner-occupied units is \$118,000. The renter vacancy rate for the county is 5.4% and the median rent is \$757.

Figure VII-5: Occupancy, Tenure and Cost of Housing

	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	25,082	100%
Occupied Units	24,052	96%
Number Occupied by Owner	17,924	75%
Dollar Median Value (\$)	\$118,000	--
Owner Vacancy Rate (%)	--	1%
Number Occupied by Renter	6,128	25%
Dollar Median Rent (\$)	\$757	--
Renter Vacancy Rate (%)	--	5%
Number of Units Vacant	1,030	4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure VII-6 provides a comparison of the occupancy, tenure and cost of housing between Rockdale County, the Atlanta MSA and the state. Compared to Georgia and the Atlanta MSA, Rockdale County has a lower vacancy rate and a lower share of rental units. When compared to the Atlanta region, housing values are low, but rents are high. Finally, the renter vacancy rate is below both the state and regional level.

Figure VII-6: Comparisons of Occupancy, Tenure and Cost of Housing

	Rockdale	Atlanta MSA	Georgia
% Occupied Units	96%	95%	92%
% Occupied by Owner	75%	66%	68%
Dollar Median Value (\$)	\$118,000	\$135,300	\$111,200
% Occupied by Renter	25%	34%	32%
Dollar Median Rent (\$)	\$757	\$746	\$613
% Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1%	2%	2%
% Renter Vacancy Rate	5%	6%	8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

6. Trends in Occupancy, Tenure and Median Cost of Housing – 1980-2000

This section details homeowner and rental housing trends in Rockdale County between 1980 and 2000. **Figure VII-7** indicates the percentage of owner occupied units has decreased 8% since 1980, but this ratio remained unchanged at 75% from 1990 to 2000. The median value of owner occupied units has increased substantially over the past 20 years, from \$49,500 in 1980 to \$118,000 in 2000.

Figure VII-7: Trends in Occupancy, Tenure and Cost of Housing

	1980	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	12,142	19,963	25,082
Occupied Units	11,592	18,337	24,052
Number Occupied by Owner	9,564	13,786	17,924
Owner Occupied (%)	83%	75%	75%
Dollar Median Value (\$)	\$49,500	\$86,200	\$118,000
Number Occupied by Renter	2,028	4,551	6,128
Renter Occupied (%)	17%	25%	25%
Dollar Median Rent (\$)	\$222	\$447	\$757
Number of Units Vacant	550	1,626	1,030
Vacant Units as Percent of Total	5%	8%	4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Over the past 20 years, the number of units occupied by renters has more than tripled, from 2,028 in 1980 to 6,128 in 2000. The percentage of all housing units that are rental units has increased from 17% in 1980 to 25% in 1990, and held constant during the 1990s at 25%. The median rent has increased significantly from \$222 in 1980 to \$757 in 2000.

While the total number of housing units grew steadily during the last 20 years, the vacancy rate has been more erratic. In 1980, 5% of all units in the county were vacant. This percentage increased to 8% in 1990, but fell to 4% in 2000.

Figure VII-8 compares the percent change in the cost of housing from 1980 to 2000 for Rockdale County and the state of Georgia. Between 1980 and 1990, the total number of units increased at a

considerably higher rate in Rockdale County than in the state. The cost of housing, while increasing, generally did not outpace the state. Home values increased at rates slower than those of the state during both the 1980s and 1990s, while rent costs increased at comparable to slightly higher rates during the same two decades. Like housing condition, affordability is not a critical issue in Rockdale County.

7. Housing Affordability

One of the prime indicators of housing affordability is the cost burden to owner and renter households for housing. Households that spend more than 30% of their income for housing are by definition considered cost burdened. **Figure VII-8** shows the percentage of total households in Rockdale County and the state of Georgia in 1999 that fall within this category.

Figure VII-8: Housing Affordability Tables

A: Households who paid more than 30% of their income for housing in 1999		
	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied
Rockdale County	35.9%	20.0%
Georgia	35.4%	21.0%
B: Percentage of households whose income was less than \$35,000 that paid more than 30% of income for housing in 1999		
	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied
Rockdale County	69.3%	52.2%
Georgia	55.1%	48.7%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

These tables suggest that Rockdale's housing stock is affordable as a whole, but has some affordability problem for the poorest of its residents. As Figure VII-9 indicates, the percentage of Rockdale County and Georgia households that are cost burdened is about the same. There is a difference, however, in terms of low-income households, where the percentage of households that are cost burdened is much higher in the county than in the state. The relatively high cost of housing for the county's poor may be forcing many households to seek affordable housing elsewhere. In the long run, this could have a negative impact on economic development efforts, since employers will have more difficulty filling entry level and low wage positions.

Figure VII-9: Percent Change in Cost of Housing Compared with Georgia

	Rockdale		Georgia	
	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-1990	1990-2000
Total Number of Units	64%	26%	31%	24%
Median Dollar Value	74%	37%	92%	57%
Median Dollar Rent	101%	69%	105%	42%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

8. Trends for the Future

As discussed in detail in the Population Element of this Plan, the population of Rockdale County is expected to increase to 91,500 by 2010 and 113,000 by 2020. Over the next 20 years, the projected household size is not expected to decrease much, declining slightly from 2.87 in 2000 to 2.80 in 2020. Based on these figures the county will have over 40,000 households by 2020.

Figure VII-10: Future Housing Demand

Year	Projected Population	Projected Household Size	Total Projected Housing Units
2000	70,111	2.87	25,082
2005	81,000	2.83	30,300
2010	91,500	2.80	34,700
2015	102,100	2.79	38,800
2020	113,000	2.80	42,800

Source: Jordan, Jones and Goulding; Atlanta Regional Commission; Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002

Assuming a countywide vacancy rate of 6%, the projected housing unit totals have been calculated. **Figure VII-10** details the future housing demand for the county over the next 20 years.

9. Assessment and Key Findings

Major points found in conducting the inventory include:

- 80% of Rockdale County's housing units are single family. Within the unincorporated county, 87% are also single family.
- Rockdale County added 5,100 housing units during the 1990s and 7,800 housing units during the 1980s.
- The number of mobile homes in the county declined between 1990 and 2000 by 18%.
- Age, condition and affordability of housing units are not significant problems within Rockdale County, although there are isolated areas in need of rehabilitation.
- 75% of the county's housing units are owner-occupied and the owner-occupied vacancy rate was 1.2% in 2000.

- Rockdale County is expected to need about 17,700 net new housing units by 2020.

Of these new housing units, approximately 80%, or 14,160, are anticipated to be single-family. This assumes that the current proportion of single-family housing to total housing units will remain the same.

10. Statement of Goals

Goal 1: Provide a variety of housing choices throughout the region to ensure housing for individuals and families of diverse incomes and age groups, including the provision of life cycle housing at the neighborhood level.

Goal 2: Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.

Goal 3: Improve the aesthetics of medium to high density housing within the county.

Goal 4: Improve the sustainability of existing and new residential neighborhoods.

11. Implementation Strategy

Following is a list of housing strategies tailored to achieve each of the identified goals. Many of the strategies identified in this plan will be accomplished through the major revision to the county's Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations that is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2004, particularly those strategies under Goals 3 and 4. Most of the strategies, however, are policy statements that should be considered by government officials in making land use and capital investment decisions.

Goal 1: Provide a variety of housing choices throughout the region to ensure housing for individuals and families of diverse incomes and age groups, including the provision of life cycle housing at the neighborhood level.

- Encourage townhouses, with design standards, in certain districts.
- Replace high-density residential zoning with a mixed use zoning district that allows comparable or slightly higher densities when built in conjunction with other compatible uses such as retail, office, or recreation. The Future Land Use Plan identifies several areas in the county where this type of development is appropriate. Several of the locations include the redevelopment of older commercial areas.

- Work with the aging baby boomer population to identify strategies for meeting their housing needs in the coming decade.

Goal 2: Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.

- Work with neighborhoods to increase accessibility of residents to shopping, schools, playgrounds, open space, as well as other residential neighborhoods.
- Increase levels of accessibility while managing increases in cut-through traffic.
- Expand neighborhood parks and playgrounds and increase opportunities for contact with nature.
- Pursue rehabilitation of older manufactured housing parks, and other isolated subdivisions and housing in close partnership with existing residents. Neighborhoods that have already been identified include:
 - The manufactured park on Lake Rockaway.
 - Fieldstone Estate subdivision

Goal 3: Improve the aesthetics of medium to high density housing within the county.

- Develop architectural controls within some zoning classifications or districts within the county. Districts that have already been identified include:
 - The Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor
 - The area along Iris Drive (SR 12) near DeKalb County (the northern subarea of the Stonecrest Mall Small Area Study)
 - And any designated mixed-use activity center.
 - Any areas designated for townhouses.
- To protect the county from low quality, small lot subdivisions, increase quality standards for residential areas as lot sizes decrease.

Goal 4: Improve the sustainability of existing and new residential neighborhoods.

- Encourage mixed-use nodes that include residences above retail. This type of development is more energy efficient and reduces the need to drive in cars.
- Encourage conservation subdivisions to preserve open space and provide easy access to nature.
- Work with developers and the public to develop a Greenway Master Plan that identifies policies and programs for developments to conserve sensitive environmental areas while protecting profitability. This Plan should also

identify ways to create a network of greenways and trails between neighborhoods throughout the county.

- Require connectivity between subdivisions either through a maximum block length or a maximum block area to create a more grid-like street network.

VIII. Land Use

The Land Use Element is the central component of the Comprehensive Plan. It serves as the synthesis of all other elements of the plan and as a mechanism to guide and control future growth in a community. Its overarching intent is to guide the intensity, location, and timing of new development and redevelopment and to ensure compatibility with existing development, future population and economic development trends, community infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.

The structure of the Land Use Element is designed to meet the requirements of the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Local Planning of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. It is presented in four sections:

1. Inventory of Existing Conditions
2. Needs and Goals
3. Recommended Plan
4. Implementation Strategies

1. Inventory of Existing Conditions

The following provides an inventory and analysis of land use patterns in Rockdale County and their relationship to environmentally sensitive lands, community facilities and services and market demands. Various spatial land use forms and projections for future land use are also presented, compiled from the integration of the existing land use inventory; future land use constraints and issues; and population, housing, and economic development trends identified in other elements of the plan. Potential applications of growth management and implementation strategies for guiding future development in unincorporated Rockdale County are also provided.

A. Existing Land Use.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has established a statewide land use classification system for regional and local government agencies in Georgia. The system, based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code, consists of eight categories required by the *Minimum Planning Standards*. In addition to the land use categories required by DCA, five additional categories were used that are specific to Rockdale County including Watershed Protection, Watershed Protection

Country Store, Historic Village, Office/Professional, and Water categories. Additionally, subcategories were created that divided the residential uses into Conservation, Low-Density and High-Density categories. **Figure VIII-1** (inserted at the end of the element) illustrates the existing land use for Rockdale County.

B. Classifications of Existing Land Use

The following land use categories were used to survey existing land uses in the county.

- **Watershed Protection** – This area is the land that falls within the Big Haynes Creek watershed in the northern part of the county. The area is intended for single-family detached residential dwellings with a density of no more than one unit per three acres.
- **Estate Residential** – This category is intended for areas composed of single-family detached residential dwellings with a density of no more than one unit per acre, consistent with the rural character of the community and surrounding densities.
- **Low Density Residential** - This category is intended for areas composed of single-family detached residential dwellings with a density of no more than one unit per acre, consistent with the rural character of the community and surrounding densities.
- **Conservation Residential** - This category is intended for single-family detached residential dwellings with a density of 1 to 2.72 units per acre. Institutional uses that are considered complementary in this area include churches, schools, and libraries.
- **High-Density Residential** - Typical uses include single-family attached dwellings (such as townhouses) as well as multi-family condominiums and apartments, at densities of three or more units per acre, typically over one story. These developments should incorporate some amount of central outdoor public space for their residents. A limited number of churches, schools, libraries, other miscellaneous institutional uses and daycare facilities would be complementary in these areas. A high-density residential area is usually located near areas of high employment concentration, large commercial nodes, transportation nodes and mixed-use developments. It is essential that these developments include proper buffering between adjacent land uses.
- **Commercial** - This category includes standard retail and commercial service activities such as shopping centers, general retailers, specialty shops, grocery stores, drug stores, banks, restaurants, theatres, hotels, dry cleaners and entertainment

facilities. These establishments should be located on appropriate transportation corridors to easily serve the public. Visual impacts of these developments should be minimized by requiring buffers, landscaping and architectural controls.

