GAINESVILLE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community Assessment

VOLUME II - SUPPORTING DATA AND ANALYSIS

Prepared by The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Note: Where possible, some data used in this document includes information from the early release of the 2010 Census. Where no 2010 data has yet been made available the latest confirmed year for that statistic has been incorporated. Once all of the 2010 data has been released, the GMRC will update the document accordingly.

PURPOSE

The Analysis of Supporting Data and Information is the compendium of facts, trends and comments used to identify and validate the Issues and Opportunities listed within the Community Assessment. This element reviews a variety of data sets as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and assesses what those data sets mean for the community. This information will also be used to support discussion during the remainder of the planning process in evaluating the objectives recommended for the community, and whether or not they'll have the desired impact.

When evaluating this data and information, the analysis should focus on:

- Whether it verifies potential issues or opportunities identified above;
- Whether it uncovers new issues or opportunities not previously identified;
- Whether it indicates significant local trends that need to be brought to the attention of decision-makers;
- Whether it suggests adjustment of recommended character areas (e.g., to avoid intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas, etc.).

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

The validity of potential issues and opportunities and recommended character areas identified within the Community Assessment is established by evaluating the data and information found in the Supporting Data and Analysis element. All of the items listed in section 110-12-1-.07(1) (see below) of the *Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning* must be evaluated by communities planning at the Advanced Planning Level, such as Gainesville. All communities must employ a 20-year planning time frame when evaluating these data and information items. All the evaluations, data, and/or maps necessary to substantiate or illustrate potential issues or opportunities, to document significant trends affecting the community, or to support character area delineation within the Community Assessment are presented herein.

Required information to be assessed:

Population	• *Total Population* • *Age Distribution* • *Race & Ethnicity* • *Income*
Economic Development	• *Economic Base* • *Labor Force* • *Economic Resources* • *Economic Trends*
Housing	• *Housing Types & Mix* • *Condition and Occupancy* • *Costs/ Cost Burdened* • *Special Needs Housing* • *Jobs Housing Balance*
Natural and Cultural Resources	• *Environmental Planning Criteria* • *Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas* • *Significant Natural Resources* • *Significant Cultural Resources*
Community Facilities and Services	• *Water Supply and Treatment* • *Sewerage Supply and Treatment* • *Other Facilities and Services* • *Consistency with the Service Delivery Agreement*
Intergovernmental Coordination	•
Transportation System	• *Road Network* • *Alternative Modes* • *Parking* • *Railroads, Trucking, Port Facilities and Airports* • *Transportation and Land Use Connection*

Source: *Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning*

POPULATION

The Population Element provides an inventory and analysis of demographic data, defining significant trends and attributes to help determine how human services, public facilities, and employment opportunities can adequately support existing and future populations. The information may also assist in establishing desired growth rates, population densities, and development patterns consistent with the goals and policies for the region. The inventory presents various statistics for the region over the past twenty years, and, where applicable, shows projections for the next twenty years. In some categories local performance is also compared with the state and other communities in Georgia.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The foremost task of any government is to promote the welfare of the existing and future populations. This is the basis for all strategies involved in economic development, capital improvement projects, and land use regulation. The hope is that growth can be encouraged and managed, such that the opportunities exist for economic expansion without diluting the quality of services provided.

The first step in achieving this lies in understanding the characteristics of both the present and future populations of the region; their traits, needs, and capabilities. Much of this begins with identifying trends within the population, to help explain current conditions and gain insight into probable future conditions.

Total Population

The total population of a region defines the volume of citizens for which a government is responsible. It explores the total size (volume) of the region as well as the trends that produced that size. Tracking a region's total population will introduce comparisons to others as well as provide a basis for which other calculations and projections will be made.

Population growth can identify numerous trends, ranging from economic expansion and a large volume of in-migration, to highlighting a comparably slow growth in relation to other areas. This information can then be used to address concerns over net migration, death and fertility rates, which in turn express greater issues to be addressed in other elements.

Table 1 - Comparison of Growth

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	*2009*	2010
Gainesville	15,280	16,583	17,885	21,732	25,578	31,953	*35,750*	33,804
Hall Co.	75,649	85,539	95,428	117,353	139,277	165,245	*187,743*	179,684
Oakwood	723	1,094	1,464	2,077	2,689	4,143	*5,353*	3,970
Flowery Br.	755	1,003	1,251	1,529	1,806	2,300	*4,115*	5,679
Lula	857	938	1,018	1,228	1,438	1,794	*2,307*	2,758
Clermont	300	351	402	411	419	688	*783*	875
Gillsville	142	128	113	154	195	175	*184*	235
Georgia	5,484,000	6,002,000	6,478,000	7,021,000	8,186,453	9,097,428	*9,829,211*	9,687,653

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Table 2 – Growth Rates

	'80 - 90	'90 - 00	'00 - 10		'80 – 10 (#)	'80-10 (%)		*'09-10 (#)*
Gainesville	17.0%	43.0%	5.8%		18,524	121.2%		*-1,946*
Hall County	26.1%	45.9%	8.7%		104,035	137.5%		*-8,059*
Oakwood	102.5%	83.7%	-4.2%		3,247	449.1%		*-1,383*
Flowery Br.	65.7%	44.4%	146.9%		4,924	652.2%		*1,564*
Lula	18.8%	41.3%	53.7%		1,901	221.8%		*451*
Clermont	34.0%	4.2%	27.2%		575	191.7%		*92*
Gillsville	-20.4%	72.6%	34.3%		93	65.5%		*51*
Georgia	18.1%	26.4%	6.5%		4,203,653	76.7%		*-141,558*

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Table 3 – Area Population Distribution

	1980	1990	2000	2009
As % of Hall County				
Unincorp. Hall County			76.9%	73.3%
Gainesville	20.2%	18.7%	18.4%	19.0%
Oakwood	1.0%	1.5%	1.9%	2.9%
Flowery Br.	1.0%	1.3%	1.3%	2.2%
Lula	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%
Clermont	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Gillsville	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Hall/ Georgia	1.4%	1.5%	1.7%	1.9%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Gainesville mirrors regional trends with regards to growing populations through natural expansion and in-migration. The metro Atlanta area and the popular north Georgia Mountains continue to draw new residents, and even with marginal amounts of annexation the City of Gainesville as seen a notable increase in population figures since 1970. The growth should also be considered indicative of an appealing community, attractive to prospective residents and employers, but also suggests the city will face growing demands for services and facilities to maintain the levels of services desired by a larger, urbanizing population.

Other natural, national factors are also heavily contributing to the population increase:

- People are generally living longer; 20th Century advances in health care and lifestyles have increased the average life expectancy in America by more than seven years.
- These same advances have also allowed *more* people to live longer, as innovations in medicine have reduced the numbers and potency of once deadly diseases and ailments. The success rate for births has grown nearly 50% and preventative medicine has helped increasing numbers of those babies to grow into healthier adults.
- These medical advances have in part contributed to the healthy aging of the "Baby Boom" population, the foremost demographic event of this century. Many boomers have also started families, producing a smaller population wave that is now impacting much of the United States.

As a regional employment center metro Gainesville experiences a dynamic change in the population during traditional daytime working hours. Segments of the community devoid of housing become active as people arrive to work, altering the location and intensity of activity throughout the community. Much of this can be experienced within downtown, the industrial areas throughout Gainesville and the businesses and campuses along Jesse Jewell Parkway. During daytime hours these parts of the city achieve higher, urban densities as employees and customers move about their tasks. As the county seat for Hall County, Gainesville is also the home to a majority of the civic functions in the area, including County operations, regional State offices and more.

Table 4 – Hall County Daytime Population Shifts

	1990	2000
Residential Population	95,428	139,277
Daytime Population	95,818	139,930
Change	-390	-653
People leaving the county during the day to work	10,295	18,319
People coming into the county during the day to work	10,685	18,972
Total number of workers during the day	48,292	65,652
Share of workers within Gainesville	62.15%	54.99%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Census figures tracking commuting patterns show a near even break between the number of residents leaving Hall County for work and the number of employees coming into the county for work, meaning minimal net change between resident and daytime populations. However, Gainesville and the economic activity centers of the county bear the brunt of the employees moving into offices, institutions and industrial areas. For instance, the work force at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center more than doubles during the daytime, while all other major commercial, civic and industrial establishments shift from dormancy to full operation. This can be reflected in the total number of workers for Hall County, most of which are located within or immediately around Gainesville.

As a result the City must be prepared to continue to manage a high level of activity among employment centers and economic activity centers. Regional shopping facilities, medical centers, schools and other institutions mean the City will remain a destination for commerce and business, and as such Gainesville must be prepared with regards to facilities and services in attending to this population sector.

Households

Households are defined by the Census Bureau as *"all the persons who occupy a housing unit,"* and represent one view of *how* the region's population is living; as families, in groups, etc.. People living in households of more than one person typically share costs of living, producing a different economic profile than individuals. In addition, the market for housing units is more responsive to household characteristics, making it important to study the size, locations, and numbers of households as well as of the population in general.

Table 5 – Total Households

	1980	1990	2000		'80-'90	'90-'00		△ '80-'00
Gainesville	5,738	6,940	8,537		1,202	1,597		48.8%
Hall County	26,071	34,721	47,381		8,650	12,660		81.7%
Oakwood	233	590	1,031		357	441		342.5%
Flowery Br.	273	526	706		253	180		158.6%
Lula	307	388	531		81	143		73.0%
Clermont	117	147	161		30	14		37.6%
Gillsville	58	48	79		(10)	31		36.2%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 6 – Average Household Size

	1980	1990	2000	△ '80-'00
Gainesville	2.53	2.45	2.79	10.3%
Hall County	2.86	2.70	2.89	1.0%
Oakwood	3.10	2.48	2.58	-16.8%
Flowery Br.	2.77	2.38	2.56	-7.6%
Lula	2.79	2.62	2.71	-2.9%
Clermont	2.56	2.73	2.60	1.6%
Gillsville	2.45	2.35	2.47	0.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

The City's trends in household numbers and average size are in line with the total population figures, showcasing the areas overall growth. That the county and other Hall communities have had greater growth rates in the number of households is more a reflection of smaller figures to begin the period and the greater amount of land for new construction. Still, Gainesville has made strides in developing an urban populace by bringing in infill development, greater amounts of multi-family and other forms that can sustain growth and keep up with market trends towards smaller and smaller household sizes.

Historically, the average size of the American household has been shrinking since the late 1960's. The social reaction to the "Baby Boom" has been a trend towards marriage and children occurring later on in life. This trend is marked by an increase in the numbers of young, single adults entering the workforce and most commonly living alone or with a single roommate. Families are also having fewer children than previously, reducing the current numbers of families with more than two kids. Plus, there is a notable increase in the population of single elderly, the result of longer lives after widowing, divorce, or other circumstance.

Age Distribution

As defined by Woods & Poole, "*the mix of age groups defines the region's character and indicates the types of jobs and services needed*." Each age group, from children to retirement age, requires special needs with respect to public services and facilities, making it important for the providing government to identify the prevailing age distribution. Moreover, by defining the present age make-up of the community a government is also producing a portrait of future age distribution and can more effectively plan for future needs and concerns.

Table 7 – Age Distribution, Gainesville

Age Group	1980	1990	2000		'80-'90	'90-'00
0 – 4	866	1,322	2,116		52.7%	60.1%
5 – 13	1,953	2,275	3,254		16.5%	43.0%
14 – 17	1,072	713	1,029		-33.5%	44.3%
18 – 20	990	1,029	1,591		3.9%	54.6%
21 – 24	1,187	1,316	2,263		10.9%	72.0%
25 – 34	2,232	3,016	4,676		35.1%	55.0%
35 – 44	1,607	2,446	3,140		52.2%	28.4%
45 – 54	1,631	1,720	2,623		5.5%	52.5%
55 – 64	1,642	1,517	1,678		-7.6%	10.6%
65 +	2,100	2,531	3,208		20.5%	26.7%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 8 – Comparison of Age Distribution, 2000

Age	Gainesville	Oakwood	Flowery Br.	Lula	Clermont	Gillsville	Hall County	Georgia	United States
0 - 17	25.0%	27.0%	25.7%	28.0%	25.5%	20.0%	26.9%	29.6%	24.2%
18 - 64	62.4%	67.2%	65.6%	61.6%	62.5%	60.5%	63.7%	60.8%	64.1%
65 +	12.5%	5.8%	8.6%	10.4%	11.9%	19.5%	9.4%	9.6%	11.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

The age distribution figures for Gainesville illustrate a general stability among younger age groups and a gentle declining share of retirement age residents. This supports the idea that many the newer residents are families migrating to the city for employment opportunities. Similarly, while the region overall is attracting larger shares of retirement age residents, and while Gainesville does have the medical facilities to attract and serve these residents, many of the younger of those households are seeking specialized developments or bona fide housing on the lake or in the mountains. In this matter proximity to the City's amenities and medical services remains relative, and while the city is a draw it may not be the final destination.

This trend is expected to continue through the planning period, with only minor changes likely to occur with each major category. This could change depending on the actions taken/pursued by the City, but overall the projected growth is to remain among younger adults and smaller households responding to the economic expansion of the metro region.

Table 9 – Projected Age Distribution, Gainesville

Age	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0 – 4	8.3%	8.6%	8.9%	9.2%	9.4%	9.6%	9.7%
5 – 13	12.7%	12.7%	12.7%	12.7%	12.7%	12.7%	12.7%
14 – 17	4.0%	3.6%	3.3%	3.0%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%
18 – 20	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
21 – 24	8.8%	9.0%	9.1%	9.2%	9.3%	9.4%	9.4%
25 – 34	18.3%	18.8%	19.2%	19.5%	19.8%	20.1%	20.3%
35 – 44	12.3%	12.5%	12.7%	12.9%	13.0%	13.1%	13.3%
45 – 54	10.3%	10.2%	10.2%	10.1%	10.1%	10.0%	10.0%
55 – 64	6.6%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%	4.8%	4.5%	4.2%
65 +	12.5%	12.4%	12.2%	12.1%	12.0%	11.9%	11.9%

Source: Extrapolation of trends via DCA online projection tool, modified by GMRC, 2010

Racial Composition

Racial composition is monitored as one element of a community's cultural make-up and for now remains a factor in some social programs. Most particularly, this is used to illustrate the possible influence of ethnic groups on economics and/or demands for civic services. Dynamic changes in racial composition could signal a need for more or new services with regards to language integration or illustrate a cause-and-effect relationship with specific employment trends.

Table 10 –Racial Composition, Gainesville

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Caucasian	77.8%	68.8%	65.2%	54.2%
Black/African American	21.4%	23.5%	15.7%	15.2%
Native American/ Alaskan	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.5%	1.2%	2.8%	3.4%
Other	0.2%	6.4%	15.9%	26.6%
Persons of Hispanic origin	0.6%	7.9%	33.2%	41.6%

Source: US Census Bureau

As a community Gainesville has become more diverse over the 20 years, as the Caucasian demographic has receded by more than 12% of the overall total population. It still remains the largest category of race in the City, but the combination of African Americans and other minorities has grown dramatically.

Most notably, Gainesville has seen a sharp increase in the number of residents with Hispanic origins. Much of this is tied directly to the job growth centered around the poultry-processing, construction and goods production industries, where Hall County as a whole has been a magnet for new residents of all kinds. Many of the ethnic households have come to Gainesville and south Hall to locate within close proximity to the employment centers and to take advantage of the urban services, such as taxis and public transit.

Table 11 – Comparison of Racial Distribution, 2010

	Gainesville	Oakwood	Flowery Br.	Lula	Clermont	Gillsville	Hall County	Georgia	United States
Caucasian	54.2%	72.4%	82.0%	86.0%	96.6%	98.3%	74.1%	59.7%	72.4%
Black/African American	15.2%	11.8%	8.5%	7.4%	0.7%	0.4%	7.4%	30.5%	12.6%
Native American/ Alaskan	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.4%	2.0%	2.7%	1.1%	0.5%	0.0%	1.9%	3.3%	5.0%
Other	26.6%	13.2%	6.5%	4.8%	2.0%	1.3%	16.1%	6.2%	9.1%
Persons of Hispanic origin	41.6%	24%	13.8%	5.3%	2.1%	1.7%	26.1%	8.8%	16.3%

Source: US Census Bureau

Many people expect this trend to continue, but with a stabilizing effect brought about by the recent recession. Overall population and employment growth has stagnated, and with that likely the rate of influx among ethnic households. However, Gainesville has developed a sub-culture for Hispanic households, including specialized media and many churches and commercial operations that cater to this demographic. This would mean the City will continue to see a strong ethnic element and will need to maintain efforts to support cross-language education and communication among all residents in order to achieve a more fully integrated community.

Projections

Having established a basic profile of existing conditions and their trends, the planning process requires an attempt to project trends forward so as to gauge potential demands, impacts and issues. Specifically for community development, this requires a projection of population trends and characteristics.

For consistency across planning elements, the Comprehensive Plan will use population projections for Gainesville as generated for the Gainesville-Hall County Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO). GHMPO is a special planning district designed to address the urbanized transportation needs of the community. Working with the firm of Ross and Associates, the GHMPO is in the process of updating their master plan, including the development of new population and employment projections for Hall County and each of the municipalities. These projections involve the establishment of a base year population estimate for 2008 (using established Census data and local information such as housing permits), then making annual projections for population, housing, households and employment through 2040.

Preliminary information from the draft Technical Report provided to GHMPO recognizes the growing population trends for Gainesville and Hall County.

> *"Hall County's central city - Gainesville - has also exhibited extraordinary growth over the decade. Focusing on the counties that, in 2000, had populations between 23,000 (Duluth) and 36,000 (Rome), Gainesville ranked in sixth place out of the nine. By 2008, Gainesville had grown at such a pace that it ranked second only to Rome in total population (falling short of 'first place' by only 1%). Of all of the nine cities in this size bracket, none exhibited a growth rate remotely approaching that of Gainesville, while only Dalton, Lawrenceville, Duluth and Peachtree City experienced any growth of significance at all. Again, the clear benefit of being located in proximity to the Atlanta Metro Area is evident, which, in Gainesville's case, is furthered bolstered by the burgeoning Hall County economy itself."*

The projections currently under consideration by the governments and the GHMPO staff suggests a continuation of strong growth that would see Gainesville increase in population by more than 358% between 2008 and 2040. Based on the model's assumptions and recognition of Georgia's likelihood to see continued in-migration, particularly between the metropolitan centers of Atlanta and Greenville (SC), projections suggest the City's current population of roughly 35,000 residents would dramatically rise to 127,000 or more. Hall County would possibly grow to more than a half-million residents.

This does account for further urbanization of the community and additional annexation, and fluctuations in current development issues such as utility capacity and changes in the housing market may alter the trends in either direction. Regardless, the City is preparing to meet the needs of a rapidly growing populace with an understanding that the character of the community will evolve from something that resembles a smaller city amidst rural landscape to one with a more decidedly metropolitan traits and urbanized surroundings.

Table 12 – Population Projections

Year	Gainesville	Hall Co. (Total)	City / County
2008	35,655	184,814	19.3%
2009	35,666	185,158	19.3%
2010	35,676	185,495	19.2%
2011	36,413	187,522	19.4%
2012	38,183	193,074	19.8%
2013	41,031	202,406	20.3%
2014	44,661	214,081	20.9%
2015	48,263	225,664	21.4%
2016	51,240	235,057	21.8%
2017	54,200	243,845	22.2%
2018	57,464	253,755	22.6%
2019	60,859	263,939	23.1%
2020	64,149	273,409	23.5%
2021	67,786	284,105	23.9%
2022	71,556	295,082	24.2%
2023	75,444	306,328	24.6%
2024	79,461	317,853	25.0%
2025	83,606	329,650	25.4%
2026	87,880	341,724	25.7%
2027	92,280	354,070	26.1%
2028	96,811	366,696	26.4%
2029	101,464	379,593	26.7%
2030	106,245	392,764	27.1%
2031	111,555	407,685	27.4%
2032	116,612	421,458	27.7%
2033	121,790	435,506	28.0%
2034	127,098	449,829	28.3%
2035	133,018	466,105	28.5%
2036	138,600	481,036	28.8%
2037	144,834	498,031	29.1%
2038	150,697	513,570	29.3%
2039	157,249	531,284	29.6%
2040	163,390	547,436	29.8%

Source: Ross and Associates, 2010: Technical Report to GHMPO

EDUCATION

A leading component in making a community's population a strong resource for economic and civic prosperity lies in the opportunities for a quality education. The academic levels and performances achieved by local residents are strong measures of quality of life and a community's overall potential. Reviewing this information, then, allows insight into the *type* of population being studied and will help shape and clarify many income, economic and employment issues.

Educational Attainment

A region's educational attainment refers to the final level of education achieved within the adult population (age 25 and up), as identified by categories representing various levels of education. Ideally, communities would prefer a greater percentage of their populations achieving much higher education levels, surpassing high school and possibly graduating college.

Gainesville is served by a City school system, one of a few remaining within Georgia. Gainesville High School has produced graduation rates in-line with those for the State and Hall County, though dropout rates remain higher by comparison. Provided the issues with retention can be improved, the high school has served the community well and students have produced solid graduate testing scores.

Table 13 – Graduate Profiles

System	9-12 Gr. Dropout Rate				Graduation rates		
	'07-'08	'08-'09	'09-'10		'07-'08	'08-'09	'09-'10
Gainesville City	4.0	4.7	4.3		77.1	73.3	81.3
Hall County	3.7	2.9	3.1		72.4	75.0	78.7
Georgia	3.6	3.8	3.6		75.4	78.9	80.8

Source: Georgia Department of Education

Table 14 – Standardized Testing Scores

System	Avg. SAT Score
Gainesville City	1431
Hall County	1467
Georgia	1455
US	1509

Source: Georgia Department of Education

The adult population of Gainesville has made improvements with regards to educational attainments, but continues to see high shares of residents lacking a full high school education. Much of this can be attributed to the influx of foreign households with members that did not have the same opportunities for education as present in Gainesville. Additionally, some of the retirees moving in to the specialty homes within the City likely did not need extensive education when they were younger due to the extensive presence of agricultural and remedial manufacturing employment to be had years ago. These trends will continue to see improvements and likely at greater rates within the planning period, especially as the local economy evolves and demands greater and greater skill sets among employees.

Table 15 - Educational Attainment

	Adults Age 25+	Highest Education Level Achieved				
		Elem.	High School (<4 yrs.)	High School	College (<4yrs.)	College (4+ yrs.)
Gainesville						
1980	9,230	21.3%	18.3%	18.8%	16.4%	25.2%
1990	11,457	13.8%	18.0%	23.3%	20.0%	24.9%
2000	14,909	18.2%	15.4%	22.9%	19.0%	24.5%
Oakwood						
1980	382	23.8%	30.1%	26.4%	12.0%	7.6%
1990	878	8.3%	15.3%	28.8%	31.3%	16.3%
2000	1,536	9.5%	12.9%	39.1%	28.4%	10.1%
Flowery Br.						
1980	473	39.5%	28.5%	23.0%	5.9%	3.0%
1990	758	17.0%	19.3%	41.6%	17.9%	4.2%
2000	1,126	10.8%	21.2%	40.2%	21.6%	6.1%
Lula						
1980	548	38.3%	23.5%	24.6%	6.8%	6.8%
1990	619	18.9%	25.5%	32.5%	15.3%	7.8%
2000	952	4.9%	25.8%	39.9%	20.6%	8.7%
Clermont						
1980	193	24.4%	40.4%	19.2%	7.3%	8.8%
1990	278	17.3%	21.9%	35.3%	19.4%	6.1%
2000	256	9.4%	17.2%	39.8%	20.3%	13.3%
Gillsville						
1980	95	30.5%	22.1%	18.9%	26.3%	2.1%
1990	91	17.6%	13.2%	42.9%	24.2%	2.2%
2000	167	11.4%	21.6%	31.1%	21.6%	14.4%
Hall County						
1980	44,237	28.4%	23.5%	24.5%	11.5%	12.2%
1990	60,321	15.9%	19.0%	30.0%	19.7%	15.4%
2000	85,762	13.7%	15.5%	29.7%	22.2%	18.9%
Georgia						
1980	3,085,528	23.7%	19.9%	28.5%	13.3%	14.6%
1990	4,023,420	12.0%	17.1%	29.6%	22.0%	19.3%
2000		7.5%	13.9%	28.7%	24.3%	24.9%
United States						
1980	-	-	-	-	-	-
1990	-	-	-	-	-	-
2000		7.6%	12.1%	28.6%	27.4%	24.5%

Source: US Bureau of the Census; Ga. Department of Education

INCOME

Measuring income levels provides an indication of the economic health of the population. Just as education levels can offer insight into employment conditions and the quality of the labor pool, per-capita and household income levels measure the financial stability of the population, and how the local economy is responding to the educational climate. Higher income levels suggest a thriving economy, and offer a good indicator as to the success of a community.

Table 16 – Mean Household Income Levels

				As % of Ga. Mean			
	1990	2000		1990	2000		△ '90-'00
United States		$56,675			70.8%		
Georgia	$36,810	$80,077		-	-		117.5%
Gainesville	$38,094	$54,154		103.5%	67.6%		142.2%
Oakwood	$33,444	$40,499		90.9%	50.6%		121.1%
Flowery Br.	$24,804	$41,517		67.4%	51.8%		167.4%
Lula	$27,103	$45,729		73.6%	57.1%		168.7%
Clermont	$26,303	$40,594		71.5%	50.7%		154.3%
Gillsville	$32,492	$73,281		88.3%	91.5%		225.5%
Hall County	$36,440	$57,000		99.0%	71.2%		156.4%

Source: US Census Bureau

Household incomes for Gainesville have improved but, like much of Georgia, has seen its mean income levels fall below the State average since 1990. Much of this can be attributed to the increase in top-level incomes now prominent among metro Atlanta residents, which will skew the scales by comparison. Mean levels remain strong in Gainesville, especially when measured against most adjoining communities.

The figures convey a similar story at the per capita scale, where Gainesville fairs well by comparison and has made real increases but has begun to trail the State mean. The ratios here are closer, however, with a balancing out of incomes among full residents, reflecting the evening out among wages across the state.

Table 17 – Per Capita Income Levels

				As % of Ga. Per Capita			
	1990	2000		1990	2000		△ '90-'00
United States		$21,587			102.0%		
Georgia	$13,631	$21,154					55.2%
Gainesville	$14,978	$19,128		109.9%	90.4%		27.7%
Oakwood	$13,567	$16,083		99.5%	76.0%		18.5%
Flowery Br.	$10,426	$16,970		76.5%	80.2%		62.8%
Lula	$10,700	$15,246		78.5%	72.1%		42.5%
Clermont	$9,749	$15,558		71.5%	73.5%		59.6%
Gillsville	$14,127	$27,551		103.6%	130.2%		95.0%
Hall County	$13,356	$19,690		98.0%	93.1%		47.4%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 18 – Household Income Distribution, Gainesville

	1990	2000		'90 - '00 #	'90 - '00 %
Total HH	6,947	8,430			
< $9,999	1,377	1,222		19.8%	14.5%
$10,000 - $14,999	766	507		11.0%	6.0%
$15,000 - $19,999	686	643		9.9%	7.6%
$20,000 - $29,999	1,115	1,022		16.1%	12.1%
$30,000 - $34,999	510	622		7.3%	7.4%
$35,000 - $39,999	423	562		6.1%	6.7%
$40,000 - $49,999	506	754		7.3%	8.9%
$50,000 - $59,999	442	619		6.4%	7.3%
$60,000 - $74,999	321	720		4.6%	8.5%
$75,000 - $99,999	320	748		4.6%	8.9%
$100,000 +	481	1,011		6.9%	12.0%

Source: US Census Bureau

The distribution of households by income reveals a shift to higher shares of higher income households, but there remains a strong element of households at the lowest income levels. For the 2000 Census more than 1/5 of all households still remained below the $20,000 per year level. Even for smaller households this is not significantly above poverty levels, especially for a community with a growing standard and cost of living. Compared to other communities, Gainesville's distribution of households by income levels appears more polarized, with higher than usual shares within both the poorest and highest of income levels. Should these ratios remain the City may find it increasingly difficult to match tax revenues with the volume of demands for services, and ultimately see the quality of services suffer or depend all the more on revenues from industry and wealthier households.

Table 19 – Comparison of Household Income Distribution, 2000

	Gainesville	Oakwood	Flowery Branch	Lula	Clermont	Gillsville	Hall County	Georgia
< $9,999	14.5%	10.50%	9.10%	14.20%	6.00%	9.80%	8.20%	10.1%
$10,000 - $14,999	6.0%	3.90%	5.50%	2.70%	9.30%	1.20%	4.90%	5.9%
$15,000 - $19,999	7.6%	5.20%	9.40%	9.30%	15.30%	4.90%	5.60%	5.9%
$20,000 - $29,999	12.1%	15.80%	17.50%	12.90%	10.00%	7.30%	11.90%	12.7%
$30,000 - $34,999	7.4%	10.80%	7.60%	7.40%	1.30%	7.30%	7.10%	6.2%
$35,000 - $39,999	6.7%	10.10%	8.70%	7.50%	3.30%	8.50%	6.10%	5.9%
$40,000 - $49,999	8.9%	15.60%	14.70%	10.60%	11.30%	7.30%	12.10%	10.9%
$50,000 - $59,999	7.3%	8.90%	7.50%	13.10%	12.70%	8.50%	10.50%	9.2%
$60,000 - $74,999	8.5%	5.40%	7.10%	11.50%	15.30%	15.90%	11.30%	10.5%
$75,000 - $99,999	8.9%	11.00%	9.40%	7.50%	14.70%	13.40%	11.40%	10.4%
$100,000 +	12.0%	2.70%	3.60%	3.20%	0.70%	15.90%	10.90%	12.3%

Source: US Census Bureau

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development element of a comprehensive plan attempts to define the assets and liabilities of industrial categories, geographical locations, and employment conditions. Economic development analyses inventory a community's functional conditions and achievements to identify the strengths, weaknesses and needs of native businesses. This portrait of a region's economic state is the foundation for assessing the performance of wages and job skills, employment and industry patterns, and the programs and efforts designed to improve local economies.

ECONOMIC BASE

Economic base analyses are used to identify the local significance of each industrial sector. Studied are the kinds of industry within a community, the total earnings those industries produce, and the wages distributed the resident population. Economic base studies can direct recruitment toward businesses that compliment existing industry or require the skills of residents currently exporting labor to other regions. This information is basic, but vital, for more effective decisions concerning the health of the local economy.

Employment by Economic Sector

The primary measure of an industry's value to a local economy is the number of people it employs. An economy grows stronger as it increases any form of gainful employment in the local population, redistributing wealth and encouraging economic growth.

Table 20 – Employment by Industry, Gainesville

	1980	1990	2000		'80-'90	'90-'00
Total Employed Civilian Pop	*6,937*	*8,741*	*11,019*		*26.0%*	*26.1%*
Manufacturing	1,716	1,991	2,972		16.0%	49.3%
Edu., health and social services	222	1,615	1,711		627.5%	5.9%
Retail Trade		1,345	1,209			-10.1%
Construction	328	542	1,091		65.2%	101.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,419	94	782		-93.4%	731.9%
Professional, scientific, mgmt., admin., and waste mgmt. services	127	278	762		118.9%	174.1%
Finance, Ins., & Real Estate	528	590	527		11.7%	-10.7%
Wholesale Trade	393	510	464		29.8%	-9.0%
Other Services	408	847	453		107.6%	-46.5%
Public Administration	398	276	324		-30.7%	17.4%
Transp., warehousing, utilities	291	385	312		32.3%	-19.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	166	268	214		61.4%	-20.1%
Information	941	0	198		-100.0%	

Source: Ga. Dept. of Labor

Gainesville and Hall County have the benefit of a growing and diverse economic base. Within the City, many of the stronger blue-collar industries such as Manufacturing and Construction have seen healthy expansion, which cannot be said of many communities. Overall employment has almost doubled within the city, with only the Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation and Food Services category suffering significant decreases in employment levels.

The strong growth among the Manufacturing and Health and Social Services sectors reflect the City's commitment to building the goods production industries and the expansion of the Northeast Georgia Medical Center. The City has worked with local stakeholders and area institutions to foster a bigger role as a regional center for employment, health care, retail and more. This has poised Gainesville for an even stronger future by giving the local economy a greater variety of assets to draw from in pursuing further economic development.

Table 21 – Comparison of Employment, 2000

	Gainesville	Oakwood	Flowery Br.	Hall Co.	Georgia	United States
Total Employment	*11,019*	*1,334*	*942*	*66,587*		
Manufacturing	27.0%	24.4%	28.8%	25.5%	14.81 %	14.10 %
Edu., health and social services	15.5%	11.5%	7.2%	15.3%	17.59 %	19.92 %
Retail Trade	11.0%	11.2%	11.7%	11.1%	11.97 %	11.73 %
Construction	9.9%	7.6%	18.6%	9.8%	7.94 %	6.78 %
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.1%	13.9%	5.2%	6.1%	7.15 %	7.87 %
Professional, scientific, mgmt., admin., and waste mgmt. services	6.9%	5.9%	6.1%	6.6%	9.44 %	9.30 %
Finance, Ins., & Real Estate	4.8%	8.1%	3.7%	5.7%	6.54 %	6.89 %
Wholesale Trade	4.2%	3.7%	4.5%	4.7%	3.86 %	3.60 %
Other Services	4.1%	1.5%	3.6%	4.8%	4.74 %	4.87 %
Public Administration	2.9%	4.2%	4.8%	2.9%	5.03 %	4.79 %
Transp., warehousing, utilities	2.8%	6.1%	3.3%	4.1%	6.02 %	5.20 %
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	1.9%	1.7%	1.1%	1.6%	1.39 %	1.87 %
Information	1.8%	0.0%	1.6%	1.9%	3.53 %	3.08 %

Source: Ga. Dept. of Labor

By comparison Gainesville's employment figures show a greater share of goods production and health service employment than other communities or even the State and Nation as a whole. As a rule this is a positive sign that Gainesville is a central economy within the region and capable of bringing revenues into the community through net exportation of products and services. The overall distribution of employment across industrial sectors is relatively balanced within the City and Hall County, though the weaker shares within the Professional Service industries may reflect the lack of more higher-end white collar jobs and/or an area of expertise lacking within the local labor pool. Depending on the directions chosen for the City with regards to future economic development, this may be a sector that requires additional attention.

Wages by Economic Sector

As the employment of each economic sector represents the value of each industry to the community's overall economic productivity, the wages provided by those sectors indicate the standard of living each industry will produce. Industries that can support higher wages yield more disposable income that can be reinvested elsewhere in the local economy. By contrast, industries with lower wages can become liabilities by leaving households dependent on additional sources of income.

Table 22 – Average Weekly Wages, 2007

	County						
	Banks	**Dawson**	**Forsyth**	**Gwinnett**	**Habersham**	**Hall**	**Georgia**
Total – All Industries	*$502*	*$506*	*$816*	*$869*	*$570*	*$711*	*$811*
Goods Producing	$661	$811	$891	$1,068	$657	$746	$851
Government	$493	$560	$754	$773	$605	$695	$760
Service Producing	$410	$436	$791	$841	$491	$697	$813
Goods Producing							
Manufacturing	$540	$918	$895	$1,136	$668	$739	$875
Construction	$649	$709	$889	$999	$583	$770	$837
Agri., Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting			$555	$636		$742	$513
Service Producing							
Information		$788	$990	$1,326	$428	$950	$1,416
Finance & Insurance	$613	$1,013	$1,043	$1,179	$715	$893	$1,331
Prof./ Sci./ Tech Services	$727	$641	$1,284	$1,246	$809	$800	$1,298
Wholesale Trade	$738	$697	$1,290	$1,218	$608	$901	$1,224
Transportation & Warehousing	$540	$714	$788	$804	$612	$794	$997
Other Services		$655	$768	$960	$363	$661	$908
Health Care & Social Svcs.	$535	$577	$695	$879	$553	$831	$791
Administrative & Waste Svcs.	$676		$703	$613	$398	$430	$594
Retail Trade	$459	$388	$496	$576	$418	$535	$491
Accommodation & Food Svcs.	$231	$258	$273	$277	$217	$261	$296

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Wage levels within Hall County reflect the area's emphasis on goods production industries, with that sector providing the highest level among major categories. At the major category level wages in Hall County are pretty balanced and in line with regional expectations: Some neighboring communities feature higher wages in some sectors due to higher costs of living or the presence of more technical industries. Hall County, however, does exhibit a high volume of employment within poultry processing and related industries that have volumes of lower paid employment levels.

LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

Information concerning the skills and abilities of the labor force provides a strong indication of the economic potential of a region. Occupational characteristics highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the available labor pool, offering guidance as to the employment needs and limitations. An analysis of occupational employment, balanced by information concerning work location and commuting patterns, can be used to determine the assets of the existing labor force as well as to highlight which skills should be brought into the area. This analysis can then be used with economic base studies to direct activities for improving the local economic conditions.

Occupations

The occupational information reveals the kinds of skills & experience present in the local labor force, and provides an indication of how successfully that force can fill the labor needs of particular industrial sectors. Such information can also help explain commuting patterns, education needs, and possible changes in demands for consumer goods and services.

Table 23 – Employment by Occupation, 2000

	County						
	Banks	**Dawson**	**Forsyth**	**Gwinnett**	**Habersham**	**Hall**	**Georgia**
Total Employed	*7,099*	*8,168*	*51,779*	*31,4471*	*16,777*	*66,587*	*3,839,756*
Mgmt.; Professional & Related	21.1%	30.0%	41.1%	39.7%	25.0%	26.3%	32.7%
Production, Trans. & Material Moving	25.5%	18.4%	9.1%	9.6%	23.6%	24.0%	15.7%
Sales & Office	22.7%	26.9%	29.1%	30.1%	23.9%	23.9%	26.8%
Construction, Extraction & Maintenance	16.7%	13.4%	11.0%	10.1%	13.1%	12.8%	10.8%
Service	12.3%	10.6%	9.3%	10.4%	12.7%	12.1%	13.4%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.1%	1.7%	0.9%	0.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Occupations found among Hall County residents mirror the trades expected from the major industries within the area, though with a higher degree of residents with Management and Professional positions. This may be due to the access to the lake, mountains and medical center that make the county attractive to business leaders and wealthier households. That this ratio remains below State averages is most likely due to the stronger share of Production and related employees among Hall County residents, as well as a slightly higher share within the Construction trades.