- **Office/Professional** – This category includes business concerns that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not, as a primary activity, involve the manufacture, storage or distribution of products. This category includes small, single-occupant structures for professionals as well as large office parks with a variety of tenants in multi-story buildings.
- **Watershed Protection (WP) Country Store** – This category includes small commercial uses located in the Watershed Protection Zoning District for the county. These uses are typically gas stations or older country stores in rural areas.
- **Public/Institutional** - Includes uses such as schools, colleges, hospitals, municipal community centers, churches, cemeteries, municipal buildings and post offices.
- **Industrial** - The primary purpose of this category is to provide for areas where light industrial uses can be located. These light industrial uses include light manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale/distribution and assembly. More intensive industrial uses that are characterized by noise, fumes, vibration and other forms of pollution that might be viewed as objectionable by surrounding uses are acceptable only on a case-by-case basis if well screened and buffered from other uses. Limited commercial uses are also allowed in industrial areas if they complement existing industrial uses, such as cafeterias and day cares.
- **Historic Village** – This category includes land that is part of the historic Milstead Village located north of Conyers. A special preservation ordinance will be prepared to protect this important historic resource.
- **Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)** - This category includes land dedicated to active and passive recreation uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include public parks, recreation areas, golf courses and similar uses.
- **Water** – Land that is included as part of a lake or pond in the county.
- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities (TCU)** - This category includes uses such as landfills, water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, power substations, rail yards, mass transit facilities, airports, etc. These uses may be either public or private.

- **Vacant** - Includes land not developed for a specific use or land that was developed for a particular use but that has been

Figure VIII-2: Rockdale County Existing Land Use: 2003

Classification	Acres	Square Miles	Percent of Total
Low Density Residential	20,161	31.5	25.0
Vacant	20,064	31.4	24.8
Conservation Residential	19,354	30.2	24.0
Watershed Protection	6,787	10.6	8.4
PRC	3,735	5.8	4.6
Industrial	2,789	4.4	3.5
High Density Residential	2,156	3.4	2.7
Commercial	1,925	3.0	2.4
Public/Institutional	1,905	3.0	2.3
Water	1,006	1.6	1.2
Office/Professional	635	1.0	0.7
TCU	207	0.3	0.3
Historic Village	10	0.0	0.0
WP Country Store	9	0.0	0.0
Total	80,743	126.2	100.0
Source: Rockdale County Existing Land Use Plan, 2003			

abandoned for that use. This category includes woodlands or pastureland, undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions and industrial parks, water bodies and locations of structures that have been vacant for some time and allowed to become deteriorated or dilapidated.

C. Existing Land Use Distribution

Residential properties are dispersed throughout the county, with single-family representing the most predominant use. (Figure VIII-2 provides a breakdown of the land use distribution in the county). Low Density Residential and Conservation Residential property combined account for approximately 50 percent of the total land area. Low Density Residential land is concentrated north of Hi Roc Road and in the southwest part of the county. The highest concentrations of Conservation Residential properties are found in the southeastern part of the county near McDonough Highway (SR 20) and Honey Creek Road.

The next largest land use category is Vacant land, accounting for 24 percent of the total. Vacant land is evenly disbursed throughout the county. The fourth largest land use category is Watershed Protection land, which makes up 8 percent of the total area. This is land in the northern part of the county that falls within the watershed of the Big Haynes Creek. Parks/Recreation/

Conservation land accounts for 5 percent of the total land area. Some of the larger park areas include the Panola Mountain State Conservation Park, the Big Haynes Creek Nature Preserve, the South Rockdale Community Park and the Earl O'Neal Sports Complex.

There are 2,789 acres of Industrial land in the county or 4 percent of the total land area. Nearly all of this land is adjacent to I-20, with the highest concentrations located in the western part of the county along Old Covington Road and east of Conyers along Walnut Grove Highway (SR 20 & SR 138) between Sigman Road (SR 20) and Old Covington Road. Public/Institutional land makes up 3 percent of the total area and is scattered throughout the county.

Both Commercial and High-Density Residential property comprise over 2 percent each of the total land area in Rockdale County. Concentrations of Commercial property can be found along I-20, McDonough Highway (SR 20), Old Covington Road and Salem Road (SR 162). High-Density Residential properties are located both north and south of I-20. The remaining five land use categories combined account for only 1.5 percent of the total land area and are spread throughout the county.

D. Land Use Assessment

1. Overview

The character of unincorporated Rockdale County is primarily suburban residential. This encompasses a mixture of land uses - residential, business/commercial, industrial, and public - all at relatively low density. I-20 bisects the county and provides a corridor of commercial and industrial uses along its length as well as in clusters at interchanges. This land use mixture provides limited spatial separation for dissimilar land uses, resulting in conflicting and contentious land use issues. The city of Conyers is roughly in the center of the county and has an older, more urbanized land use pattern with a traditional small town character. North of the municipal limits Rockdale County is characterized by the protected watershed surrounding Big Haynes Reservoir and is more sparsely developed with large lot residences and forested land.

2. Land Use Patterns and Infrastructure

Transportation has had a significant impact on Rockdale County's development pattern. Interstate 20, SR 20, SR 138 and SR 162 have served as magnets for commercial and residential development in the county. In particular, I-20 has made it easier for people to live in Rockdale County and commute into Atlanta. Also, the interstate has attracted commercial and industrial development nearby.

Whereas transportation networks influence the location of development, the availability of sewer aids in determining the density of certain developments, and to some extent, the location as well. High-density developments such as apartments, manufacturing or multi-story facilities require the availability of sewer; whereas, low-density developments can be supported by septic tanks that require relatively large drainage fields. Presently, sewer serves only 25 percent of the county's population and the remainder is served by septic tanks or private systems.

There are seven wastewater treatment facilities that serve Rockdale County. Plans currently exist to upgrade one of the plants to bring the county's capacity to 11 MGD. This capacity is sufficient to meet the county's short-term needs, but additional treatment capacity will be necessary to meet the county's long-term needs.

3. Transitional Areas

Like most suburban counties in metropolitan Atlanta, Rockdale County has some areas that may be considered to be in transition. These include residential areas in older neighborhoods, that are aging and need reinvestment and repair, as well as older commercial areas that include vacant stores and empty parking lots.

One example of an area in transition in Rockdale County that contains both symptoms is the Salem Road (SR 162) corridor. This corridor includes homes that have changed from owner occupied to renter occupied, and several commercial centers near Flat Shoals Road that have marginal tenants and some empty stores. It would appear that there is still economic activity in the corridor, since there are new commercial centers being built and a number of relatively new subdivisions a mile or so further south. It would seem that factors contributing to decline there include:

- Heavy through traffic between Newton County and I-20 that has reduced the quality of life for residents in the area.
- Older commercial centers that are losing tenants to newer structures.

- Development activity moving south toward cheaper land prices.
- Commercial strip commercial uses that cater to through traffic and lessen the attractiveness of the area for local residents
- Lack of any distinctive attractions or character that would give the area a comparative advantage over competing development.

This type of transition is an important land use planning issue because it often requires public intervention to reverse the forces of decline, provide incentives for redevelopment and set higher expectations in the real estate community. In the end, the forces of decline contain the seeds of resurgence as land values and rents will eventually fall to the point that the area is ripe for reinvestment. If the local government intervenes early it can channel the reinvestment in positive ways and ensure that the redevelopment is sustainable.

Although the term “transitional” connotes places that are in decline, transition can be a positive sign. An example of another type of transitional area is the Stonecrest area south of I-20 in western Rockdale County. This area has a large supply of undeveloped land with little community infrastructure, but it is experiencing strong development pressure as a result of the development of the Stonecrest Regional Mall in DeKalb County. Growth pressures are spilling over into Rockdale County. This area needs development guidelines to ensure that new development is balanced, of high quality, respects environmental resources in the area and is coordinated with infrastructure improvements.

In both these cases, Rockdale recognized that transition is an important issue for land use planning. Therefore, Rockdale County initiated small area studies for both of these transitional locations. The small area studies involved the community stakeholders in establishing a vision for positive change, considering the interrelationship of land use, transportation, urban design, and the natural environment. Rockdale County is now considering strategies for implementing the new vision for these areas by revising the land use plan, changing the zoning, and considering how public improvements can be used to shape future development in positive directions. A description of the planning process and recommendations from these small area studies is contained in **Section 6** of this portion of the plan.

E. Future Growth Shapers

Market demand, population growth, economic development, community infrastructure, and the environmental suitability of land are the major factors affecting Rockdale County's future land use needs. Also influential are adopted land use goals and implementation strategies. Whether qualitative or quantitative, these factors will play a significant role in guiding the intensity, location, and timing of future growth in Rockdale County.

The major growth shapers in a community typically involve the availability of community facilities and services such as roads, water and sewer, schools, social and cultural institutions such as libraries, and fire and police. From both a social and market perspective, land that provides access to a network of supporting infrastructure and community facilities has greater development value. As such, the availability of these facilities and services is key in determining land that is fiscally suitable and desirable for urban development.

As previously indicated, current transportation routes in Rockdale County play a significant role in the accessibility of land parcels, and thereby the potential for development. As in most communities, extensions of transportation, water, and sewer infrastructure greatly expand the supply of land for urban development.

Also influential to future growth in Rockdale County are established environmental standards, which have played a more significant role in shaping community growth in the last decade. Recent air and water quality programs at the Federal and State level recognize the connection between land use and environmental quality. At the local level, this is likely to necessitate more sophisticated studies of environmental quality and more precise performance standards for environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands and floodplains.

F. Urban Sprawl and Compact Development

Rockdale County is like many other growing suburban counties across the country that are experiencing the phenomenon of low density, auto-oriented growth patterns commonly known as "urban sprawl."

There are three commonly recognized types of urban sprawl:

- 1) Large expanses of low-density, single-purpose development;

- 2) Leap-frog development; and
- 3) Unbounded strip commercial development along major highways.

Strip commercial development and expanses of low-density residential development are probably the most prevalent form of urban sprawl in Rockdale County today. However, as infrastructure expands, leap-frog development could become perhaps the most costly manifestation of sprawl. Leap-frog development is the premature construction of low-density housing in areas away from existing development. The consequences of this premature development include higher costs of infrastructure. According to a study by the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the costs of providing infrastructure and services to an area that is over 10 miles away from current services is \$15,000 more per lot than the cost of providing the same services to a lot close to central facilities and services. In some cases, a community may pay twice for infrastructure and services - once for the infrastructure and services where growth was planned and again where the leap-frog development was permitted.

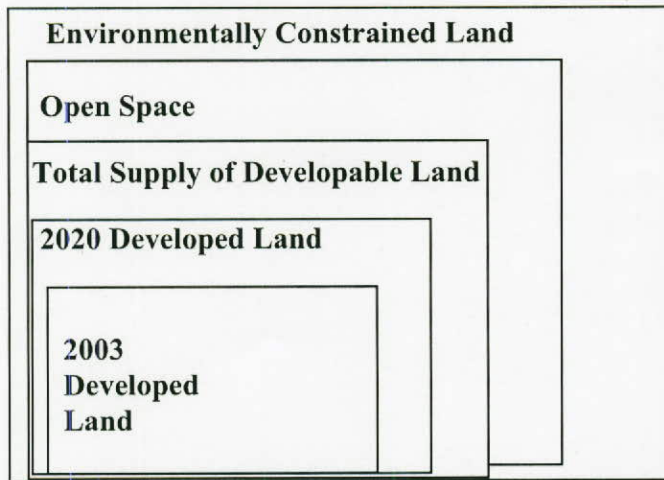
In addition, the quality and capacity of infrastructure may not be upgraded to suburban standards in the short timeframe that motivated the developer to sell houses. Therefore, the lots have to be bigger to accommodate wells, septic tanks, and ditched streets. This means lower "yield" for the developer, but also may cause a lower tax base for the local government to pay the costs of schools and public services. It also reduces the buying power of customers available to the stores and commercial services coming to serve the new area.

These are some of the characteristics of sprawl in terms of its impact on the quality of development. However, urban sprawl also has an important impact on the quantity of land use available for future generations. Sprawling suburban communities all over the country are finding that with each new wave of growth, the amount of land being consumed by development is increasing at a faster rate than is population. For example, recent studies in suburban Atlanta have shown that for every ten percent increase in population, developed land areas increase by up to fifty percent. We have already discussed how this expansion affects housing and agriculture. However, over the long run, this rapid outward expansion puts a squeeze on the quantity of land that a county has available for its future. **Figure VIII-3** shows graphically how land within a county is a fixed quantity that can be depicted as a square. On the outside of the square is open space and other land that must

be set aside from development because of its environmental sensitivity. At the other corner of the square is the land that is developed for human activity. As the quantity of land required for development expands outward, the residual supply of developable land becomes squeezed tighter and tighter. Eventually, the diminishing supply of developable land drives land prices up to perilous levels, causing the price of housing, and even public facilities, to grow beyond reach.

Given its diminishing supply of developable land, Rockdale County should incorporate land use planning tools that direct and orient development patterns and economic incentives away from urban sprawl patterns to ones that support compact development. Compact development is not synonymous with higher density. Residential density is often considered a culprit in public land use controversies. Usually the community wants less density and the developer wants more. However, residential density is a shorthand measure of the quantity of development, or number of housing units per acre. However, it is not a reliable measure of many more important, qualitative characteristics, such as the amount of open space, impervious area, building mass, or even the number of residents. These attributes relate more directly to the quality of living within a community, and relate more to the arrangement of uses, types of uses, and site design factors than on the abstract concept of density.

Figure VIII-3: Diminishing Supply of Developable Land



Compact development manages density and intensity of development through design to conserve land, reduce impacts on traffic and storm water for a given amount of development, and make maximum use of existing infrastructure. It also protects against the negative impacts of urban sprawl by placing varied but complementary land uses in proximity to each other. Compact development promotes a mix and arrangement of land uses that are conducive to pedestrian activity and alternative modes of transportation. With well-designed compact development, more everyday destinations - shops, churches, and schools- are within convenient walking distance.

The primary benefits of compact development include: (1) reductions in land consumption – preservation of open space, natural resources, and farm and agricultural land; (2) lower infrastructure costs; (3) balance of supportive land uses; (4) distinct neighborhoods with more amenities and higher quality of life; and (5) reductions in auto-dependency and promotion of a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

A key component of compact development is a balanced transportation plan that incorporates the principles of land use management, capacity management, and travel demand management (TDM). As stated previously, land use management strategies involve promoting a mixture of compact, transit-oriented land uses. Capacity management assesses the ability of existing transportation routes to meet current needs of the community, while TDM attempts to modify community travel behavior by

reducing the number and length of trips and shifting trips to more efficient modes or less congested routes. The following represent the guiding principles to sustainable mobility through compact development:

- A balance of integrated and complementary land uses;
- Diverse residential areas;
- Commercial and employment core areas in walking distance of surrounding residential areas and at a scale appropriate to a balanced living-working environment;
- Public uses and civic space suitable for the immediate community's needs;
- Natural amenity areas, attractive landscaping interconnected with functional open space;
- Well-designed shared parking areas that are also pedestrian friendly;
- Connected grid street system to distribute traffic evenly;
- Neighborhood residential street design that distributes traffic efficiently and calms internal traffic to residential levels; and
- Driveway and access design standards that move traffic efficiently, direct it away from high-conflict areas, and promote appropriate land uses.

2. Needs and Goals

As with most growing communities, Rockdale County must address the challenges that accelerated development presents, focusing future development in suitable areas and also protecting the county's significant agricultural lands, natural areas, and open space corridors. Growth management strategies offer defensible options for managing the long-term growth and development in Rockdale County, mainly through techniques that help control the intensity, location, and timing of development.

The Land Use Element Vision, Needs, and Goals are, in part, a result of a series of public workshops held during the course of the comprehensive plan development process with citizens of Rockdale County. Ideas from sub-area studies and groups throughout the county, as well as surrounding counties, were also important resources in formulating land use needs and goals. The Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor and Stonecrest Area Studies, recent sub-area study initiatives, provide excellent models for growth management principles discussed throughout the Land Use Element.

Land Use Vision

Rockdale County will provide for a high quality of life by planning for population growth, public and private development, and redevelopment and by planning the proper distribution, location, and intensity of land uses with adequate levels of services while maintaining and protecting the natural resources, residential neighborhoods, and local character of the county.

Need: Rockdale County needs to prepare for a significant amount of growth. Between 2000 and 2020 Rockdale County (including the City of Conyers) will add 17,696 new housing units and 2,333 new employees. This growth will require approximately 17,981 acres to be developed or redeveloped over the 20 years from 2000 to 2020. Environmentally sensitive areas and open space will need to be protected from development.

Goal 1: Strive for compact development patterns to conserve vacant land and identify ways to preserve open space.

Goal 2: Make rezoning decisions consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Need: As rapid growth in Rockdale County continues and infrastructure costs escalate, public officials and planning staff must work together to ensure fiscally sound land use decisions.

Goal 3: Direct development into the areas of the county that have in place, or have agreements to provide, adequate community infrastructure and services to accommodate future growth.

Goal 4: Promote more compact development patterns, focusing on principles related to walkable communities.

Need: A joint effort by Rockdale County public officials and planning staff to promote a land use pattern that protects environmentally sensitive areas and directs development away from the most environmentally constrained land.

Goal 5: Restrict land disturbance in the most environmentally sensitive areas to protect them from the negative impacts of development.

Goal 6: Reduce impervious surfaces and other land disturbance activities that may degrade the environment.

Goal 7: Promote open space conservation in the development process as a value added amenity in development.

Need: A joint effort by Rockdale County public officials and planning staff is needed to ensure a compatible land use pattern and mix.

Goal 8: Establish adequate land use transitions.

Goal 9: Preserve and protect the character and viability of existing communities and developing new communities.

Goal 10: Maintain the distinction between conservation areas and developed areas.

Goal 11: Reduce visual clutter by limiting the amount of and size of billboards and on-site signs.

Need: A joint effort by Rockdale County public officials and planning staff to coordinate land use and transportation plan so that the transportation system and future land use plan support each other.

Goal 12: Direct transportation system improvements away from environmentally sensitive areas and toward locations where community services can be provided more economically.

Goal 13: Require careful coordination of transportation facility planning and design with land use planning, growth management, and design standards.

Need: To develop a way to manage growth infrastructure problems that cross city and county boundaries.

Goal 14: Promote regional cooperation regarding comprehensive planning.

As part of its effort to protect regional values, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has developed a set of "best development practices" as well as a set of "guiding policies," which are incorporated into the planning and regulatory processes of communities under the ARC. The following practices are project level strategies for implementing regional values and attaining

regional goals. The underpinning regional goals include cleaner air and water, higher quality of life and more livable urban environments.

- Keep vehicle miles of travel (VMT) below the area average. Infill developments are the best at accomplishing this. The more remote a development, the more self contained it must be to stay below the average VMT.
- Contribute to the area's jobs-housing balance. Strive for a job-housing balance within a three to five mile area around a development site.
- Mix land uses at the finest grain the market will bear and include civic uses in the mix.
- Develop in clusters and keep the clusters small.
- Place higher-density housing near commercial centers, transit lines and parks. This will enable more walking, biking and transit use.
- Phase convenience shopping and recreational opportunities to keep pace with housing. These are valued amenities and translate into less external travel by residents if located convenient to housing.
- Make subdivisions into neighborhoods with well-defined centers and edges that employ the elements of traditional neighborhoods.
- Reserve school sites and donate them if necessary to attract new schools. This will result in neighborhood schools, which provide a more supportive learning environment than larger ones.
- Concentrate commercial development in compact centers or districts, rather than letting it spread out in strips.
- Make shopping centers and business parks into all-purpose activity centers. Mixing uses and designing them with the pedestrian amenities of downtowns could improve suburban shopping centers and their environments.
- Tame auto-oriented land uses, or at least separate them, from pedestrian oriented uses.

ARC adopted 14 development policies that served as a guide for future growth from a local perspective. These were included in the Regional Development Plan adopted by ARC in March 2003. This plan recognizes these policies as a means of protecting land as a non-renewable resource.

- **Policy 1** - Provide development strategies and infrastructure investments to accommodate forecast population and employment growth more efficiently.
- **Policy 2** - Guide an increased share of new development to the Central Business District, transportation corridors, activity centers and town centers.
- **Policy 3** - Increase opportunities for mixed-use development, infill and redevelopment.
- **Policy 4** - Increase transportation choices and transit-oriented development (TOD).
- **Policy 5** - Provide a variety of housing choices throughout the region to ensure housing for individuals and families of diverse incomes and age groups.
- **Policy 6** - Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.
- **Policy 7** - Advance sustainable development.
- **Policy 8** - Protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Policy 9** - Create a regional network of greenspace that connects across jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Policy 10** - Preserve existing rural character.
- **Policy 11** - Preserve historic resources.
- **Policy 12** - Inform and involve the public in planning at regional, local and neighborhood levels.
- **Policy 13** - Coordinate local policies and regulations to support the RDP.
- **Policy 14** - Support growth management at the state level.

These goals and policies are expressed in the Recommended Plan and Implementation Strategies that follow.

3. Recommended Plan

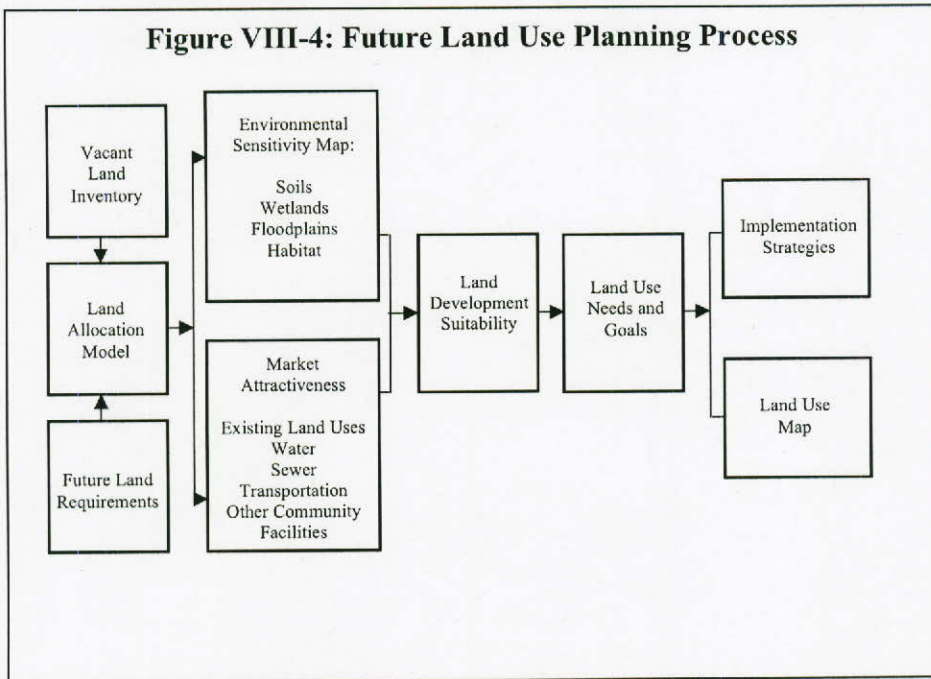
The overarching role of the Land Use Element is to manage and guide the intensity, location, and timing of growth. Determining the availability and suitability of land and future land use needs is fundamental to the growth management and land use planning process. **Figure VIII-4** illustrates the land use planning process used to determine the development suitability of land in Rockdale County.