The general balance of occupations exhibited by county residents is considered strong, and not overly dependent on one category. Compared with neighboring counties Hall features slightly stronger numbers across each category, which is befitting a burgeoning metropolitan economy. As the County considers its strategy going forward, however, there may be a need to emphasize recruitment or training of one particular category of occupational skills.

Employment Status

Another feature to be noted in addressing employment conditions is the general employment status with respect to gender and armed forces involvement. For example, higher rates of unemployment for women can often be cross-referenced with household sizes and family-status to establish a high number of stay at home mothers.

Table 24 – Employment Status

	1990			2000		
	Gainesville	Oakwood	Hall County	Gainesville	Oakwood	Hall County
Total						
In labor force #	9,219	911	51,340	11,643	1,420	69,294
In labor force %	65.2%	79.8%	69.8%	58.7%	69.4%	65.5%
In Armed Forces	0.1%	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Civilian Labor Force	99.9%	99.3%	99.8%	99.8%	100.0%	99.9%
Civ. Employed	94.9%	96.0%	95.7%	94.8%	93.9%	96.2%
Civ. Unemployed	5.1%	4.0%	4.3%	5.2%	6.1%	3.8%
Total Males						
In labor force:	4,862	494	28,473	6,707	762	39,534
Not in labor force	76.4%	88.5%	79.6%	68.1%	76.8%	73.9%
In Armed Forces	0.3%	1.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.1%
Civilian Labor Force	99.7%	99.0%	99.7%	99.6%	100.0%	99.9%
Civ. Employed	95.2%	96.9%	95.8%	95.0%	95.1%	96.6%
Civ. Unemployed	4.8%	3.1%	4.2%	5.0%	4.9%	3.4%
Total Females						
In labor force:	4,357	417	22,867	4,936	658	29,760
Not in labor force	56.0%	71.5%	60.5%	49.4%	62.5%	57.0%
In Armed Forces	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Civilian Labor Force	100.0%	99.8%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Civ. Employed	94.6%	95.0%	95.6%	94.7%	92.6%	95.6%
Civ. Unemployed	5.4%	5.0%	4.4%	5.3%	7.4%	4.4%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Historic figures for employment status within Gainesville suggest the City has maintained healthy participation rates as the community as grown. One interesting note is that both the City and Hall County did see a decrease in the share of men and women participating in the labor force, possibly due to an in migration of retirees. The City's 2000 share of adults in the labor pool ranked a comparably low 58.7%. The participation rates, however, apparently have not impacted the general size of the labor force nor shown in any way to detract from economic growth. In fact, the trend is considered in line with conventional urbanizing areas.

Table 25 – Labor Force as Share of Adult Population, 2000

	%
Georgia	66.1%
United States	63.9%
Oakwood	69.4%
Flowery Branch	69.4%
Hall County	65.5%
Lula	64.6%
Clermont	60.2%
Gainesville	58.7%
Gillsville	53.4%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Unemployment Levels

Another lead indicator of an economy's strength is the measure of its unemployment levels. Trends in this area reflect the stability and prosperity of local industries, as well as the results of past economic development strategies. Unemployment levels also represent a measure of the poverty level within the area and potential deficiencies in the redistribution of wealth.

Table 26 – Unemployment Trends

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
U. S.	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.6
Georgia	4.2	3.8	3.5	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.7	5.2	4.6	4.4
Habersham Co.	3.9	3.4	3.4	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.7	4.3	4.0	4.0
Lumpkin Co.	3.2	2.1	2.9	3.3	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.6	4.0	4.0
Jackson Co.	4.0	3.4	3.1	4.2	5.0	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.0	3.9
Gwinnett Co.	2.5	2.2	2.7	3.3	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.6	4.0	3.8
Dawson Co.	2.9	2.5	2.7	3.1	4.3	3.8	3.9	4.1	3.7	3.6
Hall Co.	***2.9***	***2.5***	***2.9***	***3.4***	***4.1***	***4.0***	***3.9***	***4.4***	***3.7***	***3.5***
White Co.	3.8	4.3	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.4	3.7	3.5
Forsyth Co.	1.8	1.5	2.4	2.8	3.9	3.7	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.2
Banks Co.	4.0	3.6	3.0	3.5	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.9	3.2	3.0

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Historically low unemployment figures for Hall County illustrate the impact of the area's economic growth. The county has routinely ranked near the low end of this scale, especially when compared to the State and the Nation. Industrial expansion has bolstered the community but at a pace in general keeping with local labor supplies. This has remained true even as metro Atlanta counties have exhibited even greater job growth and greater unemployment.

The unemployment rates have been increasing overall the past few years due to various economic forces. Some of it is the increase in single income households and early retirees still considered within the labor force. Other factors include changes to the economic base and reduction of manufacturing jobs in the area, and the increase in working-age children and young adults moving to the area. However, until the figures stray from the regional averages or grow closer to those for the nation this isn't considered cause for alarm. As economic indicators

these figures indicate the health of the regional economy. Even as wage levels remain low there has been real job growth coinciding with the population expansion. Provided the growth occurs through multiple industrial sectors and the labor force can maintain pace with the occupational demands, the unemployment rates will remain at healthy levels and the overall levels of production and prosperity should improve.

Sources of Personal Income

While wage rates represent one gauge of a population's wealth, wages constitute only a portion of each household's net income. Additional sources of revenue include earned interest, dividends, proprietor's income and financial assistance. These sources must be evaluated to levy a true measure of local economic health.

Table 27 – Sources of Household Income, Gainesville

	1990	2000	'90-'00 (#)	'90-'00 (%)
Total income	$264,375,630	$462,312,200	$197,936,570	74.9%
Aggegrate…				
wage or salary income	68.4%	70.9%	$147,013,111	81.4%
interest, dividends, net rental	10.3%	10.3%	$20,243,788	74.4%
social security income	5.6%	5.5%	$10,559,068	71.4%
retirement income	2.7%	5.4%	$17,505,864	240.9%
self employment income	11.1%	5.2%	-$5,301,452	-18.0%
other types of income	1.3%	2.3%	$7,326,874	217.6%
public assistance income	0.6%	0.5%	$589,317	35.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Table 28 – Comparison of Sources of Household Income, 2000

	Gainesville	Oakwood	Flowery Branch	Hall County	Georgia
Aggregate…					
wage or salary	70.9%	84.6%	81.4%	76.9%	78.2%
interest, dividends, net rental	10.3%	3.8%	6.8%	6.0%	5.3%
self employment	5.5%	4.6%	3.8%	4.4%	5.6%
public assistance	5.4%	1.6%	2.3%	4.2%	0.0%
retirement	5.2%	1.8%	4.2%	6.5%	4.6%
social security	2.3%	2.9%	0.7%	1.7%	4.0%
other types	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	1.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Income sources for Gainesville have improved since 1990 by virtue of declining shares in the categories for public assistance and social security. However, this improvement does not place the City on equal footing with other communities in the area. The ratio of income in Gainesville represented as wages/ salaries is noticeably lower than adjoining communities and Hall County all together, while the other communities also typically feature lower ratios of dependency on Social Security and public assistance. Some of this can be attributed to Gainesville's role as the county seat and a regional center for civic and medical services, making the city attractive to households reliant on those sources of income.

Commuting Patterns

One significant struggle with accommodating both residential and industrial needs lies in the effective use of regional infrastructure. The rapid development of modern transportation and infrastructure improvements has lead to drastic changes in the commute to work and the unemployment patterns discussed above. The same modes of transit that may easily bring people and commerce into an area can just as easily take them away. This creates a governmental concern over the commuting patterns and increased interdependence among communities. An imbalance between needs for employment and availability of employees can lead to increases in commuting, leading to a disparity in the provision of governmental services.

Table 29 – Commuting Patterns

	1990			2000		
	Gainesville	Oakwood	Hall Co.	Gainesville	Oakwood	Hall Co.
Total Population	17,885	1,464	95,428	25,578	2,689	139,277
Worked…						
in State of residence	47.9%	57.7%	50.2%	42.3%	47.9%	46.7%
outside of state of residence	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
in Hall County	33.9%	7.6%	39.4%	23.9%	9.3%	33.5%
outside Hall County	14.0%	50.1%	10.8%	18.3%	38.6%	13.2%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Table 30 – Commuting Patterns - 2000

Location of Employment for Residents				Location of Residency for Employees		
Destination	**#**	**%**		***Residency***	**#**	**%**
Hall Co.	46,680	71.4		**Hall Co.**	46,680	71.1
Gwinnett Co.	7,189	11.0		**Gwinnett Co.**	3,015	4.6
Fulton Co.	2,244	3.4		**Jackson Co.**	2,367	3.6
Dekalb Co.	1,716	2.6		**White Co.**	2,124	3.2
Forsyth Co.	1,577	2.4		**Habersham Co.**	1,979	3.0
Jackson Co.	1,205	1.8		**Lumpkin Co.**	1,991	2.5
Clarke Co.	687	1.1		**Banks Co.**	1,492	2.3
Lumpkin Co.	645	1.0		**Forsyth Co.**	1,263	1.9
Other	3,413	5.2		**Other**	5,071	7.7
Total	*65,356*	*100.0%*		*Total*	*65,652*	*100.0%*

Source: US Bureau of the Census

As discussed in the section on daytime populations, Gainesville typically sees a net increase in population during common working hours due to the presence of so many industrial and institutional operations in the community. At the county level the net impact is marginal, with almost as many employees driving into Hall County each day as there are residents leaving to work outside of Hall County. The impacts occur within the sub-areas of each community, with the bulk of the population shift occurring as residents from across the county congregate along the 985 corridor and the industrial, commercial and civic centers between Flowery Branch and Gainesville. This may not suggest a strong concern for commuting issues across the region, but does highlight the needs for the County and its cities to balance the change in demands from a more dispersed residential population and a more concentrated daytime populace.

Gainesville does have the benefit of a more integrated street network and a public transit system to assist with managing local commuting and access to employment. It also helps that some residential areas remain within close proximity to industrial areas. Still, traffic congestion has become a problem for some locations and the City must continue to work with the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization to ensure the long-term viability of the local infrastructure required to sustain economic expansion.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Many communities employ a number of methods to encourage and strengthen local business and economic conditions. Economic development resources can take the form of development agencies, government programs, or special features within an education system that foster desired business environments. These resources are a means of supporting the local economy, and as such are strong factors in the analysis of economic development patterns.

Agencies

Through the State and Federal levels the local government is provided assistance by the following:

- *Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce* – The Chamber is the organizational force behind the local business community's efforts to support community development. The Greater Hall Chamber is more than 100 years old and has more than 1,500 business members throughout Hall County, and works with the City of Gainesville to encourage and support expansion of current businesses and to recruit new business to the area. The Chamber is also very active in supporting causes that advance the local quality of life, from charitable activities to social and civic events. The Chamber has been a strong advocate of Gainesville's growth by promoting tourism and supporting the City's demands with regards to Lake Lanier. The Chamber also acts as a local industrial development authority for Hall County.

- *Georgia Mountains Regional Commission* – This is the RC serving the 13 counties in the northeastern corner of Georgia, including Hall County and neighboring Forsyth, Dawson, Lumpkin, White, Habersham and Banks Counties. The GMRC has departments for Planning and Economic Development, each available to provide a full array of services to assist the City with plans, grant writing and other community development efforts.

- *Federal EDA Appalachian Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development* – All communities within the Georgia Mountains Region are eligible for assistance from these Federal Agencies for projects that directly translate into new employment opportunities. This includes funding loans and matching grants for capital improvement and downtown development that attract new businesses or facilitate business expansion.

- *Georgia Departments of Labor, Community Affairs and Economic Development* – The State of Georgia assists local economic development through the provision of training programs, expert recruitment resources and financial assistance. Staff from all three Departments communicate with the local governments regarding programs and resources for which they are eligible.

Programs and Tools

Local governments sometimes participate in several programs designed to assist business initiatives and improve the quality of the local labor force.

Local governments in Georgia are, depending on their classification and status, eligible for both the *OneGeorgia* and *BEST* programs that are designed specifically to support economic development in rural communities. Depending on the specific program, this support can include tax credits for new employment, assistance with job skills training and assistance with capital improvement projects.

Local governments are also eligible to apply for assistance through programs such as the *Transportation Enhancement* (TE) Grant, *Employment Incentive Program* (EIP) Grant and *Community Development Block Grant* (CDBG) programs. Funds awarded as part of these programs can assist with a select range of projects such as small loans for infrastructure improvements and facility developments that support job growth. These programs can also provide loans directly to businesses for utility improvements and training programs that support economic development.

Georgia communities can also utilize the *QuickStart* program provided in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the Department of Adult and technical Education. This program provides resources for area technical colleges to develop and provide specific job training programs at the request of businesses seeking new/more employees. This service is also provided at no or defrayed cost to employees that enroll for the one-time training.

Education and Training Facilities

Post-secondary education is the foundation for developing a highly skilled work force. The accessibility and quality of colleges and universities enables a community to produce a labor pool with a wider variety of skill sets and with a deeper set of skills for the jobs in greater demand. Such facilities also support specific job-skills training for local industry expansion. Thus it is crucial for any community to include in their plans for economic development an understanding of the education resources available for building and sustaining the type of labor force needed to prosper.

Gainesville is blessed with an abundance of colleges and universities within the general vicinity, including several options within or adjacent to the city. The foremost local option is *Gainesville State College*, a non-residential unit of the University System of Georgia that's been around since 1964. The main campus is actually located in Oakwood but is only six miles southwest of

Gainesville and easily accessible from I-985 via Exit 16. Current enrollment is just under 9,000 students, 90% percent of whom are in programs transferable to four-year colleges and universities. *Gainesville State College* has worked hard to ensure students can enjoy the "total college experience" by providing such activities as intramural sports, clubs and organizations, music options, publications, cultural affairs programs, fine arts, extended orientation, and international-intercultural studies programs.

Gainesville State College Degree offerings

- Bachelor of Arts in Human Services Delivery and Administration
- Bachelor of Science in Environmental and Spatial Analysis
- Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education for Grades P-5*
- Bachelor of Science w/ Major in Early Childhood Care and Education*
- Bachelor of Applied Science w/ Major in Paralegal Studies or Technology Mgmt.
- Associate of Arts, Associate of Science
- Associate of Applied Science degrees
- Certificate programs in Theatre and Entertainment Technology, Geographic Information Systems and Personal Training.

**=Teaching Certificate*

Sharing the main campus grounds for *Gainesville State College* is *Lanier Technical College*, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia. The Technical College System of Georgia is considered an active and open partner with local education and economic development needs, and the rapport between the System and the local governments within the region is considered strong. *Lanier Tech* is an expanding college with more than 5,000 full time students, many more part-time students and additional special training courses, and has become a very active partner in regional economic development efforts. The facilities and resources are highly considered and the college is very much oriented to supporting local communities. The Oakwood campus opened in 1967 and features seven buildings with lots of parking and green space as well as a large, well-furnished library, two student centers, and a 210-seat lecture hall.

Located within Gainesville is *Brenau University,* which has evolved from a private women's seminary founded in 1878 to a full university in 1992 that also harbors a residential preparatory school for girls. Brenau's graduate programs include masters-level studies in business, education, nursing, gerontology, occupational therapy, health care administration, psychology, interior design, education specialist, and doctoral-level interior design. Today, *Brenau University* enrollment features about 1,800 undergrad students and 900 graduate students in four academic units:

- College of Business & Mass Communication
- College of Education
- College of Fine Arts & Humanities
- College of Health & Science

The next closest unit of the University System of Georgia is *North Georgia College & State University* located in Dahlonega. *NGCSU* is a 5,000 student coeducational public university emphasizing strong liberal arts, as well as pre-professional, professional and graduate programs across more than 50 majors. NGCSU is the state's second-oldest university, the first to admit women, and is one of only six senior military colleges in the United States: The Army ROTC Corps of Cadets comprises about 13 percent of the student population at North Georgia.

Two other technical colleges are near enough that they could assist in job training and general education efforts: *North Georgia Technical College* is located approximately 20 miles north in Clarkesville, and the *Lanier Tech* campus in Cumming is approximately 20 miles to the west. Depending on the exact location of new industries and/or the commuting arrangements for town residents, either facility could provide additional training resources for the local labor force.

Several private colleges are also within close proximity, adding the variety of resources available to area residents and businesses. Combined these institutions educate more than 5,000 students in an assortment of liberal arts, theological studies and general education and business majors.

Truett McConnel College - Cleveland
Emmanuel College – Franklin Springs
Piedmont College – Demorest
Toccoa Falls College - Toccoa

Another education resource for Gainesville residents is the *Featherbone Communiversity Center.* Located in the eastern part of the city, the Communiversity is a cooperative venture and facility that provides training and education opportunities from several partners and for a variety of needs and challenges. The role of the Communiversity is "to provide everyone in the North Georgia region an opportunity to make connections, engage in collaborative learning, imagine possibilities, and work together to create a better quality of life for all."

Founding partners of the Communiversity include Brenau University Department of Nursing, the Lanier Technical College Manufacturing Development Center, the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center and the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute. The Communiversity also features the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK), an independent educational environment for elementary school age kids.

Economic Trends

- The medical services industry has grown tremendously in Gainesville, fostered by the growth in size and stature of the Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC). As NGMC has evolved its role as a regional facility, they've opened new satellite facilities around the city, which has in turned spawned growth of related support industries and additional, ancillary medical services. The recent creation of a nursing program at Brenau University has only served to support this trend, as has the increased population of retirees moving to the area to maintain the high demand for medical care.

- Industrial growth along I-985 is expected to continue for the remainder of the planning period, anchored by the available utilities and infrastructure in Gainesville and the burgeoning metropolitan development moving upward from northern Atlanta. The City and County are both supporting the development of industrial park space along the corridor, through active permitting and future land use projections. The availability of Lee Gilmer Airport and a strong, diverse local economic base have allowed greater flexibility in this regard, and the local Chamber has been very successful in luring new businesses to the area.

- The development industries, businesses involved in construction and earth movement, real estate and property improvement, has struggled during the recession but is expected to rebound within the planning period. Northeast Georgia remains and attractive location for retirees and households pursuing outdoor lifestyles, and as such real estate experts are expecting an eventual return to the building boom form of the 19902 and early 2000's. The nature of the housing units constructed will likely be smaller and less expensive, but the region should continue to see strong demand due to high in-migration through the next two decades.