A. The Future Land Use Planning Process

The overarching role of the Land Use Element is to manage and guide the intensity, location, and timing of growth. Determining the availability and suitability of land and future land use needs is fundamental to the growth management and land use planning process. **Figure VIII-4** illustrates the land use planning process used to determine the development suitability of land in Rockdale County.

The **land allocation model** is the first step in the development suitability analysis. It begins with a **vacant land inventory** that examines the supply of vacant and undeveloped sites. The next step is to estimate **future land requirements** – the amount of land necessary to accommodate future land use changes related to growth. Then it compares the demand to the acreage of tracts of vacant and underdeveloped land.

Land development suitability analysis involves determining how



much of the vacant land inventory is appropriate for development. The first step in this process involves assessing the **environmental sensitivity** of land, considering the presence of sensitive environmental features such as soils, slopes, floodplains, wetlands, habitat, and prime agriculture land. The second step in the process involves the **market attractiveness** of land and considers factors such as access to water and sewer systems, major streets, highways, and surrounding land.

Land development suitability maps the market attractiveness of vacant land and compares it with environmental sensitivity maps to identify the areas of the county that are both attractive to the real estate market and relatively free from environmental constraints. These are the areas that are most desirable for higher intensity land use.

The next step in the Land Use Planning process is to interpret the data and maps created in the previous steps to write **land use needs and goals** that suggest the direction that land use and growth management would take in Rockdale County. The land use goals become the guiding force behind the preparation of a land use plan, comprised of a **land use map** to describe the spatial development and form of the county, and **implementation strategies** that establish programs and allocate necessary resources to implement the plan.

The rest of this section of the Land Use Element summarizes the outcome of this process in Rockdale County.

B. Future Land Use Requirements

Population, housing, and employment forecasts are helpful in determining the amount of land necessary to accommodate both residential and non-residential future land uses needs. Based on county-wide future population projections of 113,000 persons according to **Figure II-13** of the Population Element and the future housing projection of 40,357 households identified in **Figure VII-9** of the Housing Element, Rockdale County (including the City of Conyers), and if there will be a residential vacancy rate of 6 percent, then Rockdale County will likely see construction of 17,696 new housing units from 2000 to 2020. These housing units will need an estimated 10,059 additional acres of land. (See **Figure VIII-5**)

These 2020 projected needs are based on relatively conservative standard densities permitted for each land use:

- 1 unit per acre for housing units on Low Density Residential land use
- 2 units per acre for housing units using Conservation Subdivision land use
- 1 housing unit per 3 acres in the Big Haynes Watershed area
- 6 housing units per acre for multi-family residential

- 4 housing units per acre for manufactured homes.

Figure VIII-5 Future Residential Land Requirements in Rockdale County, 2000-2020

Housing Type	2000 Housing Units	2020 Housing Units	Change 2000-2020	Density Units/Acre	New Acres Land Use
Single Family	20,009	34,135	14,126		
Conservation SD	16,429	28,024	11,595	2/acre	5,798
Low Density Residential	2,773	4,745	1,972	1/acre	1,972
BH Watershed	807	1,366	559	.33/acre	1,694
Multi-family	4,000	7,570	3,570	6/acre	595
Manufactured Homes	1,073	1,073	0	4/acre	0
TOTAL	25,082	42,778	17,696		10,059
Source: Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc.					

Future non-residential land use needs for the economic sector were based on Rockdale County job forecasts presented in the Economic Element. Additional employees were translated into additional land use needs by calculating the average space requirement of 550 square feet per employee for retail, 300 square feet per employee for office, and 1,500 square feet per employee for industrial, warehouse and similar structures. Using a building density of 10,000 square feet per acre for buildings, the land requirement in acres per employee would be:

- 0.15 acres per employee for the types of employment using Light Industrial, Manufacturing, TCU and ODT land use
- 0.45 acres per employee for the types of employment using Commercial and
- 0.33 acres per employee for Office-Professional land uses.

Average space requirements were then adjusted for a vacancy allowance of 5 percent and an estimated density. As a result, Rockdale County will require an additional 2,450 acres for new employment by the year 2020 (**Figure VIII-6**).

Figure VIII-7 shows that if another 15 percent of newly developed land, or 1,876 acres, will be needed for right of way and public uses by 2020, altogether there will be a demand for over 14,000 acres of land development and redevelopment in Rockdale County

Figure VIII-6: Future Non-Residential Land Requirements in Rockdale County, 2000-2020

Land Use Category	Employment Type	2000 Employment	2020 Employment	Change Employ.	Acres/ Employee*	Acres
Lt. Ind., Man	Manufacturing	6,994	8,232	1,238	0.15	186
ODT	Construction	4,642	7,097	2,455	0.15	368
TCU	TCU	2,646	5,033	2,387	0.15	358
ODT	Wholesale	2,273	3,201	928	0.15	139
Commercial	Retail	8,531	16,165	7,634	0.45	344
OP/ ODT	Services	11,301	21,437	10,136	0.33	334
OP	FIRE	2,005	2,367	362	0.33	12
PI	Government	3,530	4,490	960	0.33	32
Other	Agr./Mining	546	658	112	5	560
	Total	42,468	68,680	26,212		2,333
	Vacancy					117
	Total Adj.					2,450

Source: Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc.

Note:

Manufacturing, etc. = 1,500 square feet per employee; 10,000 square feet per acre

Commercial/Retail = 450 square feet per employee; 10,000 square feet per acre

Office = 330 square feet per employee; 8,000 square feet per acre

(including Conyers). To account for market flexibility, these future land use needs should be inflated by 25 percent. The additional acreage permits a more flexible site distribution process, thereby reducing the likelihood of a tight development market with inflated costs due to a shortage of suitable sites. This would mean that the land use plan should reflect land use changes to affect approximately 18,000 acres between 2000 and 2020.

Figure VIII-7: Total New Land Use Requirements, 2000-2020

Residential Land	10,059 acres
Non-residential Land	2,450 acres
Public/ ROW	1,876 acres
TOTAL Used	14,385 acres
Market Flexibility (25%)	3,596 acres
TOTAL Planned	17,981 acres
Source: Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc.	

This is a broad estimate that is intended to provide an order of magnitude appreciation for the amount of land development activity Rockdale should anticipate over the next 20 years.

As land use needs increase, the amount of vacant land is expected to diminish. Assuming an 80 percent/20 percent split between new development and redevelopment, the total requirements for vacant land would be approximately 14,400 acres, compared to a total vacant land reserve of approximately 20,000 acres in 2003.

C. Land Development Suitability

A land development suitability analysis is a useful planning tool in that it delineates the supply of developable land – land that is typically in limited supply due to urban development and environmental and infrastructure constraints. As stated previously, land development suitability analyses incorporate a number of factors, including the environmental sensitivity of land, availability of adequate facilities, and population and economic forecasts.

D. Environmental Sensitivity

The environmental sensitivity of land is based on the resources described in the Natural Resources Element: soil drainage capacity, septic tank suitability, prime agricultural or forest land, wildlife habitat, hydric soils, and floodplains. These areas with the highest concentration of environmentally sensitive land are depicted in the Natural and Historic Resources Element Maps. Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from excessive development, as they are the most unsuitable for high intensity development.

Smaller pockets of environmentally sensitive areas can often be protected in the course of development through the application of performance standards, clustering development in upland areas, and open space conservation in subdivision design. The location of

this open space on the site will be dependent on the significant resources of the site, such as:

- Agricultural land and prime agricultural soils;
- Significant wildlife habitat;
- Wetlands;
- Mature forest stands, particularly native live oaks;
- Scenic views; and
- Water access.

To protect as much prime agricultural soils, prime forest, and wetland habitat, open space should be identified and houses built around these resource areas. Where open space has been preserved on an adjacent property, every effort should be made to connect open spaces into contiguous tracts.

E. Market Attractiveness

Real estate market value naturally grows with population growth because land is a fixed resource that becomes increasingly scarce over time. Developable land is also constrained by the availability of urban services needed to sustain quality development. Land that provides access to a network of supporting infrastructure and community facilities has greater development value, and thus, greater market potential. The availability of community facilities and services such as roads, water and sewer, schools, and fire and police are the key determinants of a community's land use pattern, ultimately driving the land use planning process and future land use spatial form.

In Rockdale County, no major new roads are anticipated. However, extension of wastewater collection lines to presently un-sewered areas of the county will influence market attractiveness of this land and will have an effect on the timing and density of new development.

F. Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan is a central component of the Comprehensive Plan. It is an extension of the goals and values of the community and a culmination of much of the thrust of the previous elements. This future land use plan is a build out plan. Following are definitions of each of the future land use designations.

- **Watershed Protection** – This area is the land that falls within the Big Haynes Creek watershed in the northern part of the county. The area is intended for single-family detached residential dwellings with a density of no more than one unit per three acres.
- **Low Density Residential** - This category is intended for areas composed of single-family detached residential dwellings with a density of no more than one unit per acre, consistent with the rural character of the community and surrounding densities.
- **Conservation Residential** – The use of conservation subdivisions is encouraged for new subdivisions in these areas with a density of 1 to 2.72 units per acre.
- **High-Density Residential** - Typical uses include single-family attached dwellings (such as townhouses) as well as multi-family condominiums and apartments, at densities of three or more units per acre, typically over one story. These developments should incorporate some amount of central outdoor public space for their residents. A limited number of churches, schools, libraries, other miscellaneous institutional uses and daycare facilities would be complementary in these areas. A high-density residential area is usually located near areas of high employment concentration, large commercial nodes, transportation nodes and mixed-use developments. It is essential that these developments include proper buffering between adjacent land uses.
- **Commercial** - This category includes standard retail and commercial service activities such as shopping centers, general retailers, specialty shops, grocery stores, drug stores, banks, restaurants, theatres, hotels, dry cleaners and entertainment facilities. These establishments should be located on appropriate transportation corridors to easily serve the public. Visual impacts of these developments should be minimized by requiring buffers, landscaping and architectural controls.
- **Neighborhood Commercial** - This category includes a limited range of retail and service activities to serve the everyday needs of local residents. Limitations should apply to both size and character of individual establishments. The basic character of this category is one that encourages and assures a compatible mixture of residential, office and retail types of land uses. Businesses in this land use category should be designed to encourage the development of neighborhood scale shopping that offers both goods and products, and the furnishing of selected services.
- **Office/Professional (OP)** – This category accommodates business concerns that do not provide a product directly to

customers on the premises, or do not, as a primary activity, involve the manufacture, storage or distribution of products. This category includes small single occupant structures for professionals, as well as large office parks with a variety of tenants in multi-story buildings.

- **Light Industrial** - This category includes warehousing, distribution, trucking, and manufacturing which are primary uses. Manufacturing would be limited to assembly of small items with components made elsewhere. Some food processing such as bottling or baking would be included in this category.
- **Manufacturing** - This category includes manufacturing uses, which convert raw materials into finished products. Also, this category includes the storage of large quantities of bulk materials, natural resource extraction and other processes, which could produce high levels of noise, dust, smoke or other emissions. Manufacturing uses would most likely have adverse impacts on adjacent properties.
- **Office/Distribution/Technology (ODT)** – This category would include warehousing, distribution and limited industrial operations. New developments within this category should have a campus-like setting and protective covenants. Also, conditions of zoning will insure building appearance, signage and landscaping compatibility within the project and with surrounding developments.
- **Special Mixed-Use Activity Center** - The Activity Center land use category includes residential, commercial, entertainment, and public/institutional land uses. Specifically, the types of uses that are desirable in this area would be restaurants, specialty retail, governmental offices, low-intensity offices (e.g. accountant or real estate office) and appropriate parking. Uses should be complemented with walking, biking and transit opportunities to provide alternative modes of transportation. Also, any roadway improvements that are considered for this area should carefully consider the scale of the area.
- **Historic Village** – This category includes land that is part of the historic Milstead Village located north of Conyers. A special preservation ordinance will be prepared to protect this important historic resource.
- **Public/Institutional (PI)** - Includes uses such as schools, colleges, hospitals, municipal community centers, churches, cemeteries, municipal buildings and post offices.
- **Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)** - This category includes land dedicated to active and passive recreation uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may

include public parks, recreation areas, golf courses and similar uses.

- **Water** – Land that is included as part of a lake or pond in the county.
- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities (TCU)** - This category includes uses such as landfills, water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, power substations, rail yards, mass transit facilities, airports, etc. These uses may be either public or private.
- **WP Country Store** - To meet long-range needs for water, in 1982 Rockdale County established an impoundment on Big Haynes Creek that can yield sufficient water volumes to satisfy the long-range needs of water supply for the county. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) classified the water in the Big Haynes Watershed as suitable for drinking water. The Atlanta Regional Commission conducted a cooperative watershed study involving all the local governments located in the Big Haynes Watershed, documenting existing conditions and setting policies and strategies to guide future land use and management in the Big Haynes Watershed Protection District.

When Rockdale County is acquiring land for other uses, recreational use should be pursued as an adjunct to the primary purpose. Consistent with this policy, the Big Haynes Reservoir property may be used for limited recreation purposes in addition to water supply purposes.

The 1991-2010 Conyers-Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan, adopted July 9, 1991, makes certain findings and recommendations regarding water quality, wetlands establishment and preservation, provision of water supply, establishment and protection of a watershed district, and expansion of public and private recreation uses in the Big Haynes basin. The plan requires protection of the Big Haynes Watershed in order to provide optimum conditions for the impoundment of the reservoir and public water intake site. The plan envisions the Watershed Protection (WP) Land Use Category and the Watershed Protection (WP) Zoning District as necessary actions to protect the integrity of the reservoir and intake site.

The purpose of the Watershed Protection designation is to protect the public health by setting standards for land use which will maintain, and, where possible, improve the purity of water in the streams in Rockdale County which flow into the

public water intake and reservoir. The Watershed Protection land use category and Watershed Protection zoning district are intended to provide for low-density residential development, public and private open space, parkland, and related uses which are compatible with the primary purpose of protecting the purity of the water and which are reasonably related to the primary intended land use of low-density residential development and recreational uses.

The Watershed Protection designation is intended to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Rockdale County and to implement the policies and objectives of the Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan. The Watershed Protection area allows for protection of wetlands and preservation of the integrity of water supplies to the greatest extent possible. The necessity for stringent environmental and water quality regulations must be carefully balanced with the individual hardships associated with restrictions on nonconforming uses as well as the public interest served by continuing to provide general store services to residents and visitors in the Watershed Protection area. Limited expansion of these general store locations may be authorized, but only in strict accordance with established standards and criteria in the Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance.

Convenience stores occur throughout the county, so that residents do not have to travel more than about two miles to a convenience store. In the Watershed Protection area, convenience stores are designated WP Country Stores (legal non-conforming use). Existing WP Country Stores, as designated in the previous comprehensive plan, are sited at the following locations in the Watershed Protection area:

- Pleasant Hill Road and Georgia Highway 20 (4975 Hwy 20 NE; American Food Mart)
- Bethel Road and Georgia 20 (4010 Hwy 20 N; Little Country Grocery)
- Pleasant Hill Road and Hightower Trail (974 Hightower Trail; Uncle Gene's Kwick Stop)
- Salem Church Road and Highway 138 (2509 Hwy 138 NE; Shell Mart)
- Hwy 20 N at Big Haynes Creek near the Walton County line (5181 Hwy 20 N; formerly known as B & B Grocery)

While the existing WP Country Stores listed above may remain and building improvements allowed in strict accordance with established standards and criteria in the Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance, they should not be allowed to change use, expand in size or increase impervious surface. Gasoline sales and preparation of food on site should be prohibited in the Watershed Protection area and phased out of existing WP Country Stores in order to preserve the integrity of the water supply to the greatest extent possible. These WP Country Store locations should meet the convenience needs of the Watershed Protection community.

Other existing and vacant commercial buildings stand at locations in the Watershed Protection area where future commercial land use should be discouraged. These commercial locations should eventually develop as low-density residential in keeping with the purpose and intent of the Watershed Protection designation. To protect the watershed, no additional commercial uses should be permitted in the Big Haynes Creek basin. Implementation of the best available technology and site design to minimize off-site storm water runoff and pollution should be required in the Watershed Protection area, and all gasoline or other liquid storage tanks required to have spill and leak containment and accounting systems and spill clean up insurance. In order to protect the purity of the water supplies to the greatest extent possible, the salvage operation on Highway 20 north of Hightower Road and south of Bethel Road should be relocated out of the Watershed Protection area by the year 2014.

The new Rockdale County Unified Development Ordinance should consider and evaluate the authorization of limited expansion of legal non-conforming uses and structures based upon factors unique to the Watershed Protection area and consistent with the purpose and intent of the WP Land Use Category. The Board of Commissioners may consider other locations for WP Country Stores, only if the location has a documented history as a County Store or a documented history of providing services similar to a Country Store. In order to protect wetlands and provide optimum conditions for the county water supplies to the greatest extent possible, no more than six strategically located WP Country Stores should be established in the Watershed Protection area.

The acreages and percentages of each future land use are compiled in **Figure VIII-8** and a map showing the location of future land

uses is included as **Figure VIII-9** (inserted at the end of the element).

The three largest future land use categories combined make up approximately 78 percent of all land in the county. The largest land use category shown in table below is Conservation Subdivision, representing 38,440 acres or 47.6 percent of the total land area. This represents a shift in the county's policy on future residential development. In the area designated as Conservation Subdivision, the county intends to have property preserved as open space and reduce the investment in infrastructure. This land is located south of I-20, with Scott Highway (SR 212) roughly serving as a southern boundary. Additional Conservation Subdivision property is north of I-20, with Hi Roc Road serving as a northern boundary. The second largest future land use category is Low Density Residential, comprising 12,977 acres or 16.1 percent of the total area. The Low Density Residential land is located in the southwestern part of the county, south of Scott Highway (SR 212). Watershed Protection land comprises 11,447 acres, 14.2 percent of the total. This land is north of Hi Roc Road and is associated with the watershed of Big Haynes Creek. In order to protect this important natural resource, development is limited to one unit per three acres.

The remaining 13 land use categories combined make up approximately 22 percent of the county's land area and these are shown in the table above and on the Future Land Use Map. The

Figure VIII-8: Rockdale County Future Land Uses

Classification	Acres	Square Miles	Percent of Total
Conservation Subdivision	38,440	60.0	47.6
Low Density Residential	12,977	20.2	16.1
Watershed Protection	11,447	17.9	14.2
PRC	3,277	5.1	4.1
Light Industrial	3,237	5.1	4.0
Public/Institutional	2,092	3.3	2.6
High Density Residential	1,807	2.8	2.2
ODT	1,702	2.7	2.1
Commercial	1,610	2.6	2.0
Special Mixed Use Activity Center	1,582	2.5	1.9
Water	1,006	1.6	1.2
Office/Professional	697	1.1	0.9
Neighborhood Commercial	297	0.5	0.4
Manufacturing	208	0.3	0.3
TCU	173	0.3	0.2
Historic Village	157	0.2	0.2
Total	80,742	126.2	100.0

Source: Rockdale County Existing Land Use Plan, 2003

highlights of these remaining land uses include minor increases in high density residential and industrial properties. A new category, Office/Distribution/Technology (ODT) accounts for 1,702 acres or 2.1 percent of the total. This category is for “clean” industrial use that is less land intensive than other industrial uses. Land designated for this category is located northeast of Sigman Road (SR 20), near an existing industrial area. Future commercial development appears on the Future Land Use Map in three categories including Neighborhood Commercial, Special Mixed-Use Activity Center and Commercial. Neighborhood Commercial land can be found at several crossroads such as Hi Roc Road and SR 20, and Scott Highway (SR 212) and Oglesby Bridge. The Special Mixed-Use Activity Center areas are located on Salem Road (SR 162) and in the Stonecrest area. Commercial growth is shown as a slight expansion in areas already used for commercial purposes.

G. Small Area Studies

Rockdale County has been facing a variety of land use issues along the I-20 corridor as it has confronted the expansion of population, employment, and commercial activity from metro Atlanta. These issues are particularly important in three areas that have been chosen for small area studies to refine the policies and map of the Land Use Element:

1. Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor – The study area extends from I-20 to Browns Mill Road in Newton County. This corridor contains a cross-section of land uses, beginning with older strip commercial uses near I-20, two private golf courses, and several older residential neighborhoods. The southern end of the corridor in Newton County has a considerable amount of vacant land that is likely to develop soon. The corridor has been stressed by significant increases in traffic, rental housing, and auto-oriented strip commercial land uses. The Georgia DOT has proposed to widen the highway, so there needed to be an investigation of alternative patterns of both land use and transportation. The goal was to balance the auto-dominated transportation system with other modes of transportation, and plan for redevelopment of current land uses to provide more walkable and interconnected development patterns. This study area included areas in Newton County, and they were represented in the study process.

2. Stonecrest Area – This largely undeveloped area is within two miles of the new Stonecrest regional mall that opened in DeKalb County in 2002. This study area extends from McDaniel Mill Road south to GA 212 and includes portions of DeKalb County south and east of Stonecrest Mall. Much of the study area consists of prime land in the I-20 corridor that is well located for future development, but lacks infrastructure. Current zoning would allow for 5,400 housing units and 1.2 million square feet of commercial space there. However, the southern end of the study area includes large tracts of undeveloped land near Arabia Mountain and in the Honey Creek basin area that contain wetlands, erodible soils, and rock outcroppings. These areas are good candidates for open space conservation and recreation. The vision for the area features a community center around a gridiron pattern of streets stretching between the I-20/Turner Hill Road and I-20/Sigman Road (SR 20) interchanges, transitioning to open space conservation subdivision and greenways extending toward the Arabia Mountain Preserve. A neighborhood center is proposed for the area in the intersection of Klondike Road and McDaniel Mill Road. Because much of this study area is in DeKalb County, their active participation is critical. DeKalb County officials and staff were invited to a community workshop and DeKalb Planning staff participated in the study.

3. Parker Road/Flat Shoals Road Area – This area includes an older commercial strip center that is in need of redevelopment with a creative approach to encourage mixed use at a pedestrian scale. The planning process was guided by the Georgia Conservancy Blueprints Workshop that recommended a plan for development of vacant land as well as infill / redevelopment of the existing commercial area. The goal was to create a community -oriented mixed-use plan with a town square, interconnected neighborhoods and an extensive array of “street grids” that will provide an alternative to the highly congested SR 138 corridor. Portions of this study area included the City of Conyers which partnered with Rockdale County in the study process.

All three of these planning efforts featured energetic, hands-on workshops with active public participation that provided the overall vision and planning concepts that drove the planning recommendations. All three studies examined transportation, land

use, zoning, and urban design options for their respective study areas and produced a set of detailed recommendations to create a zoning overlay district to change the current land use and zoning practices, allow community oriented mixed use development and open space conservation neighborhoods designed with pedestrian friendly streets and parks that incorporate landscaped sidewalks, multi-use trails, community-oriented facilities, and greenspace. Community facilities and transportation planning recommendations are included in those elements of the Comprehensive Plan. A summary of the Land Use recommendations is provided below:

Future Land Use Plan – These three study areas are classified as Special Mixed Use Activity Centers on the Future Land Use Map for Rockdale County. The detailed recommended master plans and development standards for mixed land uses in these areas is contained in the studies prepared by the county and serve as official development guides for these three study areas. The Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element incorporates these development guides by reference to the following reports available in the Rockdale County Department of Public Services and Engineering:

- *Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor Study Summary Report*, May 23, 2003.
- *Stonecrest Area Study Summary Report*, July 30, 2003.
- *Conyers/Rockdale County Workshop,,Blueprints for Successful Communities*, July, 2003.