- Small businesses catering to the Hispanic population should continue to prosper, though likely at a slower rate in the near term. The slowing economy impacted many small businesses in general and much of the Gainesville area labor pool in particular, including many Hispanic households working in the poultry processing industry. Until the general goods production sector restores its prosperity to pre-recession levels, much of the City's retail and local service sectors are expected to remain at current levels or possibly experienced further contraction.

- The City's retail sector has evolved tremendously over the recent decade by seeing more large-scale, regional shops placed along the Dawsonville Highway corridor but seeing the Lakeshore Mall struggle. This sector will continue to evolve both in terms of retail specialization and building forms, particularly as the internet becomes a more prevalent forum for local commerce.

- Education will become even more critical in the future at all levels. Access to Brenau University and Gainesville State College will greatly support economic development of the region, but growing care and attention will be paid to the primary and secondary levels as the Gainesville labor force must continually adapt to the new world economies.

HOUSING

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

Total Units/ Type of Structure

In reviewing the housing trends across a community, the number of units alone does not provide the most accurate picture. Instead, the number of housing units must also be divided into three categories that further define the type of housing involved. For the purposes of this plan, the assessment of housing units will utilize three primary housing types: Single family, multi-family, and manufactured housing. Because each type of housing provides different options for lifestyle choices and economic conditions for local households, they also require varying sets of needs and demands with respect to land conditions, public services, and facilities. Understanding the different housing types and how they are dispersed throughout a community can assist governments in more effective distribution of public services and facilities.

Single-family units are defined as free-standing houses, or as units that are attached but completely separated by a dividing wall. Associated with the "American Dream," single family housing is often the most desirable by all parties involved; To residents for the ownership rights and symbolism of achievement, to governments for the tax revenue and investment in the community, and to developers for the potential return value.

Multi-family housing consists of structures containing two or more units, including large multi-unit homes, apartment complexes, and condominiums. Compared to single family housing, multi-family units are more cost effective to produce and associated with a more temporary residency, factors which have spurned the growth of this market in a national society achieving new levels of mobility.

Manufactured housing is currently defined by the US Census as all forms of pre-fabricated housing, with a special HUD definition for units produced before June 10, 1976. This category is generally the least expensive means of housing production and ownership, but is also often associated with weaker economic conditions because of how local communities continue to evolve in their approach to taxing such structures, treating modern units the same as their mobile-home predecessors. However, the difference between modern manufactured housing and conventional housing is growing smaller and smaller, with much of the remaining difference being stylistic and less in terms of functionality or impacts on public services. The issue of how manufactured units fits into overall housing plans will remain prevalent until the real and taxable values of manufactured housing can be clearly defined in relation to conventional units.

Table 31 – Housing Units in Gainesville

Year	Total Units	Occupied Units	Population	Average Household Size
1990	7,651	6,940	17,830	2.57
1991	7,592	7,166	18,445	2.57
1992	7,532	7,135	19,021	2.67
1993	7,486	7,116	19,722	2.77
1994	7,650	7,299	20,711	2.84
1995	7,667	7,340	21,597	2.94
1996	7,649	7,349	22,325	3.04
1997	7,857	7,575	23,381	3.09
1998	8,133	7,869	24,637	3.13
1999	8,405	8,160	26,076	3.20
2000	*9,076	8,537	26,503	3.10
2001	9,648	9,107	28,072	3.08
2002	9,795	9,279	28,577	3.08
2003	10,342	9,832	30,087	3.06
2004	10,763	10,268	30,855	3.00
2005	10,943	10,477	32,261	3.08
2006	11,295	10,852	33,436	3.08
2007	11,575	11,159	34,818	3.12
2008	11,850	11,464	35,668	3.11
2009	11,895		35,750	
2010	12,967	11,273	33,804	**2.99

Source: US Bureau of the Census
**=Adjusted total **=GMRC Estimate*

Overall the volume of housing has remained steady and strong, in keeping with the metropolitan expansion of the region. The number of total units has surpassed 11,000 at a growth rate on par with the area's population growth, meaning the city and county have not experienced any tremendous changes with regards to occupancy rates.

Like most urbanizing communities Gainesville consists of mainly single family residential with a growing share of multi-family structures. Areas with more intense activities and available utilities and infrastructure foster such higher density forms that allow more residents to live in cities, within closer proximity to areas of work, commerce and recreation. Gainesville already featured traditional neighborhoods with fairly compact lots, which likely encouraged the level of urban densities seen today, but in the past two decades has seen a large influx of multi-family units to coincide with the booming employment opportunities.

Table 32- Housing Units By Type, Gainesville

	1980	1990	2000		'80-00 (#)	'80-'00 (%)
TOTAL Housing Units	*5,958*	*7,651*	*8,912*		*2,954*	*49.6%*
Single Units (detached)	61.4%	55.4%	51.2%		907	24.8%
Single Units (attached)	2.2%	1.6%	3.3%		157	117.2%
Double Units	5.8%	5.3%	4.3%		42	12.2%
3 - 9 Units	13.1%	20.4%	21.3%		1120	144.0%
10 - 19 Units	9.3%	13.4%	10.7%		398	72.0%
20 - 49 Units	3.5%	2.6%	4.2%		169	81.3%
50 or more Units	4.5%	0.0%	4.1%		96	35.8%
Mobile Home or Trailer	0.3%	0.7%	0.9%		65	433.3%
All Other	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%		0	

Source: US Census Bureau

This mix of housing types is in line with regional norms and in particular the character of the community. As a regional activity center Gainesville presumably harbors a higher share of transitional and smaller households which add to the demand for multi-family housing and smaller units overall. Most of the multi-family housing is within modestly sized structures (under 19 units), which is to be expected given both the prevailing topography of the area and that the city is mostly built out.

The one facet of housing not prevalent within the City is that for manufactured housing. This is likely due to the higher costs for land within the city and the expectation that most residential development will be pursued at larger scales, typically done using site built construction. The market for the past two decades has also increased the value of land due to the popularity of the lake and growing employment opportunities. For this reason the City will need to ensure affordable housing options remain among the other categories of housing types so that the area labor pool can afford to remain within the City.

Table 32 - Housing Units By Type - 2000

	Single Units (detached)	Single Units (attached)	Double Units	3 - 9 Units	10 - 19 Units	20 - 49 Units	50 or more Units	Mobile Home or Trailer	All Other
Gainesville	51.2%	3.3%	4.3%	21.3%	10.7%	4.2%	4.1%	0.9%	0.0%
Oakwood	27.7%	3.2%	14.9%	31.7%	7.8%	2.8%	5.1%	6.9%	0.0%
Flowery Br.	41.6%	1.6%	11.8%	13.1%	3.8%	2.3%	0.0%	25.8%	0.0%
Lula	77.7%	0.0%	0.8%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%	0.0%
Clermont	70.4%	1.2%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	26.0%	0.0%
Gillsville	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Hall County	70.3%	1.7%	2.3%	5.5%	2.7%	0.9%	0.9%	15.6%	0.0%
Georgia	64.2%	12.0%	9.3%	2.9%	0.1%	2.8%	3.9%	1.8%	3.0%
United States	60.3%	7.6%	9.4%	5.6%	0.2%	4.3%	4.0%	3.3%	5.3%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Projections

Projections for housing are used to gauge the land use impacts of population growth. Governments have a vested interest in the quality and viability of their residential areas, wanting to keep residents happy and involved in the community. The volume of residents and the type of their housing choices will shape the nature of development, traffic patterns and the delivery of services and utilities.

As with the total population projections, the Comprehensive Plan will use projections for total housing as generated for the GHMPO. This will ensure consistency across plan elements and across several planning documents used by the City. As part of this effort, various projections were provided based on differing parameters for development trends over the planning period. Each scenario could yield comparable total population numbers, depending on the influence of social trends at the time.

Housing Projection Parameters

High Scenario	Medium Scenario	Low Scenario
• Housing unit construction during 2009 and 2010 will mirror the number of permits issued in 2008 and 2009, respectively. • The current housing slump will begin to turn around in 2011, but housing construction will not return to 'normal' until 2015. • Pent up demand for housing during the current slump will drive an acceleration in construction in the short term. • Over time, housing construction will completely overcome the effects of the current recession and will return to the pace of growth set by the baseline projection, achieving the same ultimate level of growth as would otherwise be expected.	• Housing unit construction during 2009 and 2010 will mirror the number of permits issued in 2008 and 2009, respectively. • The current housing slump will begin to turn around in 2011, but housing construction will not return to 'normal' until 2015. • Pent up demand for new housing during the current slump will not be made up in the short run due to mortgage credit restrictions. New standards for creditworthiness will be addressed somewhat by housing cost adjustments. • In the long run, the effect on the housing industry of the current recession will never be fully overcome; the number of potential new units 'lost' to the recession years through 2010 will never be replaced. • By 2040, the total number of housing units will reflect the baseline projection, minus the 'lost' units during the recession and recovery years.	• Housing unit construction during 2009 and 2010 will mirror the number of permits issued in 2008 and 2009, respectively. • The effect of the current recession will be felt more strongly and for more years. • The current housing slump will begin to turn around in 2011, but housing construction will never return to the pace of growth reflected in the 1992-2005 baseline period. • Pent up demand will create a moderate 'bounce' in construction, but in the long run new credit-worthiness standards will restrict the number of eligible buyers to a greater extent than price reductions can resolve. • By 2040, the greater impact of the recession and recovery years will be reflected in the lowest number of total units.

Source: Ross and Associates, 2010: Technical Report to GHMPO

All three scenarios assume a degree of annexation by Gainesville and an increase in the urbanized density of the population. This would suggest an increase in housing types as multi-family units and group living quarters. Regardless of the scenario fostered it will require the City to be more proactive in identifying land within the City for higher density housing but within a design standard and pricing range that can be viable for both the market and the City.

Table 34 – Projected Total Housing Units

	High	Medium	Low
2008	11,850	11,850	11,850
2009	11,895	11,895	11,895
2010	11,913	11,941	11,941
2011	12,222	12,234	12,165
2012	13,142	12,877	12,887
2013	14,363	13,843	13,862
2014	15,916	15,129	15,165
2015	18,035	16,416	16,729
2016	19,217	17,435	17,680
2017	20,432	18,514	18,661
2018	21,680	19,636	19,671
2019	22,962	20,803	20,710
2020	24,278	22,014	21,780
2021	25,627	23,270	22,879
2022	27,009	24,569	24,008
2023	28,426	25,913	25,167
2024	29,877	27,300	26,357
2025	31,360	28,732	27,578
2026	32,879	30,209	28,829
2027	34,431	31,730	30,111
2028	36,018	33,295	31,423
2029	37,638	34,904	32,767
2030	39,293	36,557	34,142
2031	40,982	38,255	35,548
2032	42,705	39,997	36,986
2033	44,463	41,783	38,456
2034	46,255	43,614	39,957
2035	48,082	45,489	41,489
2036	49,943	47,408	43,054
2037	51,838	49,372	44,651
2038	53,768	51,380	46,280
2039	55,732	53,433	47,941
2040	57,732	55,529	49,634

Source: Ross and Associates, 2010: Technical Report to GHMPO

Age and Conditions

The US Census of Housing includes information on units without complete plumbing and water service, allowing governments to target concentrations of such housing for service upgrades or redevelopment. The number of housing units constructed prior to 1939 is one indicator of the overall age and productivity of the local housing market.

Prevailing conditions within Gainesville find comparably higher shares of housing to be of older stock, especially compared with the burgeoning communities to the south in Flowery Branch and Oakwood. This alone does not mean the City is experiencing concerns, and in fact Gainesville has several neighborhoods that are very popular for their historic quality and established character. However it does mean more units that are susceptible to more rapidly falling values if neglected and in disrepair. Older homes require reinvestment to sustain competitiveness depending on market trends in home amenities. Concentrations of older homes that are neglected can contribute to social decay at the neighborhood scale, and Gainesville must monitor the relative health and property values of its neighborhoods to protect against blight or compounding economic depression.

Table 35 - Housing Conditions

			Date of Construction					Incomplete Facilities	
1990	**Total units**		**Pre 1939**	**1940-'59**	**1960-'79**	**1980+**		**Plumbing**	**Kitchen**
Gainesville	7,651		9.8%	26.0%	38.5%	25.6%		0.2%	0.2%
Oakwood	686		2.6%	6.7%	38.3%	52.3%		0.0%	0.0%
Flowery Br.	575		13.9%	16.7%	18.1%	51.3%		0.3%	0.3%
Lula	441		18.8%	11.6%	34.7%	34.9%		0.9%	1.4%
Clermont	161		31.1%	24.8%	26.1%	18.0%		0.0%	0.0%
Gillsville	57		22.8%	42.1%	28.1%	7.0%		10.5%	0.0%
Hall County	38,315		7.0%	16.0%	40.7%	36.3%		0.7%	0.4%
Georgia			8.1%	18.1%	41.7%	32.1%		1.1%	0.9%
2000	**Total units**		**Pre 1939**	**1940-'59**	**1960-'79**	**1980+**		**Plumbing**	**Kitchen**
Gainesville	8,912		5.9%	21.5%	29.5%	43.1%		0.7%	0.2%
Oakwood	1,109		0.9%	3.2%	27.8%	68.1%		1.7%	1.7%
Flowery Br.	788		9.3%	17.0%	20.2%	53.6%		0.6%	0.3%
Lula	610		15.4%	11.8%	32.0%	40.8%		0.3%	0.0%
Clermont	169		18.3%	13.0%	21.9%	46.7%		0.0%	0.0%
Gillsville	98		28.6%	13.3%	42.9%	15.3%		0.0%	0.0%
Hall County	51,046		4.3%	11.2%	27.3%	57.1%		0.6%	0.4%
Georgia			5.9%	13.0%	31.2%	49.9%		0.9%	1.0%
US			15.0%	23.5%	46.3%	15.2%		1.2%	1.3%

Source: US Census Bureau

Occupancy/residency characteristics

Similar to the different economic and social needs defined by demographic statistics, occupancy and residency conditions can also indicate specific trends or needs of the region's population. Whether a housing unit is being leased or owned indicates the financial abilities of the household, as well as suggesting the health of the local economy. Vacancy rates, meanwhile, tell whether the market is ahead or behind the pace of population growth and demands. Typically, a strong market is defined by a relatively high percentage of homeowners and low occupancy rates.

Past occupancy rates for Gainesville reflect a generally improving housing market, with fewer vacancies as the community grew in size and economy. The share of renter occupied units is high when compared against State and national averages, but communities such as Gainesville that serve as a regional center for education, medical services and manufacturing typically harbor more households demanding rental units. This is especially true for students and areas growing as quickly as Gainesville, where newcomers will use rental units before committing to home ownership.

As a trend, however, this should be monitored in case the balance tips much further towards the rental share. Such trends might be an indication of an imbalance between housing costs and predominant wage levels for the area, and could impact the City through falling property tax values/revenues and/or weaker economic expansion.

Table 36 – Occupancy/ Vacancy Rates

	1990	2000	2010		'90 – '10	
Gainesville					#	%
Total Units	7,651	8,912	12,967		1,261	16.5%
Vacant	9.5%	5.5%	13.1%		966	132.7%
Owner Occupied	43.1%	41.3%	NA			
Renter Occupied	48.3%	53.3%	NA			
Hall County						
Total Units	38,315	51,046	68,825		12,731	33.2%
Vacant	9.4%	7.2%	11.8%		4,540	126.3%
Owner Occupied	62.9%	66.0%	NA			
Renter Occupied	27.7%	26.8%	NA			

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 37 – Occupancy/ Vacancy Rates

	Gainesville	Oakwood	Flowery Br.	Lula	Clermont	Hall Co.	GA	US
2000								
Vacant	5.5%	5.9%	12.1%	11.1%	5.3%	7.2%	8.4%	9.0%
Owner Occupied	41.3%	26.1%	44.8%	69.0%	65.7%	66.0%	67.5%	66.2%
Renter Occupied	53.3%	68.0%	43.1%	19.8%	29.0%	26.8%	23.6%	25.8%
2010								
Vacant	13.1%	21.5%	10.6%	12.5%	13.2%	11.8%	12.3%	11.4%

Source: US Census Bureau

HOUSING COSTS

Understanding the physical conditions of housing options within a community is relatively useless without also understanding the market for housing affordability. An assessment of housing costs is critical to understanding the accessibility of the housing supply to the residents, and goes a long way toward explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the housing supply.

Table 38 – Average Housing Costs

				As % of Georgia Avg.			
Owner Costs	**1990**	**2000**		**1990**	**2000**		**'90 – '00**
Georgia	*$71,300*	*$111,200*		*100%*	*100%*		*56.0%*
Gainesville	$91,500	$133,700		128.3%	120.2%		46.1%
Oakwood	$66,400	$112,300		93.1%	101.0%		69.1%
Flowery Br.	$44,400	$97,500		62.3%	87.7%		119.6%
Lula	$49,500	$77,500		69.4%	69.7%		56.6%
Clermont	$58,600	$99,400		82.2%	89.4%		69.6%
Gillsville	$39,600	$90,000		55.5%	80.9%		127.3%
Hall County	$76,300	$120,200		107.0%	108.1%		57.5%
United States		*$119,600*			*107.6%*		
Monthly Rent	**1990**	**2000**		**1990**	**2000**		**'90 – '00**
Georgia	*$433*	*$613*		*100%*	*100%*		*41.6%*
Gainesville	$393	$606		90.8%	98.9%		54.2%
Oakwood	$471	$663		108.8%	108.2%		40.8%
Flowery Br.	$448	$587		103.5%	95.8%		31.0%
Lula	$352	$553		81.3%	90.2%		57.1%
Clermont	$431	$550		99.5%	89.7%		27.6%
Gillsville	$0	$375		0.0%	61.2%		
Hall County	$424	$619		97.9%	101.0%		46.0%
United States		*$602*			*98.0%*		

Source: US Census Bureau

As a general rule, Gainesville is expected to have slightly higher housing costs compared to other communities or the State as a whole based upon the access to the lake and the volume of historic homes within the city. The average costs have grown more in line with the state, however, as Georgia's continued housing boom has helped more metro communities match Gainesville in the supply of middle-scale housing. Taken alone this statistic does not pose much of an issue for the City. However, should the Gainesville average remain high and the growth rental housing continue to outpace ownership models that could signify an imbalance between land values and local wage levels, which could lead to broader economic hardships for the region.

Similarly, rental costs for the City have increased as the area has grown more popular, responding to the market demands for transitional shelter and providing accommodations for lower-end working households. The averages for Gainesville are in line with neighboring communities, suggesting there is no critical issue in this regard.

An additional factor in assessing housing costs and values is the impact of property taxes. Property taxes are one of the primary revenue generators for local governments. Residential property, however, generally does not supply enough taxes to offset the demand for services and utilities, and the difference must be made up from commercial and industrial land uses. It is in the best interest of local communities, even municipalities that do not collect property taxes for themselves, to maintain trends of increasing property values to ensure proper revenues for schools and other public services. In this regard, the local government will need to consider long-term impacts of new development and the possible need for land use management policies that encourage higher standards of housing.