H. Implementation Strategies for Small Area Studies:

The implementation of the three small area studies will require the following actions:

1. Enact Interim Development Controls in the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor: On May 16, 2003 the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners enacted an Interim Control Development that suspended acceptance of new rezonings, subdivisions, building permits, and land disturbance permits for nine months.
2. Adopt Salem Road (SR 162) Overlay District: A Zoning Overlay District should be adopted by the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners encompassing the portion of the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor study area within Rockdale County. The zoning overlay district will assure a consistent treatment and design of public improvements and private development within and adjacent to the right of way of public

streets, greenways and multi-use trails. The Overlay District includes the following types of standards:

- Location map
- Street standards, by type
- Standards for sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, landscaping, streetlights, signs, and street furniture
- Access management standards for curb cuts, medians and interparcel access.
- Site development standards for lots and subdivisions
- Parking spaces and parking lot design
- Environmental standards limiting impervious surfaces and requiring Best Management Practices for storm water management
- Architectural standards for building height, massing, orientation, façade materials, and roof pitch
- Street standards with cross-sections and network standards for connectivity.

3. Adopt Stonecrest Area Overlay Districts: The Rockdale County Board of Commissioners should adopt two Overlay Zoning Districts encompassing certain portions of the Stonecrest Area study area that are within Rockdale County. The zoning overlay districts will assure consistent treatment and design of public improvements and private development within and adjacent to the right of way of public streets, greenways and multi-use trails:

- Community Center Mixed Use Overlay District – this overlay district extends along I-20 from the Rockdale County line to McDaniel Mill Road. It is intended to provide a mixture of office, commercial, civic, and residential uses in 2-3 story buildings within an interconnected and walkable framework of streets, sidewalks, open space, landscaping, and multi-use paths. Exact boundaries are shown in the *Stonecrest Area Study Summary Report*. Provisions of this overlay district will address the following standards:
 - Location Map
 - Street standards, by type
 - Standards for sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, landscaping, streetlights, signs, and street furniture
 - Access management standards for curb cuts, medians and interparcel access.
 - Site development standards for lots and subdivisions

- Parking spaces and parking lot design
 - Environmental standards limiting impervious surfaces and requiring Best Management Practices for storm water management
 - Architectural standards for building height, massing, orientation, façade materials, and roof pitch
 - Street standards with cross-sections and network standards for connectivity
- Village Center Overlay District - this overlay district applies to a relatively small activity node intended for the area surrounding the re-designed intersection of McDaniel Bridge Road and Hurst/Klondike Roads. It is intended to provide a low-intensity neighborhood convenience center for commercial retail, restaurants, and neighborhood services, within an interconnected and walkable framework of streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and trails. Exact boundaries are shown in the *Stonecrest Area Study Summary Report*.

Provisions of this overlay district will address the following standards:

- Location Map
- Street standards, by type
- Standards for sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, landscaping, streetlights, signs, and street furniture
- Access management standards for curb cuts, medians and interparcel access.
- Site development standards for lots and subdivisions
- Parking spaces and parking lot design
- Environmental standards limiting impervious surfaces and requiring Best Management Practices for storm water management
- Architectural standards for building height, massing, orientation, façade materials, and roof pitch
- Street standards with cross-sections and network standards for connectivity

Undeveloped portions of the Stonecrest Small Area Study area that are not in one of the overlay districts should either be in open space conservation, recreation, public, civic or institutional uses, or zoned for Conservation Subdivisions.

4. Adopt Rockdale Blueprint Study Area Overlay District: A Zoning Overlay District should be adopted by the Rockdale

County Board of Commissioners encompassing the portion of the Conyers/Rockdale County Blueprint Study Area within unincorporated Rockdale County. The zoning overlay district will assure a consistent treatment and design of public improvements and private development within and adjacent to the right of way of public streets, greenways and multi-use trails within this area. Rockdale County and the City of Conyers should work collaboratively to incorporate parallel development standards for portions of the study area within the City limits.

5. Adopt New Zoning Districts: The Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include five new zoning districts that will be permitted within the overlay districts identified above and in other locations to be approved by the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners:
 1. Conservation Subdivision District – providing residential development that will conserve a minimum of 25 percent open space to be interconnected with greenways and trails.
 2. Townhouse Residential District - providing for well-designed townhouses and rowhouses, designed with open space and a small amount of accessory convenience retail and services.
 3. Neighborhood Commercial District - providing low-impact commercial goods and services accessible to neighborhoods and in residentially-scaled buildings.
 4. Mixed Use District - providing for low- and mid-rise structures that contain a complementary mix of commercial, residential and office uses designed to form the core of walkable activity centers.
 5. Civic/ Institutional District – to provide locations for well-designed community center activities such as public assembly, places of worship, hospitals and medical services, offices for public and non-profit agencies, education and parks.

6. Amend Official Zoning Map: After the new zoning districts are incorporated into the text of the Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance, the Official Zoning Map should be amended to be consistent with the recommended Future Land Use Map in this plan and the detailed master plans for these three study areas. The recommended zoning maps include rezoning of property using the new zoning districts described above. The recommended changes to the zoning map for the Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor and the Stonecrest Study area are contained

in the following studies and are hereby incorporated by reference as a guide for future development of property in these areas:

- *Salem Road (SR 162) Corridor Study Summary Report*, May 23, 2003.
- *Stonecrest Area Study Summary Report*, July 30, 2003.
- *Conyers/Rockdale County Workshop, Blueprints for Successful Communities*, July 2003.

7. Appoint Staff Coordinator: Identify an existing or new county staff person to serve as Special Projects Coordinator to manage exclusively the implementation of the overlay districts, community development improvements and to secure funding. Funding for this person could be pursued through the Main Street program or similar funding source.
8. Intergovernmental Coordination: Rockdale County should enter into a memorandum of understanding with adjacent local governments, including Newton County, DeKalb County, and the City of Conyers to coordinate their respective processes for Comprehensive Planning, land use planning, zoning, development review, permitting, service delivery strategies and Capital Improvements Programs for the purpose of implementing these Small Area Studies.
9. Utility/ Land Use Coordination: Rockdale County should initiate a study of water and sewer capacity and the need for carefully timed and located expansions of these systems as needed to manage environmental impacts of future development patterns to conform with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended master plans for these Small Area Studies.
10. Land Preservation: Identify and preserve key access easements for open space conservation, including recreation areas and multi-use paths that are coordinated with the recommendations of the Small Area Studies.
11. Economic Development: Rockdale County should pursue funding to encourage and stimulate infrastructure improvements that are consistent with the recommendations adopted by the Board of Commissioners in these small area studies.

Additional related implementation strategies related to Small Area Studies are contained in the Transportation element of the Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan.

I. Other Implementation Strategies

The following implementation strategies are intended to support the various goals presented throughout the plan and to outline specific actions that Rockdale County should take to achieve its land use goals.

Strategy 1: Perform Small Area Studies and complete more detailed future land use map for future growth areas.

More small area studies will be needed to detail the development concept for specific areas of Rockdale County. Studies should be done in concert with property owners and other affected parties. Some of the small area studies should include a design workshop with the community to develop design standards and might be funded using Livable Center Initiative grant funds available from the Atlanta Regional Commission. Implementation would be the responsibility of the Rockdale County Department of Public Services and Engineering.

Strategy 2: Review all rezoning requests for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

The county's Comprehensive Plan contains many useful and important guides for land use decision-making. One of the most important guides is the Future Land Use Map. Rockdale County has established a policy for many years that zoning decisions should be consistent with the Future Land Use Map. Because the Future Land Use Map is parcel specific, the categories of the Future Land Use Map can bear a direct relationship with zoning districts. **Figure VIII-10** contains a chart of the Zoning Districts that are considered to be consistent with each category of land use in the Future Land Use Map.

Figure VIII-10: Correspondence of Future Land Use Categories to Zoning Districts

Future Land Use Categories	Consistent Zoning Districts
Low Density Residential	A-R
Conservation Residential	A-R, R-1
Haynes Watershed Residential	W-P
High Density Residential	R-2, R-3
Office-Professional	O-I
Commercial	C-1, C-2
Office Distribution Technology	O-I, M-1
Special Mixed Use Activity Center	New Districts Being Developed
Manufacturing	M-2
Light Industrial	M-1
Parks and Public Recreation	All
Public/Institutional	All Residential Districts and O-I
Historic Village Area	Milstead Historic District

Strategy 3: Revise countywide zoning and development regulations.

The County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations are very out of date and have many inconsistencies. Administrative procedures need to be updated. The format of the current ordinance makes it difficult to use. It would be wise to revise the Zoning Ordinance, incorporate innovations such as Overlay Zoning, Mixed Use Development, Access Management Strategies, and other contemporary practices based on the Small Area Studies that the county has conducted. The county should incorporate all the related ordinances into a Unified Development Ordinance. The county should also consider how to improve consistency and coordination between its planning and zoning procedures and those of the City of Conyers. The implementation would be done by the Rockdale County Department of Public Services and Engineering.

Strategy 4: Establish Open Space Conservation Subdivision design in zoning ordinance.

This zoning amendment would enable subdivision design to transfer density within the development away from the vulnerable areas and into the areas of a large tract that are most capable of supporting development with minimum impact. Where the development occurs outside the sewer served area, lots requiring septic tanks would avoid unsuitable soils and could be clustered on

the more acceptable soils. The open space can also become a value-added amenity and source of identity for the subdivision. Clustering of homes preserves open space; rural character protects environmental quality and can save the developer money:

- Clustering development reduces the length of subdivision streets, curbing, sidewalks, water lines, sewer lines, drainage lines, and other utilities, consequently reducing development construction and maintenance costs; and
- Clustering reduces the loss of existing vegetation and reduces impervious surfaces resulting in decreased stormwater runoff and construction costs for detention and piping.

There should be public workshops with the development community to discuss the effectiveness of alternative approaches. This strategy would be implemented by the Rockdale County Department of Public Services and Engineering.

Strategy 5: Prepare a travel demand management study for Rockdale County.

This would be a review of alternative approaches to reducing trip generation, trip length, and increasing use of alternative modes of travel using a coordinated strategy of land use planning, development design standards, and brokering ridesharing or public transportation options. The process should focus on a workshop approach, involving municipalities and businesses as well as the county staff. There should be public workshops with the community to discuss the effectiveness of alternative approaches. The Department of Public Services and Engineering would be responsible for implementation.

Strategy 6: Require and monitor Best Management Practices for stormwater management in Rockdale County.

These are practices that affect the management of urban runoff in conjunction with soil and erosion controls and other practices that protect land and stream habitat and water quality. This strategy would be implemented by the Department of Public Services and Engineering in consultation with Rockdale Water Resources.

Strategy 7: Develop a land development tracking system using GIS that enables the Planning Department to track the status of rezoning and development permits.

This system would have both maps and attribute files of rezonings, subdivision plats, and permits in a relational database. It would enable the Planning Department to keep accurate records of what

development activity is happening for updating the Land Use Element and evaluating needs for infrastructure. The Rockdale County Department of Public Services and Engineering would implement this strategy in conjunction with the Tax Assessor.

Strategy 8: Create an intergovernmental planning committee in Rockdale County.

This committee would bring together planners from the municipal governments and adjacent counties, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, local school boards, and GSWSA to meet once a month concerning coordination of comprehensive plans. The Rockdale County Public Services and Engineering Department would implement this strategy.

Strategy 9: Continue policies of the previously adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

The following Land Use Element policies were contained in the 1991 CLUP and remain valid:

- Conserve and enhance the Milstead community. *An Historic Preservation Overlay District will be prepared for adoption in 2004.*
- Document and protect archaeological sites and unique plant species through public land acquisition.
- Limit building heights in the I-20 corridor to mid-rise (5 stories).
- The four interstate interchanges are planned for major activity nodes with business, office, commercial, service and industrial uses. These areas should be contained and not allowed to spread along major arterials. Controlling access to individual uses, designing traffic flow patterns and encouraging amenities such as trees, landscaping, and sign standards will be important in enhancing and protecting the vitality of these areas.
- Preserve the entire Yellow River corridor. Include trails linking Milstead, a wetland nature area on the eastern County line, and the county park at Lake Rockaway.
- Protect the historic and natural resources, views and pastoral character.
- Implement a conservation subdivision ordinance and require a minimum open space set aside.
- Develop and adopt sign ordinance.
- Begin small area plan program of facilitating mixed-use village developments throughout the county.