Table 39 – Housing Costs as Share of Household Income

	% of Total Units - 1990				% of Total Units - 2000		
	30% - 49% of Income	50% + of Income	Not Computed		30% - 49% of Income	50% + of Income	Not Computed
Gainesville	8.3%	NA	1.7%		14.3%	12.7%	4.5%
Oakwood	4.5%	NA	0.9%		17.9%	13.2%	1.5%
Flowery Br.	4.9%	NA	2.3%		9.6%	7.5%	4.3%
Lula	10.7%	NA	2.7%		10.8%	5.9%	3.3%
Clermont	8.1%	NA	1.9%		10.1%	9.5%	4.1%
Gillsville	5.3%	NA	0.0%		2.0%	3.1%	8.2%
Hall County	16.5%	NA	1.8%		11.8%	7.8%	2.6%
Georgia	11.3%	NA	2.1%		12.1%	8.5%	3.0%

Source: US Census Bureau

As of 2000 Gainesville did exhibit a relatively high ratio of households living in cost-burdened conditions, where housing costs exceeded 30% of household income levels. Some of this can be attributed to households living on fixed incomes (retirees) or students for the local post-secondary institutions. The figure remains higher than State and county levels, however, and, most importantly, got higher between 1990 and 2000. Part of this may be symptomatic of the housing crush that contributed to the eventual recession in 2009, whereby residents moving in for the local economy purchased at higher costs assuming continued escalation of wage levels and property values. Should the rates remain high through the 2010 Census counts then the City may need to reflect on development forms allowed and encouraged in order to foster more sustainable housing types.

Table 40 – Overcrowding Conditions

	Occupied Units - 1990				Occupied Units - 2000		
		>1 person per room				>1 person per room	
	Total	#	%		Total	#	%
Georgia	*2,366,615*	*95,828*	*4.0%*		*3,006,369*	*145,235*	*4.8%*
Gainesville	6,989	344	4.9%		8,426	1,260	15.0%
Oakwood	590	16	2.7%		1,044	101	9.7%
Flowery Br.	533	20	3.8%		693	55	7.9%
Lula	391	9	2.3%		542	19	3.5%
Clermont	149	3	2.0%		160	3	1.9%
Gillsville	45	0	0.0%		84	5	6.0%
Hall County	34,721	1,368	3.9%		47,381	4,001	8.4%

Source: US Census Bureau

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

In addition to considerations for various income levels, housing assessments must also consider those persons and households with special needs such as the disabled, elderly, victims of domestic violence, those suffering with HIV or from substance abuse. This segment of the population not only requires basic housing, but also housing that matches affordability with functionality due to their limited abilities or need for access to medical care and human services.

Table 41: Hall County Special Needs Statistics

Population Group	Total	Share of Total Pop
AIDS Cases 1981-2000	95	
Family Violence, # of Police Actions Taken, 2000	223	
Total, # Age 62+, 2000	15,934	11.44%
Disability (Any) % Age 16+, 1990		26.72%
Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Need, 2001	9,878	7.09%
Migrant/ Seasonal Farm Workers and Dependents, Estimated # at Peak Employment, 1994	94	0.09%

The presence of the education and medical facilities within and around Gainesville helps the City attract and manage residents with special needs. In particular, Gainesville and Hall County have experienced strong growth in the numbers of retiree residents and those with a form of disability, in both cases looking for comparably cheaper costs of living while maintaining proximity to the Northeast Georgia Medical Center. To date this has not been an area of additional need for the City, with most concerns readily addressed through private operations or with routine assistance from the local or State government.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water and Sewer Service

Note: This discussion assesses the performance and issues related to the collection, treatment and distribution systems. Analysis of the environmental health of the resources is discussed in the Natural Resources element.

Water is among the foremost utilities provided by local governments, and is generally considered the primary benchmark of progressive modern communities. A stable, healthy water supply is considered critical for attracting industrial growth, and the scope and quality of the distribution system will play a significant role in shaping how a community grows over time.

The City of Gainesville Public Utilities Department is the primary supplier of public water service within Hall County and operates as a self supporting Enterprise Fund. The Department operates approximately 1,600 miles of water and sewer piping. Water service is provided to approximately 46,550 individually metered customers (residential and commercial) within and outside the city limits.

Water Treatment Plants

Facility	Address	Capacity (MGD)
Riverside	2120 Riverside Drive, Gainesville	25
Lakeside	5640 Jim Crowe Road, Flowery Branch,	10
Total		***35 MG***

The Riverside Drive WTP is more than 50 years old but received a substantial renovation in FY02. It has an overall treatment capacity of 25 MGD, drawing raw water through two intake structures, with pumping capacity provided by four vertical pumps with rated capacities ranging from 8.5 to 25 MGD. The Lakeside WTP opened in FY03 with a capacity of 10 MGD, but the space for future expansion to manage up to 100 MGD. Raw water is pumped from Lake Lanier and is channeled more than a mile via two 42-inch lines to the treatment facility. Incline plate settlers save space during the filtering process, while a gravity flow backwash septic tank provides substantial energy savings. Treated water production for FY09 produced an annual average of roughly 16.6 MGD, which was about 2 MGD less than produced for FY07 or FY08

Water System Storage Capacity

Facility	Capacity (MG)
Riverside WTP – 3 clearwells	12 (combined)
Lakeside WTP – 2 clearwells	10 (combined)
High Street Tank	5
5 Elevated Storage Tanks	3.6 (combined)

Total	***30.6 MG***

A local community's sewerage system and ability to treat wastewater is the utility most responsible for facilitating growth from rural to suburban and urban conditions. Managed properly, sewer service permits densities and levels of industrial capacity that allows cities' to receive volumes of development with comparably marginal impacts on the environment.

The City of Gainesville Public Utilities Department provides sewer service to 8,896 customers, including approximately 1,975 customers outside the City limits.

Wastewater Reclamation Facilities

WRF	Address	Capacity (MGD)
Flat Creek	2641 Old Flowery Branch Rd., Gainesville,	12
Linwood	500 Linwood Drive, Gainesville,	5
Total		***17 MGD***

As with treated water production, sewage flows for FY09 were down as well with a combined annual average flow of 8.0 MGD to local treatment facilities. General Industry is the largest user of wastewater at 60.0% of total system usage, followed by commercial usage at 18.2% and residential usage at only 11.7%.

Maintenance and expansion of lines for water distribution and sewerage collection is done regularly in accordance with Departmental schedules and plans, as budgets allow. Current needs include continued upgrade of infrastructure and connections with the proposed intake at the Cedar Creek Reservoir.

Solid Waste Management

As communities grow they also incur more garbage, necessitating proper management of the collection and disposal of various forms of solid waste. Some items can be recycled, some require special measures for disposal. All forms of waste management should be considered so as to ensure the continued health and safety of local residents.

The City of Gainesville provides waste collection to city residents within housing units up to quadraplex size. Collection service has not been available to businesses, apartment complexes and industrial accounts since 1995. Backdoor residential collection entails city crews collecting wastes from designated, ground level locations on the resident's lot. The City requires waste to be in plastic bags and stored in rust proof, moisture-proof containers equipped with handles and tight fitting covers. Residents must provide their own bags, cans or carts.

Private haulers manage the total commercial and industrial sector within the city, but the City maintains a non-exclusive franchise status so as to allow an approved hauler to operate within the city according to its ability to gain market share under open competition within the commercial/industrial sector.

The collection fleet consists of rear loaders, scooters and flat-bed dump trucks for collecting bulky items and yard waste. Curbside vacuum trucks, chippers and specialty vehicles are also utilized to collect leaves, small limbs and storm debris on a seasonal or as needed basis.

The city of Gainesville also provides weekly curbside recyclables collection via a private contractor. Items must be placed at curbside in recycle containers supplied by the contractor.

The Hall County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan is being updated at the same time as this particular document. Both plans will be drafted so as to ensure compatibility and provide record of long term waste disposal capacity.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is the primary responsibility of government to preserve the health and welfare of its citizens, and nothing embodies this role greater than the management of services directly involved in public safety. These services, such as fire and police protection, typically demand volumes of specialized manpower to attain effective levels of service and to help a community remain secure.

Fire Protection

Fire protection services provide not only the direct benefit of safety against hazards, but the ability to provide such services traditionally ensure a higher quality of life for urbanized communities by permitting greater numbers of residents and activities at lower insurance costs. Half of this is dependent on the distribution of the public water system, the other half is the make-up of the personnel, facilities and equipment needed to perform the actual protection services.

Gainesville and Hall County each respectively administer, maintain and operate a comprehensive fire suppression system which includes emergency medical services. The supporting facilities and equipment are situated strategically throughout each jurisdiction based upon risk, population, accessibility, jurisdiction and other considerations. Each fire component has on duty, twenty four hours each day, a well trained, qualified, state certified staff of emergency medical technicians who are prepared to act spontaneously in delivering high quality first responder emergency medical services. The fire suppression and the emergency medical service of each community is funded from respective local governments' general funds. Hall County performs all transport under this arrangement.

Gainesville and Hall County maintain a Fire Department Automatic Aid Agreement that outlines the coordination and cooperation of the two governments in the areas of fire suppression and emergency medical services, providing a more comprehensive protection package for the citizens of both communities. In addition, many city and county law enforcement personnel have some training in fire protection to increase the capacity for emergency assistance and, in many circumstances, produce a quicker response time.

The City of Gainesville Fire Department primarily serves the city limits with a response area of 36 square miles and as many as 125,000 citizens during working hours. The Department operates four fire stations equipped with a total of 10 fire trucks, 74 firefighters working on three shifts and 8 administrative staff members. Since FY06 the Department has averaged more than 6,000 service calls per year.

To help measure the performance or value of fire protection services, a national fire protection rating system has been established by the Insurance Services Organization to evaluate the adequacy of fire protection services in a community. Ranging from 1 to 10, communities with more than adequate personnel and water systems would score very low, while areas with sparse public water and volunteer firemen would score very high. The City of Gainesville Fire Department is one of only nine ISO Class 2 fire departments in Georgia, allowing residents and

businesses to receive lower insurance premiums and superior service. To maintain the Class 2 designation, the department maintains a vigorous education plan for staff, with members required to attend at least 240 hours of training per year, including in the areas of emergency medical, high angle rescue, & confined space/trench rescue. The Department also coordinates and supports many outreach programs to promote and education residents about fire prevention and general safety, including the distribution of smoke detectors, aid kits and school programs.

Gainesville Fire Station #1 has recently been relocated to the just opened Public Safety Complex and features a 26,000 square foot facility and 4-engine bay. Short-term plans for the Department include the construction and equipping of Fire Stations #5 and #6.

Police Protection

Police protection, or law enforcement, is the public service designed to safeguard community residents and businesses from acts of theft, personal violence and other crimes. Such protection builds community character and support and can serve as a tool for attracting tourism and growth. Preventative protection also can lower costs of living and contribute to an overall higher standard of living within the community.

The City of Gainesville Police Department is a multi-faceted professional public safety organization providing emergency and non-emergency service. The Department employs a total of approximately 118 employees, including 97 officers and 21 administrative staff. Service precincts include 3 government housing precincts, Lakeshore Mall, the Municipal Court building and the Public Safety building.

This Gainesville Police Department does not normally operate out of the geographic limits of the City of Gainesville; however, it will respond routinely in an emergency under a mutual aid circumstance with other law enforcement agencies. The Hall County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement protection for all citizens of the county, operate and man the Hall County Jail and a number of activities supporting the local courts. The Cities of Flowery Branch and Oakwood provide law enforcement to their respective citizens. Services from their respective police departments are confined to city limits except under an emergency mutual aid assistance circumstance.
The Department is internationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. and is State certified by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. All City of Gainesville Police Officers are certified by the Georgia Peace Officers' Standards and Training Council and must complete 20-hours of training annually to maintain their certification. In 2010 the Police Department was recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police for its efforts in traffic and highway safety.

Year	Service Calls	Motor Vehicle Accidents
2008	56,785	1,697
2009	63,101	1,553

As part of its outreach and education programs the Department provides a number of crime prevention programs, including a Selective Traffic Enforcement Program to reduce the volume and severity of motor vehicle crashes, school programs and appearances at civic and social events. The Department is also coordinating a community oriented policing approach to build relationships and communications with local residents and neighborhood associations.

The new 13-acre Gainesville Public Safety Complex opened November 30, 2010. The complex houses the new Gainesville Justice Center, the new Fire Station #1 and a 2+ acre Storm Water Detention and Biodetention pond. The Justice Center occupies 52,000 square feet and features the new administrative offices for the Police Department as well as the Municipal Court. Remaining short-term plans for the Police Department include calls to construct a new training & outdoor firing range facility.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management refers essentially to two things: The communication network that facilitates the response actions of public safety organizations, and the availability of ambulance carriers to address health transport needs that fall beyond the normal purview of police and fire protection services. Combined these services provide an additional means for supporting the general health and welfare of the citizens.

The City of Gainesville and Hall County maintain a contractual agreement for county-wide communication 911 services. Emergency calls (911) are received and evaluated at the Communications Center with immediate dispatch being initiated to the appropriate emergency response agency.

Emergency management is conducted in Hall County on a county wide basis. Funding for these activities is provided through Hall County general funds with a small percent coming from federal (FEMA) and state (GEMA) grant funds.

Hall County and all of its cities recently completed an update of the Hall County Hazard Mitigation Plan, a document guiding response activities that is required in order to obtain full federal assistance for emergency management investment.

Hospitals and Health Facilities

The remaining aspect addressed within the Public Safety element is the availability of hospitals and healthcare facilities to treat the ill and infirmed. Access to such facilities is required in order for a community to sustain its level of function and prosperity.

The City of Gainesville is home to the main campus for the Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS), a regional not-for-profit community health system serving approximately 700,000 residents in northeast Georgia. NGHS offers a full range of healthcare services through its Joint Commission accredited hospital in Gainesville, Northeast Georgia Medical Center, which was named one of the country's 100 Top Hospitals for 2009 by Thomson Reuters. The system features a capacity for 557 inpatients, including 261-skilled nursing beds and a medical staff of more than 500 physicians. Additional facilities in Hall County include: three urgent care centers; a mental health and substance abuse treatment center; two outpatient imaging centers; two long-term care centers; and outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapy clinics.

As a not-for-profit health system, all revenue generated above operating expenses is returned to the community through improved services and innovative programs. Northeast Georgia Medical Center's Charity Care Policy supports the provision of care for indigent patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

The Hall County Health Department provides a variety of general medical and well-being services available to any resident. The mission of the Department is to increase public access to basic preventative care and medical screenings traditionally too expensive for lower income households. Costs for services through the Department are based on sliding fee scale determined by income. Currently the priority needs for the Department are equipment and resource related, with some additional need for improved parking at their main center.

Mental health services in Hall County are provided countywide through nonprofit Georgia Mountains Community Services. Provision for these services is coordinated through the County Health Department, with funding derived from federal and state grants, the Hall County general fund, as well as user fees.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Parks and Recreation

Recreational facilities provide communities with a quality that is difficult to measure but considered vital to its social well-being. By offering a variety of recreational activities a region can strengthen the residents' quality of life and stimulate facets of the local economy.

Recreation facilities and services for Gainesville residents are provided through the Gainesville Parks and Recreation Authority, an independent agency governed by a 9 member Board of Directors appointed by the Gainesville City Council. The GPRA is one of only 4 nationally accredited parks and recreation agencies in the state of Georgia and only 1 of 71 in the nation. GPRA is responsible for maintaining over 425 acres of land, 20 parks, 20 athletic fields, 16 tennis courts, and 12 playgrounds. GPRA also operates the Gainesville Civic Center, the three years old Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center, the Martha Hope Cabin and the Fair Street Neighborhood Center. The GPRA also oversees the parks along the Rock Creek Greenway. Additionally, the GPRA is responsible for the development and coordination of several recreation and social programs, including league sports, health and fitness programs and special events for senior citizens and children. Recently, the Gainesville Parks and Recreation Department was named *Best in the State* in its population category in 2010 by the Georgia Recreation and Park Association, the second time in a row the Department has been so honored.

The GPRA routinely shares equipment and personnel with the Hall County Parks and Leisure Services Department to provide optimum response to recreation needs from one community to the other. Hall County shares costs, operation and ownership on a 50-50 basis with the City of Gainesville on two parks, which are Clarks Bridge Park and Monroe Drive/Allen Creek soccer Field Park which consists of 88 acres currently under development. The Clarks Bridge Park is leased from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

GPRA Parks	Athletic Fields	Playgrounds	Pavilions	Restrooms	Beach	Trails	Other
Allen Creek	Soccer						
City Park	Softball Fields, Football Stadium, Tennis Courts,	X	X	X			Civic Center, Martha Hope Cabin
Clarks Bridge Road				X	X		Boat Ramp; Fishing
Desoto Park	Tennis, Basketball	X	X	X			
Engine 209 Park							Historical Park With Railroad Cars
Fair Street Center							Community Center
Holly Park			X			X	Boat Ramp; Fishing
Rock Creek Greenway							
Ivy Terrace Park			X			X	
Rock Creek Park						X	Ampitheatre
Wilshire Trails		X		X		X	
Longwood Park	Tennis	X	X	X	X	X	Fishing; Horseshoe Pits
Kenwood Park		X				X	
Lanier Point Park	Softball	X	X	X		X	Boat Ramp; Fishing
Linwood Nature Preserve						X	
Myrtle Street Park	Basketball	X					
Poultry Park							Benches/ Gardens Around Monument
Riverside Park		X	X			X	
Roper Park	Tennis, Athletic Field	X	X	X		X	
South Side Park	Basketball, Ball Fields	X	X	X		X	
Wessell Park	Tennis, Basketball	X				X	

An additional recreational resource for Gainesville residents is the City managed Chattahoochee Golf Course located across Lake Lanier from downtown Gainesville. This is a Robert Trent Jones, Sr. design measures over 7,000 yards and the oldest golf course in northeast Georgia. In 2006 the course was renovated with new greens, bunkers, cart paths, improved drainage and a modernized teaching center. The Chicopee Woods Gold Course, located in unincorporated Hall County, is owned and operated by the Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission, and is available to the public. Both courses are self-sufficient inasmuch as they are funded by consumer user fees.

To sustain the high level of service established, the Parks and Recreation Department has several projects planned or underway. Efforts have already begun in constructing new trails and park amenities around the Frances Meadows Center Park, as well as initial work on the Midtown Greenway trailhead and park. Additional plans call for expansion of the Rock Creek Greenway and trail and an eventual Rails-to-Trails conversion utilizing the Gainesville Midland railroad that travels northward through Cleveland. The Department is also scheduled to perform the 10-year update to its Vision and Strategic Plan by 2014.

The Hall County Parks and Leisure Services Department encompasses 14 parks and includes two lakefront properties and the Agricultural Center at Chicopee Woods and one community service building, five animal stall barns, three performance arenas, one of which is covered, situated on approximately 45 acres with another 200 acres undeveloped. The City of Oakwood operates a city park and swimming pool as its recreation program. The City of Flowery Branch operates a small lakefront park which is currently inactive until such time as renovations are initiated and completed. Clermont has recently taken responsibility of a small park, gym, athletic field and picnic grounds under a lease program from Hall County. The City of Gillsville operates a small community park with a ball field and picnic area.

Education

Education facilities are those places and programs designed to support the learning and development of youth and the general labor force. These can include general or specialized education facilities and programs, and are closely tied to economic development efforts: Economic growth is often dependent of the levels of education and skill sets available within a community, thus it is in the best interest of every community to have the best education resources available.

Primary and Secondary Schools

The base level of education and the most prevalent within most American communities is that of primary and secondary schooling, which entails the common curricula taught between kindergarten and 12th grade. This education is designed to arm children and youth with the basic understanding of communication, analytical and social skills required to function within society. Often these schools will incorporate higher levels of study for those inclined to continue their education. They may also include technical and professional job-skill training programs that provide specialized instruction on common and available jobs, so that graduates can immediately (re)enter the workforce.

The Gainesville City School System, serving only city households, is one of the few municipally based systems within Georgia. The system currently features 5 elementary schools plus Gainesville Middle School, Gainesville High School and Woods Mill, a grades 6-12 alternative high school. For the 2009/10 academic year the total system had a full-time enrollment of 6,296 students, with 1,377 attending Gainesville High School.

In a move to provide a unique and invigorating learning environment, as well as a means to provide some level of choice and control to local parents, the elementary schools have individual academic themes and parents have the chance to choose to send their children to any school within the system. Every school still provides the core curricula required by the State, but also provides specialized programs based on the particular theme as a means to stimulate student interest.

Gainesville City School System Elementary Schools
Centennial Arts Academy
Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy
Fair Street International Baccalaureate World School
Gainesville Exploration Academy
New Holland Core Knowledge Academy

Within Georgia, the primary measure of a schools/systems general academic performance is monitored through the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria. These criteria involve progressive testing throughout an academic year in several subjects for various grade levels, and are based on the population groups' ability to improve over the course of the year. According to the 2009/10 testing the Gainesville City School System as a whole successfully passed AYP, however New Holland Core Knowledge Academy failed to meet the total criteria. That school will now have to show significant improvement in order to remain in good standing.

Of special note, Gainesville High School was one of seven schools in Georgia honored as a 2010 National Blue Ribbon School, which recognizes students for achievement at high levels or for drastically improved scores on standardized tests.

2009/10 Specialized Education Services - Gainesville City School System

Program	Program Enrollment	% of Student Population
Special Education (Grades K-12) (PK)	 488 40	 7.8% N/A
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (Grades K-12)	1,647	26.2%
Early Intervention Program (EIP) (Grades K-5)	1,390	39.1%
Remedial Education (Grades 6-8)	331	24.3%
Remedial Education (Grades 9-12)	263	19.1%

The School System maintains the State mandated 5 year master plan that is projected an increase in enrollment from 6,386 in 2009/10 to 7,566 in 2013/14. This would be an increase of almost 1,200 students, or 18% over the current student population. This would leave the enrollment within the 2,000 student limits budgeted within the middle and high schools, but would necessitate the construction of new elementary facilities. Currently the System is planning on new schools to replace Fair Street Elementary and an additional elementary school in a location to be determined.

In addition to the Gainesville City School System, city residents have their choice among several private schools within the community.

- *Riverside Military Academy* is a college preparatory boarding/day school for boys that was founded in Gainesville in 1906. The academy features grades 7-12 and an enrollment of around 300 students.
- *Brenau Academy* is a college preparatory boarding/day school for girls grade 9-12 located on the Brenau University campus.
- *Lakeview Academy* is a 500 student, co-ed college preparatory day school for grades pre K-12.
- Faith based schools are also available in or within 10 miles of Gainesville through *North Georgia Christian Academy*, *Maranatha Christian Academy* and *Heritage Academy*. All three are accredited schools featuring at least 1st-12th grade, however Heritage Academy is a classroom/home study collaborative and does not have its own campus.

Post-Secondary Facilities

Post-secondary education facilities are those colleges, universities and other programs that allow high school graduates to pursue higher levels or different fields of study. Their programs of are designed to strengthen the real-world skills of the younger labor force for a variety of subjects.

An assessment of the post-secondary resources within the greater Gainesville area was presented within the Economic Development chapter. Of those listed, only Brenau University and the Featherbone Communiversity are within the city. While neither entity is a State or local facility, the City does regularly communicate with each and is vested in their long-term success. As such the City will cooperate with each in planning for growth management and facility needs.

Libraries

In addition to the formal education programs directed through schools and post-secondary institutions, libraries provide an important resource for individual learning and development, as well as a source of recreation. As the default media and archive center of a community, the availability and scope of library services can prove significant in shaping the potential of a community. Libraries provide information and tools needed to support continued learning, ingenuity and creativity outside the structured environment of schools.

Local library services are provided by the Hall County Library System, which maintains libraries in Gainesville, Oakwood, Flowery Branch, Clermont, East Hall, and Murrayville. The Gainesville location serves as the main branch, and the system is a member of the PINES statewide library network that allows the sharing of resources. The East Hall Branch and Special Needs Library has many services dedicated to giving our special needs patrons an equal library experience, while each facility features a variety of children's activities and programs. The system also works with the local school systems to ensure the maximum amount of resources and assistance are made available to area students.

The recent construction of the Spout Springs branch in Flowery Branch features special areas for children and teens as well as a coffee shop and recreation areas. This facility has been received as a great success and is the model for future construction/ renovations. Current improvement plans call for a new structure in Clermont and modest renovations of existing facilities in Oakwood and Gainesville. Improvements to media resources and the book inventories will be ongoing as budgets permit.

The Library system maintains as one primary objective that *"All residents will have access to a library facility within a 15 minute drive of their home by 2019."* Currently only a handful of households are outside this standard due largely to remote, rural housing in the west and north of the county.

General Government

General government facilities are those resources required for the government to perform its operations: Administration and office space, meeting facilities, storage space, etc. In order for the government to function efficiently (both fiscally and physically) the operating facilities must be conducive the nature of the operations.

Both Gainesville and Hall County are planning some expansion, renovation or relocation of select government administrative operations within the planning time frame, which may include a realignment of services currently within the Joint Administration Building. The recent completion of the Public Safety Complex has resolved the City's most pressing space needs, and in the short term the City is focused on maintaining and improving existing facilities.

The Community Service Center is jointly funded and operated by Hall County and the City of Gainesville. Services of the Center are provided countywide and include counseling, parenting, homebound services, operation of the Hall Area Transit, Meals on Wheels, and the Senior Center. The Center is located in downtown Gainesville and has a staff of 29.

Legacy Link, Inc., a nonprofit agency, contracts with Community Service Center, to provide state and federal funds to provide senior citizens services to all qualifying cities of Gainesville and Hall County. Funding from the Gainesville and Hall County general funds and from private donations and participants' fees also support CSC/SAS programs.

The City of Gainesville owns and operates the City of Gainesville Civic Center and the Georgia Mountains Center. Located in the downtown area of the City, both facilities are supported by Special Revenue funds managed by the City, as well as consumer user fees. In addition, both facilities are open to the public within and outside of the City's incorporated boundaries. The Mountains Center is targeted for long-term improvements but has recently benefitted from the completion of a new adjacent parking deck. Plans are also underway to build a pedestrian bridge linking the building with the hotel located across Jesse Jewell Parkway, in a bid to increase the facilities convention appeal.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation concerns the accessibility to sites and land uses. The demands for transportation facilities and services vary by land use, demographics and other factors. The dynamic nature of accessibility and the various factors that combine to determine functional performance in infrastructure suggest transportation for larger or rapidly growing communities requires special attention outside of the traditional public facilities and services. Because transportation plays such a large part in shaping development patterns, and because transportation systems can be assessed as all together a utility, a set of facilities and a service, transportation must often be assessed as its own element.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Transportation systems and infrastructure are critical components of community health and development, due to their symbiotic relationship with land use and the provision of other public services. Accessibility is one of the defining attributes behind the value of a property's, or a city's, location, and as such it is valuable to understand the conditions influencing transportation needs and issues.

Gainesville is maturing from a mid-Twentieth Century regional industrial center into a modern multi-faceted metropolitan community center. The industrial fabric remains a critical element in shaping the transportation form and demands, including larger manufacturing sites and freight rail service that provides much of the employment for area. Of growing importance, however, is the role as a regional center for medical, convention and collegiate facilities. Even as the City grows in population it continues to receive more traffic from outside the area for such destinations as the North Georgia Medical Center and Brenau College.

Additional factors are altering the dynamic of Gainesville's transportation needs and increasing the scale and forms of automotive use. The evolution in commercial services from smaller, urban scale businesses to auto-oriented strip shopping centers has turned several portions of roadway into regional commercial centers, drawing shoppers from around Hall County and beyond. Additional traffic comes to and through the city as tourists flock to Lake Lanier, often patronizing shops and restaurants as part of their visit. These demands must be balanced with the needs of local residents and businesses, ensuring proper flow of traffic and access to destinations.

The transportation system in and immediately around Gainesville is largely defined by the shape of the lake and I-985. The Lake serves as a natural barrier prohibiting traffic along the city's western and northern frontiers, where traffic must ultimately converge into one of the several bridges crossing the reservoir. As a result these roadways have grown in their role as arterial highways and helped shaped land use along their corridors. Similarly, I-985 has defined the land use and traffic flow on the city's eastern frontier, providing one of the main arteries connecting Gainesville to the metro area to the south and the popular tourist destinations to the north. Topography has also helped to shape the roads, as the slope of the land dictates both buildable land and the route for optimal roadways.

It is considered a certainty that Gainesville will continue to grow and the demands will increase in scope and dynamic along with this growth. Major influences on the current traffic patterns include the continued expansion of metropolitan Atlanta and metro Athens, the growing influence of northbound tourist traffic, and the city's own economic activity centers: Industrial sites, the hospital, college, etc. As a means to accommodate these needs and to achieve other

community objectives, general ambitions for the City's transportation system includes improving the scope and quality of urban roads and parking in downtown, increasing the options and abilities for public transit, increasing the volume and reach of sidewalks and trails, and maintaining an effective road network throughout the city.

Transportation Planning Process

Out of the roughly 139,000 overall residents within Hall County counted during the year 2000 Census, 88,680 were identified as being part of an urbanized area in and around the city of Gainesville. This made Gainesville (and the surrounding urbanized areas) one of 76 newly designated urbanized areas nationwide, and with that mandated compliance with federal policy requiring the establishment of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and standards for transportation planning. The MPO is responsible for transportation assessments and planning (in coordination with the GDOT) and for developing a short-range transportation improvement program (TIP).

The Gainesville-Hall County MPO was convened in 2003 with representatives from all of Hall County's impacted governments among the various Committees and with an agreement designating the Hall County Planning Department to serve as the technical and administrative staff. Early assessments produced a travel demand forecast model to determine roadway conditions in through 2030, as referenced within the 2004 comprehensive plan update for Gainesville and Hall County. Ultimately the MPO completed its requirements in developing a long range transportation plan in 2007 and maintains a TIP for guiding transportation investment and supporting the transportation management for the City.

MPOs are required to update their long-range transportation plans every four or five years depending on air-quality non-attainment status. While much of the current long-range transportation plan remains valid, the GHMPO is currently developing an updated model and forecast that reaches through 2040 and takes into account recent issues with regards to roadway financing revenues and evolving traffic patterns. Where possible, the information and assessment associated with the update of that document are being used within this comprehensive plan element.

ROAD NETWORK

State roads are classified as interstates, arterials, collectors, or local roads based on average trip lengths, trip destinations, traffic density and speeds. Each classification represents the relative weight, or value, of a roadway, which helps govern the types of service and development conditions permitted. In this modern era characterized by the automobile, a community's accessibility is largely defined by the quality and quantity of its street network, particularly its access to major arterials. As a result, business and land development is often dictated by the conditions of the local roads and related capital improvements.

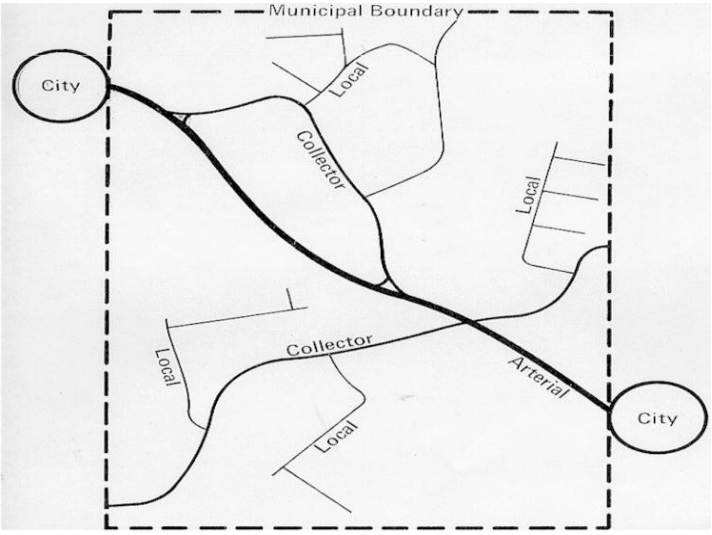
Functional Classification

Assessment of roadway infrastructure conditions involves a breakdown of road inventories by functional classification, a process by which streets and highways are grouped according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Individual roads and streets do not all serve the same function, nor do they manage travel independently but rather as part of a cohesive network. Transportation planning for roads, then, is used to determine how this travel can most efficiently move within the network, and functional classification assists with this process by

defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a roadway network.

While the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have established 11 different types of Functional Classifications or use in transportation planning, most roadways fall into one of four more generalized categories—*Interstate highways*, *arterials, collector roads,* and *local roads*. *Arterials* provide longer through travel between major trip generators (larger cities, recreational areas, etc.); and *collector roads* collect traffic from the local roads and also connect smaller cities and towns with each other and to the arterials; finally, *local roads* provide access to private property or low volume public facilities. Each category may have sub-categories to recognize latent differences within the community, but this provides a framework for the identification of roadway objectives and services. The figure below shows a representative map of these four categories by weighted intensity.

Figure: *Illustration of Functional Classification Categories*



Interstates

Interstate highways feature the most intense use based both on volume and speed of traffic because they are designed for very exclusive access and traveling longer distances. Interstates are used to connect communities across jurisdictions, states and even the country, providing access beyond immediate surroundings. These are primarily managed by the FHWA in conjunction with the States and planning for these facilities is addressed on a macro scale.

Arterial Roadways

The primary function of an arterial roadway is to move traffic through a defined region or corridor by providing limited access and carrying large volumes of traffic at higher speeds. Within municipal boundaries and in some rural areas, these roadways may provide limited access to cross streets and private property.

Principal (major) arterials serve major activity centers and major corridors within a community or defined area and typically have the highest traffic volumes. These roadways

carry a large proportion of trips with origins and destinations within the surrounding region. They also serve to move thru-traffic into and out of the region or area by connecting them to other communities. These roadways may provide access to private property or be a controlled access facility. Typically, these facilities have 100 to 200 feet right-of-way, four or more lanes, and may be divided by a median or some type of barrier. Speeds are generally high- ranging from 45 mph to 70 mph. Interstates and freeways are the best example of such road systems.

Minor arterials are often classified as streets and highways (non-interstate or freeways) that interconnect with and compliment the principal (major) arterials. These roadways serve trips of moderate length and emphasize more land access than major arterial roads. Minor arterials usually have 80 to 120 feet of right-of-way and have wide intersections with turn lanes. These roadways may have up to five lanes of traffic. However, most facilities in rural areas are two lanes. Speed limits are moderately high- ranging between 45-65 mph. Most State Routes typically fall into this category.

Collector Roadways

The primary purpose of a collector road is to collect traffic from other roadways in commercial and residential areas and then distribute that traffic onto arterial road systems. Some collector roads serve thru-traffic as well as local traffic, which accesses nearby destinations. Essentially, collectors are designed to provide a greater balance between mobility and land access within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. The makeup of a collector facility is largely dependent upon the density, size, and type of abutting developments. Additionally, due to the emphasis on balancing between mobility and access, a collector facility is better designed to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity while still serving the needs of the motoring public.

Collectors typically have 60-100 feet right-of-ways and two to four travel lanes. Collectors intersect with cross-streets and driveways more frequently than arterial systems. Speeds and traffic volumes along these roadways are moderate. Posted speed limits are generally between 30-55 mph.

Local Roadways

Local roadways, because of their design features, are influenced less by traffic volumes and are tailored to provide more local access and community livability. Mobility on local facilities is typically incidental and involves relatively short trips at lower speeds to and from collector facilities. They are designed for neighborhood environments. This "neighborhood" nature requires travel speeds to be generally lower than collectors and arterials. Posted speed limits on local city streets generally range between 15 and 35 mph, depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses. Local county roads are generally posted between 30-55 mph. Traffic volumes on local streets are generally less than 5,000 vehicles per day, and often vary depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety and aesthetics are generally high priorities on local road systems in and around residential and commercial areas. Wider travel lanes and broader turning radii, to accommodate larger vehicle sizes, are major considerations on local streets in industrial/commercial areas.

Existing Roadway Conditions

The City of Gainesville street network features a traditional core of grid patterns streets around downtown that eventually gives way to more curvilinear streets that reach out into surrounding neighborhoods. As the streets reach further away from downtown they respond more to historic trade routes and the rolling topography. Key arterials in the form of State Highways intersect at the northeast corner of downtown, forming the primary axes stretching out in all four directions. An additional main east/west connector is at the southeast corner of downtown, with Interstate 985 providing the most prominent north-south arterial approximately 2 miles east of downtown.

As a regional center for employment, commerce, recreation and medical and educational services, Gainesville features a high degree of local and commuting traffic. As a result, congestion peak periods not only include commuter periods but also a noon time rush hour. A recent study of traffic volumes on Jesse Jewel Parkway showed that the noon time vehicles per hour rate was as high or higher than the 5:00 PM count and double that of the 8:00 AM count. Key transportation routes through the city include Interstate 985 and arterials such as E.E. Butler Parkway, Green Street/Thompson Bridge Road, Browns Bridge Road, and Jesse Jewel Parkway. These routes combine with collectors and local streets to form the County's roadway system.

E.E. Butler Parkway is a four-lane divided arterial. Traffic flows predominantly southbound (or eastbound) during the morning and northbound (or westbound) during the afternoon, peaking during the typical morning and evening heavy travel periods. E.E. Butler Parkway serves significant truck traffic between the industrial areas in the eastern portion of the City of Gainesville and I-985, with traffic volumes highest near I-985 and decreasing slightly approaching downtown Gainesville.

On the Green Street/Thompson Bridge Road corridor, traffic flow is highly directional during peak periods, with the flow predominately southbound in the morning and northbound in the evening. In addition, a mid-day peak period, extending from about 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, exhibits a roughly 50/50 directional split.

Browns Bridge Road and the western portions of Jesse Jewel Parkway are predominantly lined with strip commercial development, such as fast food restaurants, gas stations, and strip mall shopping. The traffic characteristics are typical of these adjacent land uses, with morning and afternoon peak periods overshadowed by a long mid-day peak period. The highest traffic volumes on this corridor are recorded on Jesse Jewel Parkway just west of E.E. Butler Parkway.