- Revise single family residential density categories to reflect density and site plan/performance standards to maximize preservation of open space, slopes, rock outcrops, forests and trees, views, stream and lake water quality, wetlands and other natural and historic features of the site, especially in the low density watershed zone, in rural conservation areas, and in areas with historic importance.
- Revise commercial and office/institutional categories and descriptions of each. Include internal circulation standards, forested or landscaped buffers on boundaries with contiguous residential zones, and site planning maximizing preservation of slopes, rock outcrops, forests and trees, views, stream water quality, wetlands and other natural and historic features of the site.
- Coordinate long-term on-site wastewater treatment requirements and extension of public sewerage with single family zoning density through an urban growth boundary policy.
- Provide for landscaped or undisturbed forested buffers in the county by establishing an interstate corridor overlay zone for the purpose of improving the appearance of the county from the interstate. This zone could also regulate building setbacks, billboards, and other features.
- Require construction or reservation of easements for sidewalks and bike lanes, and reservation of space for future transit stops along major roads and near all schools and commercial centers.
- Discourage “spot” zoning or leapfrog extensions of commercial or industrial uses beyond buffers of land with less intensive uses.
- Provide for adequate, safe, pleasant and convenient access to commercial and service establishments for neighborhood, community and regional customers traveling by foot, auto, and future transit.
- Enhance the Conyers central business district and build the local tax base through commercial development and redevelopment.
- Prevent strip commercial development.
- Encourage new commercial and office development in locations where there is adequate infrastructure.
- Encourage commercial and mixed-use locations and designs that minimize negative impacts on those using nearby property and preserve natural features of the site.

Strategy 10: Update the Comprehensive Plan every 5 years.

IX. Short-Term Work Program

ROCKDALE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM 2004-2009

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Sigman Road grade separation at CSX R/R	2004	Rockdale County	\$13,380,000	Local/State/ Federal
Hurst Road at Honey Creek, upgrade bridge	2007	Rockdale County	\$1,300,000	Local/State/ Federal
SR 212 at Honey Creek, upgrade bridge	2008	Rockdale County	\$1,670,000	Local/State/ Federal
Flat Bridge Road @ South River Bridge Replacement	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$766,000	Local
Irwin Bridge Road @ Yellow River Bridge Replacement	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$1,522,000	Local
RO 013B: SR 138/20 from just north of I-20 to Sigman Road (SR 20); widening	2004-2009	Georgia DOT	\$24,324,000	Local/State/ Federal
RO 017A: Klondike Road from Smyrna Road to Johnson Spur; widening	2006-2008	Rockdale County	\$2,501,000	Local/State/ Federal
RO 023: Smyrna Road from Klondike Road to Iris Drive (SR 12); Widening	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$2,985,000	Local/State/ Federal
West Avenue at Green Street, operational and safety improvements	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$500,000	Local
RO 035B: Old Salem Road (SR 162) Relocation from I-20E at SR 138/20; new road	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$31,061,000	Local/State/ Federal
RO 202D: SR 20 at Oglesby Bridge Road; intersection improvement	2004-2005	Rockdale County	\$814,600	Local/State/ Federal
RO 202E: SR 212 at Oglesby Bridge Road; intersection improvement	2004	Rockdale County	\$1,121,235	Local/State/ Federal
RO 202F: SR 162 at McCalla/Fairview Road; intersection improvement	2004	Rockdale County	\$1,213,000	Local/State/ Federal

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Railroad St (Center St to West Ave), Traffic Ops	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$240,000	Local/State/ Federal
SR 138 (from Stanton/ Ebenezer to County Line)	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$3,610,000	Local/State/ Federal
Hurst Road (from DeKalb County Line to McDaniel Mill Road)	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$2,260,000	Local/State/ Federal
RO 228: SR 20 at Cowan Road; intersection improvement	2004	Rockdale County	\$908,830	Local/State/ Federal
RO 230: Iris Drive (SR 12) @ McDaniel Mill Road, intersection improvement	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$630,000	Local
RO 231: Lenora Church Road @ Pleasant Hill Rd, intersection improvement	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$840,000	Local
RO 232: Old Salem Rd @ McCalla/ Evergreen, intersection improvement	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$769,000	Local
RO 233: Sigman Road (SR 20) @Gees Mill Road, intersection improvement	2008	Rockdale County	\$327,000	Local
Klondike Road (McDaniel Mill Road/Hurst, intersection improvement	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$1,210,240	Local
Main Street (Pine Log Road to Rockbridge Rd), revitalization	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$2,010,000	Local
American Legion Road and Pine Log Road, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$75,000	Local
Scott Street & Green Street, traffic ops	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$347,000	Local
SR 138 at Pine Log Road, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$290,000	Local
Scott Street at O'Kelley Street, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$22,000	Local
Sigman Road at East Park Drive, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$360,000	Local

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
SR 138 at East View Parkway , operational and intersection improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$75,000	Local
Bank Street from Main Street to Pine Street , reconstruction	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$5,000	Local
Ebenezer Road at SR 138 , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$22,000	Local
Loganville Highway (SR20) at W. Hightower Trail/East View Parkway , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$200,000	Local
SR 20 at Honey Creek Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$35,000	Local
Milstead Avenue at Woodland Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$105,000	Local
Milstead Avenue at Northside Drive and McCalla Street , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$815,000	Local
Pine Log Road at Rowland Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$30,000	Local
Milstead Avenue at East View Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$155,000	Local
Milstead Avenue at College Avenue and Turner Street , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$195,000	Local
Green Street at Old Covington Highway , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$4,000	Local
Pleasant Hill Road @ W Hightower , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$510,000	Local/State/Federal
Old Salem Road (SR 162) @ Underwood/Benji , intersection	2004 - 2006	Rockdale County	\$790,000	Local
SR 138 @Tucker Mill Road/Walker , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$510,000	Local

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
SR 138 @Tucker Mill Road (West), intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$510,000	Local
SR 138 @Smyrna/O'Neal Roads, intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$510,000	Local
Honey Creek Road/Underwood/Spr., intersection	2004-2005	Rockdale County	\$670,000	Local
SR 20 @Ralph Road, traffic signal	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$80,000	Local
SR 20 @ Marthas Way/Lost Valley, traffic signal	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$80,000	Local
SR 20 @ Millers Chapel/Jimson W, traffic signal	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$80,000	Local
SR 20 @Renaissance Drive, traffic signal	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$85,000	Local
SR 20 @Christian Circle (S), turn lane	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$20,000	Local
SR 20 @ Brookfield Drive, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$85,000	Local
SR 20 @ Bethel Road/ Field Road, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$105,000	Local
SR 162 @ Old Salem Road, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$75,000	Local
Old Covington Hwy @ Plunkett Rd, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$100,000	Local
SR 138 @ East Fairview Road, intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$655,000	Local
SR 138 @ Union Church Road, intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$150,000	Local
East Fairview @ Union Church Road (S), operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$80,000	Local
Pleasant Hill Rd @ Mink Livey, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$80,000	Local
SR 138 @ Amherst, operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$75,000	Local

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Ebenezer Road @ Troupe Smith Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$115,000	Local
Pleasant Hill Road @ Rosetta Lane , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$115,000	Local
Ellington Road @ Financial Blvd , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$100,000	Local
SR 212 @ Bailey Road , turn lanes	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$503,000	Local
SR138 @ Old Parker Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$75,000	Local
Granade Road @ Smyrna Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$80,000	Local
SR 20 @ J.H. House Elementary School , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$125,000	Local
Lester Road @ Plunkett Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$100,000	Local
Milstead Avenue (SR 20) & Milstead Road , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$440,000	Local/State/Federal
Bethel Rd/ N. Hightower Rd/ White Rd , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$85,000	Local
Old Covington Road @ Gees Mill Rd , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$110,000	Local
E. Fairview Road @ Williford Branch , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$85,000	Local
Sigman (N. Salem) @ Old Covington R , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$670,000	Local/State/Federal
College Avenue from Main Street to Milstead Avenue , reconstruction	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$75,000	Local
SR 212 @ Crowell Road , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$85,000	Local

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
McDaniel Mill Rd (Smyrna – Flat Shls) , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$120,000	Local
Sigman @ Eastview Parkway , operational and safety improvements	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$650,000	Local
SR 20 @Bell Road , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$750,000	Local
SR 20 @ Sugar Creek Drive , turn lane	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$630,000	Local
Smyrna Road @ Flat Shoals Road , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$730,000	Local
SR 20 @ Hospital Entrance , intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$620,000	Local
Abbott Road Extension , extends Abbott Road south of Turner Road to McDaniel Mill Road	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$5,362,138	Local/State/Federal
SR 138/20 (From North of I-20 East to Sigman Road) , widen to 6-lanes divided	2007	Rockdale County	\$24,324,000	Local/State/Federal
Sigman Road (From Irwin Bridge Road to SR 138) , widen to 4-lanes divided	2007	Rockdale County	\$6,255,807	Local/State/Federal
RO 015D: Parker Road from Flat Shoals Road to Culpepper Drive ; widening	2006	Rockdale County	\$5,936,000	Local/State/Federal
RO 015E: Parker Road III (Millers Chapel Rd to Flat Shoals) widening	2008	Rockdale County	\$3,050,000	Local/State/Federal
RO 023A: Dogwood Drive Connector from Covington Hwy @ Rockdale Ind Blvd to end of Dogwood Drive ; new road	2005	Rockdale County	\$1,670,000	Local/State/Federal
RO 25C: Flat Shoals Road (Salem to Old Salem) , widening	2008	Rockdale County	\$10,425,000	Local/State/Federal
RO 34: Old Covington Highway (Green Street – SR 138E) , widening	2007	Rockdale County	\$1,591,000	Local/State/Federal

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
RO 206: Salem Road-SR 162 (Flat Shoals to Old Salem Rd), widen to 4-lanes divided	2008	Rockdale County	\$4,125,000	Local/State/ Federal
Old Covington Highway (From Sigman Road to DeKalb Co. Line), widen and reconstruct	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$2,495,000	Local
Honey Creek Road/Turner Mill Road (From SR 138 to Newton County), widen to 3-lanes and reconstruct	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$9,897,931	Local
Sigman Road (SR 20) Ext (I-20 to Turner Hill Road), new road	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$5,136,504	Local
Oglesby Bridge Rd (From South River to SR 20), widen to 3-lane and reconstruct	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$8,923,663	Local
SR 138 widening, 4 to 6 lanes from Sigman Road to White Road	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$4,305,940	Local
SR 138 widening, 2 to 4 lanes from White Road to Newton County	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$1,702,320	Local
Old Salem Road extension over I-20	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$13,052, 740	Local
ROAR 177AB: Milstead Ave SW (Turner-Sigman (SR 20), sidewalks	2004	Rockdale County	\$460,000	Local
Parr Rd @ Honey Creek to Stanton Road, sidewalks	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$15,000	Local
Oglesby Br. Rd (South River to SR 20), sidewalks	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$40,000	Local
Rockbridge Rd from Main Street to Sigman Road, sidewalks	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$20,000	Local
ROAR 203: Sigman Road (SR 20) @East View Road (LCI), intersection	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$275,260	Local/State/ Federal
Express Bus System (Oper/Maint)	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$1,400,000	Local/State/ Federal
SR 20/138 Beautification – Part 1	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$500,000	Local/State/ Federal

Transportation Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
SR 20/138 Beautification – Part 2 Congr	2004 - 2009	Rockdale County	\$1,000,000	Local/State/ Federal
Paving of Gravel Roads¹	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$3,000,000	Local
Signing/Striping Study/Needs Analysis²	2004	Rockdale County	\$200,000	Local
Guardrail – Various Locations – 30 @5,000	2004-2009	Rockdale County	\$150,000	Local/State/ Federal
Traffic Calming Study/Needs Analysis³	2007	Rockdale County	\$40,000	Local
Sidewalks – Various⁴	2007	Rockdale County	\$530,000	Local
Traffic Signals – Various⁵	2007	Rockdale County	\$220,000	Local
Pavement Reconstruction/Resurfacing⁶	2004	Rockdale County	\$5,000,000	Local

1 Note: Gravel roads to be paved starting in 2004 include: Rowan Road (0.68 mile), East Hightower Trail (2.15 miles), Gleaton Road (0.2 mile), McCart Road (0.61 mile), Tini Evans Road (0.12 mile), Daniel Bridge Road (Union Church to end) (0.74 mile), and Old Hightower Trail (0.72 mile)

2 Note: A Signing and Striping Study/Needs Analysis will be performed to determine actual cost, location and design of needed projects.