Roadway Capacity

The Gainesville-Hall County transportation travel demand model incorporates features of the area's transportation network and provides insights into the system's capacity. Key to identifying potential current and future deficiencies, modeled lane miles of roadway able to accommodate traffic volumes of varying intensity by functional class are shown in Table 1. Current roadway capacities are mapped in Figure 2. While the GHTS area's roadway capacity is significant, recent rapid growth in population and employment will challenge the system's ability to continue to provide acceptable levels of service.

Table: Gainesville Roadway Capacities by Functional Class - 2000

Functional Class	Less than 20,000	20,000-24,999	25,000-29,999	30,000-34,999	> 35,000	Total
Interstate	0	0	0	13.1	0	13.1
Arterial	7.1	40.1	2.9	1.4	0	51.5
Collector	82.3	19.6	0	0	0	101.9
Local Road	23.5	0	0	0	0	23.5
Ramps	0.4	0	0	0	0	0.4
Total	113.3	59.7	2.9	14.5	0	190.4

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Table 2 provides additional details about the performance of the base year 2000 roadway network in the GHTS area. Volume to capacity (v/c) ratios for interstates and ramps are approaching levels of congestion that are a concern. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) offers a base statistic for road utilization by functional classification.

Table : Gainesville System Performance by Functional Class - 2000

Functional Class	Avg Congested Speed	AADT	Avg volume capacity ratio	Vehicle Miles Traveled	% of Vehicle Miles Traveled
Interstate	55	19,333	0.7	669,019	18.90%
Arterial	49	9,561	0.4	1,005,029	28.60%
Collector	29	2,453	0.2	1,650,324	46.70%
Local Road	26	1,073	0.1	199,853	5.80%
Ramps	24	4,665	0.8	20,214	0.60%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Existing traffic volume field counts and AADT counts are prepared and reported by GDOT. The raw counts are collected and adjusted to reflect average traffic volumes at particular locations on an annual basis. Total daily roadway volumes for 2000 are mapped on Figure 3. Table 3 also contains area traffic volume data from 1992 to 2002. Changes in traffic volumes along the various routes have also been calculated. The general trend of significantly increased traffic volumes from 1992 to 2002 on the road network reflects significant growth in population and employment. The heaviest traveled roadways are I-985, SR 11, SR 365, SR 53, SR 369 and SR 60.

Congestion Management

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law on August 10, 2005. SAFETEA-LU requires metropolitan planning organizations serving a Transportation Management Area (TMA), a metropolitan area with a population in excess of 200,000, to have a process that provides for effective management and operation to address congestion management. An effective Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a process to manage congestion.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines congestion as the level at which transportation system performance is no longer acceptable due to traffic interference, and this definition has been used in the GHMPO 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Update. The level of system performance deemed acceptable varies by functional classification of the transportation facility, geographic location, time of day and other characteristics.

In 2007, only a small portion of the Atlanta Urbanized Area extended into southern Hall County. Only this portion of the GHMPO study area must comply with the CMP requirements. Although the City of Gainesville is not currently included in this area, the roadways included in the CMP contribute to congestion in Gainesville and the surrounding areas of Hall County. With the release of 2010 Census Data, Gainesville's population could exceed 200,000. This issue will be addressed in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan Update currently underway by the GHMPO.

For the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, the GHMPO used the Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio to evaluate roadway congestion in the Atlanta urbanized portion of Hall County. 2005 was used as the base year, the year 2030 was used to evaluate future congestion with the Existing plus Committed (E+C) formula. There is an established relationship between V/C ratio and traffic operation, and V/C ratio is a common indicator of congestion. The volume of a facility is the estimated amount of traffic utilizing the facility at a given time period at free-flow speed while maintaining safe traveling distance between vehicles.

V/C ratios can be used to illustrate a facility's Level of Service (LOS). The 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan contains LOS values for a portion of the GHMPO study area calculated with V/C ratios.LOS measures "A" to "F" reflect the roadway's operation; the higher the ratio, the closer the roadway's capacity to being filled. The GDOT recognizes the following LOS values:

- LOS A to C <= 0.70
- LOS D and E >= 0.71 <= 0.99
- LOS F >= 1.00

LOS definitions qualify traffic conditions in terms of such factors as speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions and safety. LOS A represents the best operating conditions. Per the LOS guidelines in the Highway Capacity Manual distributed by the Transportation Research Board, the criteria are:

- LOS A, B & C - Indicates conditions where traffic can move freely.
- LOS D – Vehicle speed begins to decline slightly with increasing flows. Speed and freedom of movement are severely restricted.
- LOS E – Describes conditions where traffic volumes are at or close to capacity, resulting in serious delays.
- LOS F – Breakdown in vehicular flow. Condition exists when the flow rate exceeds roadway capacity. LOS F is used to describe conditions at a bottleneck or breakdown as well as the condition of the traffic downstream from that point.

Roadways described as "regionally significant" in the model networks that are in the Hall County CMP were evaluated. The table below provides the V/C thresholds used to define congestion in the CMP.

Table : Gainesville Roads Congestion Thresholds

	Freeways		Regionally Strategic Arterial System	Other Arterials & Regionally Significant Roadways
	HOV	Others		
Area Type	**Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratios**			
Urban	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Suburban	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8
Exurban/Rural	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

The V/C ratio is not the only measure to identify congestion. Facilities can also be ranked by analyzing the duration of daily congestion. If the CMP area in Hall County broadens to include additional facilities, future CMP updates may include such rankings for Hall County.

Based upon a review of functional classifications and traffic volumes for the base year, SR 13/Atlanta Highway (Major Collector), McEver Road (Minor Arterial), and SR 347/Friendship Road (Minor Collector) are the only regionally significant roadways that are part of the CMP. As mentioned earlier, V/C ratios were applied to identify the congested links. After congested links were identified, congested facilities and corridors were identified. The 2030 E+C analysis forecasts congested conditions likely to occur with near term programmed transportation improvement projects in place. The results of this analysis show the following road segments with a LOS F (V/C Ratio of >1.0): McEver Road from the Gwinnett County Line to the urbanized boundary and SR 13/Atlanta Highway from the Gwinnett County line to the urbanized boundary.

Within the City of Gainesville, the most congested areas in 2005 were SR 60/Greene Street, Washington Street, Jesse Jewell and SR 13/Atlanta Road with LOS D to E. These areas are heavily utilized by business and school traffic, often used as “cut through” routes to avoid the larger roads. The intersection of Jesse Jewell and SR 60 in downtown Gainesville shows an LOS F. This intersection is used to obtain access to I-985 and SR 60 for those travelling from the southeast and western portions of Hall County. According to the 2030 E+C V/C Ratios for Hall County, these areas increase to LOS E and LOS F, with the majority of the surrounding roads and streets increasing from a LOS A,B, C to LOS D and LOS E. Again, these congestion issues more than likely stem from the business and school traffic as well as drivers accessing I-985 and SR 60.

Congestion-Reduction Projects

Several congestion-reduction strategies were reviewed for implementation in the GHMPO 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Update. Candidate congestion reduction projects included Transportation System Management (TSM), Travel Demand Management (TDM), Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) strategies, transit service projects, and highway improvement projects.

Federal regulations cite that strategies should be considered that reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel and reduce SOV demand before the addition of extra lanes or new roads are necessary. Below are five categories of traditional and nontraditional congestion management strategies that could be considered under the federal regulations. Some measures may not be appropriate for GHMPO study area, but could be considered in the future.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Measures

- Growth Management and Activity Center Strategies
    - Promote infill, compact and mixed-use development
    - Enforce growth boundaries and limit rural growth areas
    - Develop standards
- Congestion Pricing
    - Parking fees
    - Price preference to car and van poolers
- Ridesharing Programs
    - Carpool/vanpool and transit initiatives
    - HOV priority systems
    - Employer trip reduction programs
    - Guaranteed ride home programs
    - Park and ride facilities
- Alternative Work Strategies
    - Telecommuting
    - Flexible work hours
    - Telework
- Shuttle Services
    - Demand-response transit
    - Express service
- Nonmotorized Transportation Planning
    - Traffic calming
    - Streetscape
    - Safety education
    - Transit oriented development
    - Improved sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes

Traffic Operational Improvements

- Traffic Signal Improvements
    - Signal re-timing
    - Vehicle detection
    - Highway/railroad signal coordination
- Roadway Geometrics Improvements
    - Bottleneck alleviations
    - Turnlane additions at intersections
    - Re-striping/lane modifications
- Turn Restrictions
    - Time of day restrictions on turning movements
- Access Management Techniques
    - Driveway management
    - Median arrangement
    - Frontage roads
- High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

Public Transportation Improvements

- Public Transit Capital Improvements
    - Fleet expansion
    - Transit support facilities
    - Improved intermodal connectors

Intelligent Transportation System Technologies

- Incident Management
    - Incident detection and surveillance
    - Incidence response units
- Advanced Traveler Information
    - Dynamic message signs
    - Highway advisory radio
- Advanced Traffic Management Centers
    - Traffic management center
    - Traffic signal coordination

Additional System Capacity

- Additional Freeway Lanes
- Additional Roadway Lanes
- New Roadway Construction
- Interchanges

CMP Monitoring Program

An important component to the CMP is evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented actions. The monitoring of the CMP network, through use of performance measures is intended to be a continual process. Monitoring will assist in the identification of location where congestion mitigation measures are need and will be most effective, assisting in transportation planning needs.

Local Maintenance

Maintenance and repaving of roadways are managed through a combination of local and State efforts. The GDOT sponsors maintenance and repair of all State roads but must do so based upon funding and state-wide prioritization. Local public works and road departments are responsible for managing local road maintenance and can pursue both State and outside assistance with funding or seek to repair some state routes of their own initiative if so desired.

The Traffic Engineering Division of the Public Works Department oversees the management of the City's transportation system. The Division's mission is to achieve and sustain a transportation system that will address traffic demand and capacity, employ appropriate technologies, and join transit, roadway and bicycle/pedestrian facilities into a safe, efficient and environmentally sensitive network. The Division has three primary focus areas: 1) an engineering section responsible for transportation system planning and maintenance, 2) a traffic signal section responsible for the efficient operation and maintenance of the city's 79 signalized intersections, and 3) a traffic sign and marking section.

The Division maintains an inventory of road conditions in cooperation with the GDOT, and has a maintenance and improvement policy for managing the city's roads. Staff from the Division also participate in transportation planning with the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Scheduled/ Proposed Improvements

The GHMPO maintains the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for the City of Gainesville, identifying the needed infrastructure expansions and maintenance required to sustain levels of service and pursue desired growth. The current TIP includes projects that should be regarded as priority projects that will/should be initiated within the near term, and as such must be regarded during any projection of future needs and demands. These reflect the priorities for the whole county, however, and reflect those projects to be developed as part of regular federal assistance. Local projects may be developed by discretion through local and other funding sources.

Currently the only project remaining that directly impacts Gainesville is the Midtown Greenway on CSX Right-of-Way, to be pursued through FY13. As the current Transportation Planning Process is completed additional Gainesville projects may be added to the program list. Additionally, the effort to nominate projects to be considered for funding by the possible regional sales and use tax may provide additional funding to be used for City projects.

Bridges

There are 13 bridges within the City limits, 7 of which are along State routes and are the responsibility of the GDOT. Six of the remaining bridges are local two-lane roads crossing over small creeks and are regularly inspected by City Public Works personnel, none of which are located in corridors identified as having congestion issues or failing levels of service. The remaining bridge is Athens Street as it crosses over I-985.

All of the bridges maintained by the City are currently consider adequate for the near term of the planning period, and long-term maintenance is planned in coordination with GDOT and the GHMPO.

PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

A number of these short trips may be accomplished by pedestrian or bicycle rather than vehicular travel. The opening of additional roads and addition of sidewalks between the central part of town and redevelopment areas would increase the ability and safety of pedestrian travel. The pedestrian experience may be improved with the addition of streetscaping, lighting and crosswalks, particularly in the areas near existing and future public buildings and facilities.

Sidewalks

Downtown Gainesville contains an excellent sidewalk system, which connects government and office buildings, downtown merchants, and major parking areas. However, the location of sidewalks outside of the downtown area is sporadic. Most of the blocks surrounding the square feature sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, with at least one side continuing outward for two blocks.

Across Jesse Jewell Parkway to the east, the midtown district features some sidewalks on an inconsistent basis, but the network does reach as far as the industrial buildings several blocks into the area. Most of the surrounding neighborhoods, including Fair Street and the Washington Street/Oak Street area feature sidewalks along most roads, even if only along one side. There is also a thorough network within the Enota and North Gainesville neighborhoods and within the Brenau University area.

Combined the sidewalk network for the City is expansive and serves the form of the city well. Most are in decent condition but some improvements are needed at intersections and to improve ADA accessibility. Crossings at arterials around downtown will be critical in the future is Gainesville is to foster a stronger, walkable urban network. Construction in 2011 of a pedestrian bridge over Jesse Jewell near the Ga. Mountains Center will be a big first step, but maintaining connectivity with the Brenau and medical center campuses is vital.

Sidewalks are maintained by the City's Public Works Department on an as-needed basis. Expansion of the system has been coordinated through a Safe Routes to Schools program developed in 2006 with the City of Gainesville School System. This effort included a comprehensive mapping of the existing sidewalks and a stakeholder driven process to identify target areas for future expansion and improvements of the network. The resulting program helped coordinate several improvements but many of the recommendations remain, with some $160,000 worth in new construction proposed for the next few years, pending grant approvals. Priority extensions include new sidewalks reaching critical areas for shopping, medical facilities or government buildings, including the Shallowford Road commercial centers, Thompson Bridge Road and deeper into the north Gainesville neighborhood.

Bicycle Routes and Trails

Trails and bicycle routes have grown in popularity as both recreational amenities and as components of transportation infrastructure. Properly designed routes can serve both roles as well as adding valuable greenspace and promoting a more active community.

Gainesville's most prominent trail is the Rock Creek Greenway, a series of paved trails roughly 1 mile in length alongside a scenic creek. The greenway links downtown with Longwood Park and Lake Lanier, features several pavilions and seating areas, an amphitheater and a playground. It also helps serve the north Gainesville neighborhood and provides connectivity to the three schools.

Future greenways are currently being proposed/developed include the following:

Midtown Greenway
This project features the conversion of the CSX rail line into a greenway and the building of a park. This greenway in Midtown will improve the aesthetics of the area and will provide an alternative mode of transportation, recreational opportunities, and pedestrian connections to the downtown square, the Elachee trail system, and the Rock Creek Greenway.

Central Hall Multi-Use Trail
This project is a cooperative venture between Gainesville, Hall County and the City of Oakwood. It consists of several trails that would form a loop between Gainesville, the Elachee Nature Center, Gainesville State College and southwestern Gainesville. The corridor intersects other existing or proposed trails, including the Midtown Greenway, and

would run along scenic Flat and Balus Creeks. Engineering for select portions is already underway.

Gainesville-Midland Rails-to-Trails
This project proposes to convert a decommissioned rail line to a paved multi-use trail that runs from Gainesville to just south of Helen, Ga. This would be more a recreational route and add to the tourist amenities for the area. The conceptual development plan is underway and each of the communities along the route have signaled their support.

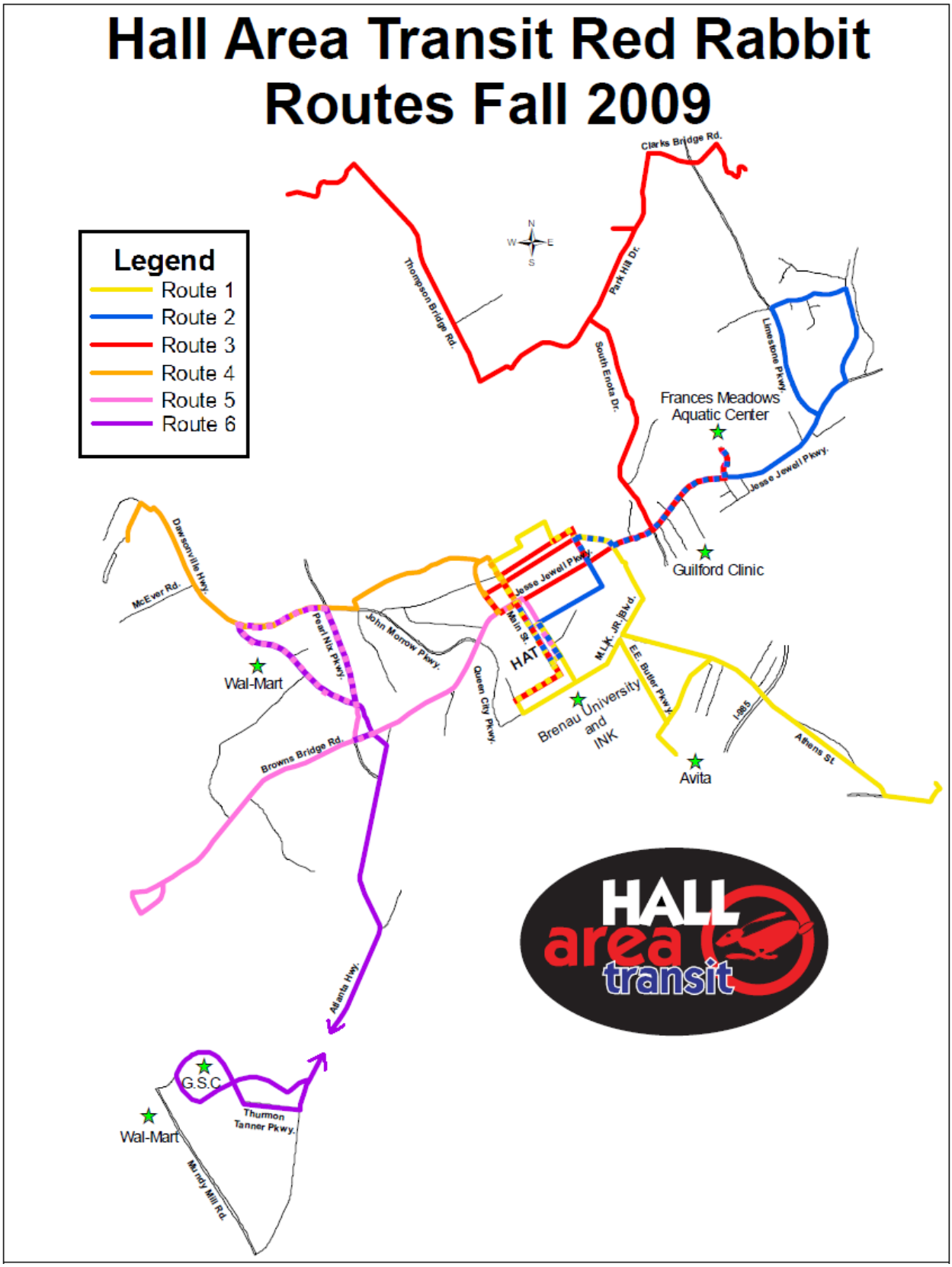
Additionally, the State DOT has created Georgia's Bicycle Master Plan, which coordinates a network of 14 named and numbered routes totaling 2,943 miles that are or will be particularly well suited for bicycle use. Within the Gainesville-Hall County borders is State Bicycle Route 55, which runs north-south along US 23 north to Gainesville and then along SR 284 to the County line for approximately 26 miles.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation allows people otherwise unable to travel greater access to the community, and can support a community's health and vitality by providing a functional alternative to private automobile ownership. Public transportation is also a means of diffusing traffic pressures, alleviating the environmental concerns stemming from roadside development, and for stimulating residential and commercial activity.