3 Note: A Traffic Calming Study/Needs Analysis will be performed to determine actual cost, location and design of needed projects.

4 Note: A Sidewalks Study/Needs Analysis will be performed to determine actual cost, location and design of needed projects.

5 Note: A Traffic Signal Study/Needs Analysis will be performed to determine actual cost, location and design of needed projects.

6 Note: A Pavement Reconstruction/Resurfacing Study/Needs Analysis will be performed to determine actual cost, location and design of needed projects.

Planning, Land Use, Community Facilities, Economic Development Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Attract desirable businesses and industries to Rockdale County through active recruitment efforts, business assistance programs, and support for expansion of the county industrial park.	On-going	Rockdale County, Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority	NA	Local
Work to develop a four-year college or satellite campus of institution of higher learning near the Georgia International Horse Park.	2004-2006	Chamber of Commerce, School Board, Rockdale County Board of Commissioners, City of Conyers	NA	NA
Adopt DCA approved local ordinances for wetlands, water supply watersheds and groundwater recharge areas that comply with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Criteria. To be incorporated into the major revisions to Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations.	2004	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	\$300,000	Local
Promote infill and redevelopment by working to implement the Salem Road Corridor, Stonecrest Mall Area and Blueprints small area study recommendations.	On-going	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	NA	NA

Planning, Land Use, Community Facilities, Economic Development Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Adopt ordinances protecting historic resources, including a specific ordinance to protect the Milstead Historic District. To be incorporated into the major revisions to Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations.	2004	Rockdale County of PS&E	\$300,000	Local
Improve the aesthetics of Rockdale County by adopting improved landscaping requirements, and working with City of Conyers to develop architectural and signage guidelines for the I-20 corridor. To be incorporated into the major revisions to Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations.	2004	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	\$300,000	Local
Implement natural resource education programs, such as a developers' training workshop on "Designing to Meet Water Quality Performance Standards," and a program for homeowners and the lawn care industry on responsible fertilizer and pesticide application.	2005	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	NA	Local

Planning, Land Use, Community Facilities, Economic Development Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Increase and train staff to conduct watershed monitoring for evaluation of development designs and performance standards, and long-term water quality monitoring, to implement a septic tank inspections program, and to implement a storm drainage and sanitary sewer system inspection and maintenance program.	2005	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	NA	Local
Develop a stream corridor restoration master plan in conjunction with a Greenway Master Plan, which will identify priority projects, local partnerships, and funding sources.	2006	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	\$250,000	Local
Develop a new Water and Sewer Master Plan	2004	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	\$300,000	Local
Develop a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2007	Rockdale County Department of PS&E	\$175,000	Local
South Rockdale Recycling Center: new facility	2008	Rockdale County	\$76,000 (\$46,000 GEFA, \$30,000 Local)	Local and Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority
Rockdale County Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations: major revision and update	2002 - 2004	Rockdale County	\$300,000	Local
Five year update of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan	2008	Rockdale County	\$150,000	Local
Five year update of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan	2008	Rockdale County	\$300,000	Local

Planning, Land Use, Community Facilities, Economic Development Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Parking Deck for Rockdale County Courthouse Complex: new 200 car facility; in Courthouse parking lot	2004 - 2005	Rockdale County	\$3,200,000	Local
Black Shoals Park (phases II)	2002 - 2010	Rockdale County	\$500,000	Local
Georgia Veterans Memorial Park at Black Shoals Park	2002 – 2007	Rockdale County, VA HUD	\$10,000,000	VA HUD, Local
Vaughn-Jones Botanical Garden	2004	Rockdale County	\$100,000	Local/Private
Regional Retention Pond	2004-2006	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Rockdale County	\$4,900,000	Local, Congressional Appropriations
Stormwater Infrastructure and Water Quality – throughout Rockdale County	2004-2020	Rockdale County	\$1,500,000 annually	Local (Stormwater Utility)
Wastewater Treatment Plant; new plant in southern Rockdale County	2008-2015	Rockdale County	\$17,000,000	Local
Expansion of water and sewer throughout the county	On-going	Rockdale County	NA	Local
JP Carr Health and Human Resources Center; renovation and expansion of existing West Avenue facility	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$5,000,000	Local, Federal (Congressional Appropriation)
Johnson Park; addition to existing recreation center facility at Johnson Park in southern Rockdale County	2004	Rockdale County	\$6,000,000	Local
Parker Road recreation facility	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$10,000,000	Local
Development of a Greenspace Plan and acquisition of greenspace	2004-2006	Rockdale County	\$2,250,000	Local, state and private
Rockdale County Jail; 200 to 400 bed addition to existing County Jail	2004-2005	Rockdale County	\$16,000,000	Local

Planning, Land Use, Community Facilities, Economic Development Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
New Fire Station; near Turner Road and McDaniel Mill Road in southern Rockdale County	2004	Rockdale County	\$2,000,000	Local
SR 138 beautification and economic initiative	2004-2006	Rockdale County	1,000,000	Congressional appropriation
County-wide beautification initiative	2004-2006	Rockdale County	Host 3,000,000	Local
GIS development and improvements	2004-2005	Rockdale County	\$500,000	State

**ROCKDALE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 1996-2003**

Activity	Completion Year	Status
Randy Poynter Lake / Big Haynes Creek Reservoir	2002-2003	Completed at a cost of \$45,000,000.
Prepare Capital Improvement Program	1998-2001	Complete; Capital Improvement Program prepared each year
Complete Minimum Security Work Release Detention Center	2001	Complete in Spring 2002
Revise Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations	1999	Amendments and revisions to Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations have been made through 2001. Overhaul (major update) of Zoning and Development Ordinance in STWP for 2002-2003.
Complete Historic Site Assessment; Prepare Historic Preservation Ordinance; Adopt Historic Districts (as appropriate)	1999	Historic Site Assessment begun but not completed due to funding; Historic Preservation Ordinance to be included in major update of Zoning and Development Ordinance in 2002-2003.
Revise and Update 1991 Comprehensive Land Use Plan including: a) Review development guidelines and incorporate as necessary, b) Incorporate newly mapped sections of USDI wetlands maps, c) Prepare Small Area Plans subsequent to analysis to determine appropriate areas for detailed study	1997	Update of Comprehensive Land Use Plan is underway; Development standards to be revised with Zoning Ordinance update; current USDI wetlands maps to be included in current update; areas for more detailed study to be recommended.
Complete Relocation of Fire Station No. 1	2001	Completed in 2001
Complete Senior Citizens Center	1997	J.P. Carr Service Center completed; currently undergoing renovation and expansion with Health & Human Resources Building groundbreaking in 2002
Prepare Water Supply, Treatment and Service Plan with Financing Strategy	2001	Water Resources Master Plan to be adopted by Board of Commissioners in March 2002

Activity	Completion Year	Status
Wastewater treatment plant in south Rockdale	2003	Permit process began
Construct Big Haynes Water Treatment Plant	1998	Completed in March 2002
Construct Big Haynes Reservoir Park (now known as Black Shoals Park)	1998	Phase I of Black Shoals Park completed in 2000; Phases II-V to be completed over next ten years
Two water tanks	2002	One million gallon tank in south Rockdale County and a two million gallon tank in north Rockdale County.
Nineteen miles of water and wastewater lines	1999-2003	Part of ongoing countywide expansion of service.
Develop Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan	1997	Comprehensive Storm Water Management Plan to be included in major update of Zoning & Development Ordinance and regulations (2002-2003)
County-wide watershed assessment.	1999-2002	
NPDES Phase II, MS4 Municipal Stormwater Permit	2002, 2003	Rockdale County completed the task in-house using existing staff
Complete Various Drainage Improvements	2000	See Attachments D & F
Complete Transportation Projects (see Attachments D & E for specific projects)	2002	See Attachments D, E & F for specific projects
Rockdale County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update	2003	
Construct Swimming Pool/Gymnasium at Johnson Park	1997	Completed in 1999
Acquisition of Water and Sewer System from the City of Conyers	1996	Acquired the city/county water system from the City of Conyers and implemented new rate structure to more fairly and equitably distribute the cost of operations among both the city and unincorporated Rockdale County customers.
Opened and Expanded a Recycling and Transfer Station	1993-1997	Opened in 1993 with expansions through 1997, the recycling and transfer station has helped to manage waste since the closing of the county landfill in 1992.

Activity	Completion Year	Status
Established an East Rockdale Recreational Complex	1996	Constructed the Earl O'Neal Complex to provide needed recreation facilities in east Rockdale County, including softball, baseball, and soccer fields.
Consolidation of Rockdale County Public Works and Planning & Development Departments	1997	Consolidated Public Works and Planning & Development departments to improve customer service and increase efficiency.
Established County Television Studio	1997	Developed an in-house television studio to produce and air programs aimed at keeping the citizens informed of County issues and events.
Established Water Reservoir in North Rockdale	1998	Constructed a 650-acre reservoir to help meet the future water needs of Rockdale County citizens and businesses.
Acquired land application site	2002	Acquired 440 acre site near intersection of Oglsby Bridge and Union Church for land application of treated wastewater.
Central/South Rockdale Recreational Facility	1998	Built Johnson Park, a multi-purpose recreational facility with an indoor pool, gym, meeting rooms and art rooms.
New Public Safety Facilities	1996-1998	Constructed a new county jail facility and a new fire station.
Privatization of Wastewater System Operations	1998	Privatized the management and operations of the County's wastewater system, resulting in significant savings to system customers.
Watershed Management Plan	1998	Developed a watershed management protection plan, following a 1993/94 pilot watershed assessment study of the Snapping Shoals Basin, to increase water quality and minimize flooding throughout the county.
Expansion of Water Service	1999-2003	Expanded water service with more than 20 miles of new pipe to serve residents previously dependent on wells for their clean water supply.
Environmentally Sensitive Pilot Development	2000	Worked with private sector developer to successfully implement a pilot project protective of the environment with water quality components, compatible with the County's infrastructure, aesthetically pleasing and cost effective.
Expansion of Wastewater Treatment Capability	2000-2001	Expanded Quigg Branch Treatment Plant capacity by 2 million gallons per day.
Olde Town Conyers Revitalization	2002	Revitalization of historic Olde Town Conyers. Landscaping, sidewalks and replacement of old water and sewer pipes.

Activity	Completion Year	Status
Veterans Memorial Park	2000-2001	Began construction of Veterans Memorial Park at Black Shoals Recreation Park in North Rockdale County. Phase I-A completed.
J.P. Carr Service Center	2001	Addition of new facilities at the J.P. Carr Service Center to bring all county health and human services to one location.
Hodges property greenspace acquisition	2003	Adjacent to reservoir. \$350,000 R.C. construction
Centralize County Services	2001	Facilitated “one-stop-shopping” for citizens and businesses by consolidating the customer service components of various county departments into one building in a central downtown Conyers location.
No Property Tax Increase	1996-2001	Met County needs without increasing County property tax rate.