Hall Area Transit (HAT) is the public transportation service within the Gainesville / Hall County area. The system is funded jointly by the City of Gainesville, Hall County, the GDOT and the Federal Transit Administration. The availability of this system provides citizens greater mobility and access to destinations for employment, health care, education, shopping, community services, recreation, and other personal business. The system also provides specialized transit capabilities for handicapped and elderly riders within Gainesville.

Hall Area Transit offers two types of transportation: 1) A fixed route system within the City of Gainesville called The Red Rabbit, and a Dial-A-Ride service that provides curb-to-curb transportation for the outlying areas of Hall County. There are currently six (6) bus routes as part of the fixed route system, with each bus making approximately 30 stops per hour. The Red Rabbit bus service features a one-way fare of $1.00 per trip, $0.50 for seniors, children and students, and allows free transfers. The service is available, within the City of Gainesville and on Atlanta Hwy to Gainesville State College, Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.


Hall Area Transit Red Rabbit Routes Fall 2009
Legend
Route 1
Route 2
Route 3
Route 4
Route 5
Route 6
N
W
E
S
Clarks Bridge Rd.
Thompson Bridge Rd.
Park Hill Dr.
South Enota Dr.
Limestone Pkwy.
Frances Meadows Aquatic Center
Jesse Jewell Pkwy.
Guilford Clinic
Dawsonville Hwy.
McEver Rd.
Pearl Nix Pkwy.
John Morrow Pkwy.
Main St.
HAT
M.L.K. JR. Blvd.
E.E. Butler Pkwy.
I-985
Athens St
Queen City Pkwy.
Wal-Mart
Brenau University and INK
Avita
Browns Bridge Rd.
Atlanta Hwy.
G.S.C.
Thurmon Tanner Pkwy.
Wal-Mart
Mundy Mill Rd.
HALL area transit

RAILROADS AND AIR TRANSPORTATION

While personal automobiles are the most common form of transportation, rail and air travel remain critical to the efficient movement of people and goods. More importantly, these facilities require specialized planning and development to ensure efficient operation and not adversely impact surrounding land uses.

Railroads

Railroad service has declined in priority in the US since the 1950's but is still crucial to several industries. Heavy rail is an integral part of modern industrial freight movement as well as growing plans for increased passenger travel. Transportation planning must address available rail options and conditions not only for the benefit of the rail system but also for points where rail service interacts (or intersects) other transportation systems.

Two major active freight rail lines run in a north-south direction through Hall County. The Norfolk Southern Atlanta/Greenville line parallels US 23 and passes through Flowery Branch, Gainesville, and Lula. The CSX line runs south from Gainesville to Athens. AMTRAK provides daily passenger service along this line with a Gainesville station stop in each direction. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP) envisions future commuter rail service between Atlanta and Gainesville, as well as intercity service to Greenville, South Carolina. Commuter rail between Atlanta and Gainesville is a second phase development of the Commuter Rail Program. The line would have seven stations beginning at Lenox and going to Norcross, Duluth, Suwannee, Sugar Hill, Oakwood and Gainesville. The GDOT study projects that there would be more than 7,000 daily passenger trips and a substantial part of the operating costs could potentially be recovered from the farebox (estimated recovery about 60 percent).

The same line would serve as part of an intercity rail program also envisioned by GDOT. The Intercity Rail Passenger Plan explores the possibility of intercity rail passenger services between Atlanta and Greenville, South Carolina, going through Gainesville. The service is projected to attract 128,000 passengers annually by 20202. Implementation of the service is expected to cost approximately $104 million.

Air Transportation

All public use airports in Georgia are assigned one of three functional levels as the facility relates to the state's transportation and economic needs, as discussed in the current Georgia Aviation System Plan, a 20-year plan for the state's public use airports. These functional levels are generally described as:

Level I-Minimum Standard General Aviation Airport

Level II- Business Airports of Local Impact

Level III- Business Airports of Regional Impact

Gainesville is served by Lee Gilmer Airport (GVL), a Level III facility located just east of the city within an industrial district adjacent to I-985. Lee Gilmer Airport is owned and managed by the City, provides private general aviation air service including fuel sales and aircraft storage, and also harbors a local flight school. The airport features two runways, including a main runway at 5,500 x 100 feet and a secondary 4,000 x 100-foot runway. Lee Gilmer airport has recently

upgraded lighting systems and introduced an instrument landing system (ILS). The facility has also received some runway surface improvements as funding permits during the past couple years in accordance with the general facility improvement schedule.

The City initiated the required master plan update process for Lee Gilmer in 2010 and outlined several mid-to-long-term improvements, including initiatives to assess options and acquire property for an expansion of the terminal space, storage capacity and support facilities. Preliminary plans have been developed and the advisory board is reviewing options into 2011. The final recommended concept will be included within the updated Master Plan.

NATURAL RESOURCES

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

The City of Gainesville has many reasons to be wise stewards of the area's natural resources. The city is located within the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and along the shores of Lake Lanier, so there is an affinity for nature among residents and a culture rooted in outdoor activities, including hiking, hunting and fishing. Gainesville is also a prominent provider of water within Hall County, enjoys the benefits of the Elachee Nature Center and Chicopee Woods management area and has a growing abundance of parks and trails. These amenities serve not only residents but serve to help attract tourists looking to enjoy north Georgia's mountains, rivers and lakes.

As part of its effort to properly manage these natural resources and community assets, the City of Gainesville has implemented several programs and measures that seek to protect and enhance environmental quality. Environmental planning criteria have been adopted for all applicable conditions identified within the comprehensive plan, educational and informational material about best management practices are promoted by the Planning Department, and the City works closely with Hall County, the Army Corps of Engineers and other stakeholders in fostering resource stewardship.

STATE VITAL AREAS

The Environmental Planning Criteria was establish through the Georgia Planning Act as a method of identifying minimum standards that should be implemented to protect Georgia's most sensitive natural resources, known as State Vital Areas. These include wetlands, water supply watersheds, protected rivers, groundwater recharge areas, and mountain protection areas. Local governments are encouraged to adopt regulations for the protection of relevant natural resources to maintain their eligibility for certain state grants, loans, and permits. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has developed model ordinances to be used as guides for local governments as they develop the necessary regulations to meet EPD standards.

Water Supply Watersheds and Recharge Areas

Water supply watersheds include all areas within a watershed that are located upstream of a public water supply intake. Proper land use management within these areas is critical to ensure that raw public water supplies are of high quality and do not become degraded to the point where it cannot be treated to meet drinking water standards.

The City of Gainesville using adjoining Lake Lanier and its Chattahoochee River vein as its primary source for water, and is just one of several communities relying on these resources. Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River are arguably the most valuable water resources within Georgia based upon their use as a major sources of public water supply, electric power generation, recreation, flood control and downstream navigation.

As part of an intergovernmental agreement with Hall County, the City of Gainesville is assuming eventual ownership and management of a unified water system for the two communities. Presently the City withdraws water from two points along Lake Lanier: The Riverside pumping station on the city's north side along the Chattahoochee River vein of the reservoir, and the Lakeside treatment plant located in Flowery Branch. The Riverside location has a withdrawal permit for 25 million gallons per day (MGD) and the Lakeside facility is permitted for 10 MGD.

Lake Lanier "is managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and is the most popular singular attraction within the Georgia Mountains Region and a major source of economic development. More than two dozen parks and public access points line the lake shore, as well as several private marinas and resorts."

"Currently Lanier is at the heart of a legal matter involving the States of Georgia, Alabama and Florida, specifically dealing with the ability of metro Atlanta governments to continue to draw as much water from the reservoir as currently done. At the same time, the Corps is revisiting the lake's management plan and has undertaken a 9 month long public commenting process leading up to their assessment of needs and demands. The outcomes from these efforts will impact stakeholders' interests in keeping the lake at or near full pull and making sure the region's residents have ample water supply throughout the Chattahoochee River watershed. Regardless of the eventual outcomes, however, Lake Lanier will continue to serve as a major resource and demands as much protection as possible. The lake has been a spark for higher end development and is the impetus for many small businesses within at least 4 counties."

(Quoted text taken from the Georgia Mountains Regional Resource Plan, 2010)

The City is also permitted for withdrawal from the North Oconee River to fill the Cedar Creek reservoir near Gillsville, in eastern Hall County. This reservoir was developed by Hall County around the year 2000 and has since been ceded to the City as part of the intergovernmental agreements authorizing the City to serve as the long-term water provider for Hall County. The City of Gainesville currently operates the pump stations to fill the reservoir and is engaged in the permitting process for developing an intake and treatment facility. The reservoir holds approximately 1,200 million gallons of water and covers 143 acres in water surface area alone. The City is applying for permitted withdrawal of up to 12 MGD.

The Cedar Creek reservoir is within the Upper Oconee River watershed, and as part of its construction a formal environmental impact study was performed and approved by the EPD. Limited to negligible impacts were found as part of the review process, and moving forward the reservoir is considered a critical environmental asset both as a water source that would ease inter-basin transfer concerns but also secure more green space through the conservation of surrounding land and subsequent development policies applied within the watershed.

Protected Rivers

The Chattahoochee River is the only State designated protected river within Hall County and Gainesville, and where defined as being within the reach of Lake Lanier is under the auspices of the Army Corps of Engineers. "It originates in the Blue Ridge Mountains and flows in a southerly direction through the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. It is the longest river in Georgia - 436 miles from its source in northeastern Georgia to the Florida line. The drainage area of the Chattahoochee River in the Georgia Mountains region is 1,179 square miles, including all of White County and portions of Hall, Habersham, Lumpkin, Dawson and Forsyth Counties. Smaller tributaries to the Chattahoochee River in the region include the Soquee and Little

Rivers. The river is dammed to form Lake Lanier south of Gainesville, the first of several impoundments on the river. Below Buford Dam, the Chattahoochee is very heavily used by local governments in the Atlanta region, and supplies 70 percent of metropolitan Atlanta's water needs and over half of the State's residents."

(Quoted text taken from the Georgia Mountains Regional Resource Plan, 2010)

As part of their overall management of hydrologic resources Hall County and Gainesville have adopted measures to protect the Chattahoochee and the Chestatee Rivers as well as Lake Lanier. Both governments have ordinances protecting all surface waters with setbacks ranging from 25 to 150 feet, depending on the stream classification. Enforcement of these regulations, along with erosion and sedimentation control and development regulations assist both in preserving water quality, stable stream banks and shorelines, and with flood management.

Groundwater recharge areas

Groundwater recharge areas are drainage basins that direct water into underground aquifers for possible water supplies. When combined with severe conditions for soil types and slope conditions, recharge areas lose their ability to naturally treat potential contaminants and efficiently replenish underground aquifers.

There are minimal lands within the City limits contributing to significant recharge areas, and none that are located within areas with concentrations of personal wells. However, the City does maintain appropriate development policies for managing land disturbance and construction in these areas and works with Hall County in monitoring development for impacts on these resources.

Wetlands

Wetlands are land areas prone to regular flooding and/or standing water such that they foster their own unique ecology. Wetlands play an important role in maintaining environmental quality by providing habitat for a variety of rare and sensitive species and serve human needs by storing natural flood waters and stormwater, purifying water through filtration, and providing open space and recreation areas. Because of this special role section 404 of the Clean Water Act provides a measure of protection through a permitting and mitigation process for all activities that impacts wetlands. However, local oversight of wetland disturbing activity is still critical, particularly in monitoring whether impacts or alteration of the wetlands would do any of the following:

- Adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
- Disrupt unique or significant conservation of threatened, rare or endangered species.
- Adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
- Adversely impact on adjacent sensitive natural resources.

In an effort to sustain these resources Georgia has minimal standards for Environmental Planning Criteria that regulates development activity in and around wetlands so as to minimize land disturbance, volumes of impervious surface and alteration of the topography. The criteria also recommends local regulations define unacceptable uses for wetlands based on the storage or use of toxic or hazardous waste.

Most wetlands within the City of Gainesville lie also within stream corridors and/or existing conservation areas. The topography of the region that fosters the mountain tourism and reservoir leads to concentration of wetland areas often to lands also protected for the surface water. The City of Gainesville has the required environmental regulations for development in place and identifies wetlands based on the national Wetlands Inventory Maps prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The inventory of wetlands is monitored in conjunction with the Hall County GIS department.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Floodplains

Floodplains are low-lying areas alongside surface waters or in recharge areas that experience high rainfall and slow drainage. They represent the land areas most susceptible to flooding through storm water overflow or other natural events, and like wetlands feature an ecology adapted to such conditions. In their natural or relatively undisturbed state, floodplains provide three broad sets of environmental benefits: (1) water maintenance and groundwater recharge; (2) living resource benefits, including habitat for large and diverse populations of plants and animals; and (3) cultural resource benefits, including archeological, scientific, recreational, and aesthetic sites. In addition, some sites can be highly productive for agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry where these uses are compatible.

Local floodplains are identified through topographic records and periodic flood analyses, with the Hall County GIS Department maintaining an inventory of known floodplains for Gainesville as well as the county. The City employs development regulations and environmental planning standards to manage impacts to these resources by minimizing the presence of impervious surfaces, land disturbing activity and hazardous materials. The City has also worked to restore the viability of the Longwood Creek area as a greenspace for managing potential flood waters, and for improving the general collection and discharge of storm waters to improve rain event conditions. Green Street and other blocks around downtown remain susceptible to flooding conditions, but these are due to storm water management and are not flood plain related.

Soils

Soils are an important factor for both natural and manmade settings. Soils dictate the type of vegetation and its growth rate, suitability for agricultural and forestry production, propensity for erosion, suitability for building foundations and septic systems, and indicate depth to bedrock.

Georgia is divided into three geologic provinces based on rock types, with the City of Gainesville and southern Hall County located in the Southern Piedmont area defined by steep-to-gently rolling topography with thin, well-drained red soil. The soil is mostly sandy-clay to clay subsoils characterized by fair-to-good suitability for building foundations and fair-to-poor suitability for septic tanks. However, the City of Gainesville requires all development to be either part of a sewer system (City of private) or to produce soil tests that verify the viability of septic systems on each property.

General soil management is maintained through coordination of development with regards to a *Soil Suitability* map or inventory that illustrates the viability for locally identified soil groupings to support development, septic systems and/or other material infiltration. This information is collected by the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the latest versions of these inventories are maintained with the Hall County GIS Department.

Soil and water conservation districts were formed in Georgia in the late 1950's to provide local assistance with federal land conservation efforts. These district offices provide expertise and guidance in matters of soil and ecological preservation through a variety of programs, long-range plans, demonstration projects and conservation workshops. Gainesville and Hall County lie within the Upper Chattahoochee River Soil and Water Conservation District along with Dawson, Forsyth, Habersham, Lumpkin and White Counties. Gainesville residents and businesses may also seek assistance from the local Extension Service as part of environmental support provided by the University System of Georgia.

(Source: Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Committee, Georgia Resource Conservation Program and Action Plan.)

Steep Slopes

Steep Slopes include areas other than protected mountains where the slope of the land is severe enough to warrant special management practices, typically measured at 15% or greater. Soil conditions are often shallow and unstable in these areas, resulting in erosion, loss of vegetation and habitat and ultimately reduced water quality. Steeper slopes can also require more expensive and specialized construction measures, yielding concerns over the safety or efficiency of development

Located in a region transitioning from the Piedmont to more mountainous terrain, it's expected that the topography of Gainesville features many areas exhibiting steep slopes. Local development has found these areas to provide attractive, dynamic amenities with regards to the Lake Lanier shoreline or on ridges affording scenic views, particularly as new roads tend to follow the ridgelines to decrease construction costs.

The City of Gainesville and Hall County employ development standards that minimize land disturbance and encourage maintenance of local topography. Management practices for storm water, tree planting/retention and other environmental mitigation measures are used to ensure development along steep slopes does not adversely impact the environment or adjoining land uses.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

As a burgeoning urban center, the City of Gainesville does not feature prime lands for agricultural and/or silvicultural activity. Development regulations permit this activity but the city and surrounding areas have grown too expensive and congested to sustain agricultural activity on a commercial scale.

Endangered Species & Protected Habitats

Many ecological habitats are predicated on a co-dependent balance of animal and plant life, creating food sources and stable environments for any and all species present. As certain species become threatened due to human encroachment or environmental degradation, measures must be employed to restore and ensure their long-term viability.

Information about endangered/protected species within and around Gainesville is recorded by USGS quadrant in accordance with studies performed by several federal and State agencies. Based on recent surveys, at least 6 species of animals and 10 varieties of plants within Hall

County are classified as protected or threatened. The City of Gainesville and Hall County work with the local Extension Service, US Fish and Wildlife and other agencies to regularly monitor habitat conditions and development trends to support efforts at sustaining local habitats for these species, including the restriction of development forms and types to those compatible with desired environmental conditions.

Plants		**Fish**	
Pink Lady Slipper	(Cyprpedium acaule)	Altamaha Shiner	(Cyprinella xaenura)
Georgia Aster	(Aster georgianus)	Shoal Bass	(Miropterus cataractae)
Ozark Bunch Flower	(Melanthium woodi)	Bluestripe Shiner	(Cyprinella callitaeria)
Indian Olive	(Nestronia umbellula)	Highscale Shiner	(Notropis hypsilepis)
Pool Sprite	(Amphianthus pusillus)	Greater Jumprock	(Scartomyzon lachneri)
Black-spored Quillwort	(Isoetes melanospora)		
Mat-forming Quillwort	(Isoetes tegetiformans)		
Goldenseal	(Hydrastis Canadensis)		
Broadleaf White Spirea	(Spiraea alba var. latifolia)	**Amphibians**	
Broad-toothed Hedge-nettle	(Syachys latidens)	Four Toed Salamander	(Hemidactylium scutatum)

Parks

The inventory and assessment of park and recreation facilities included within the Public Facilities and Services element addresses the built structures and spaces designed for more intense human use and activity. However, parks can be a critical element in natural resource preservation by providing greenspace and land for conservation. Done properly, these spaces not only contribute to environmental stability but also provide attractive amenities and educational opportunities for people with otherwise less exposure to natural environments.

The City of Gainesville has 19 park and recreation facilities, including several neighborhood and community parks, one golf course, special event centers and The Chicopee Woods Agricultural Center, which is owned by the City of Gainesville and leased by Hall County. The City is also co-lessee with Hall County for Clarks Bridge Park. The system includes recreation facilities and multi-purpose centers. Many of these feature a combination of passive use greenspace and active use ball fields and facilities. Select parks, such as Longwood Park/Wilshire Trails, were designed primarily around environmental sustainability.

The existing inventory of parks does well to aid the practices of environmental stewardship for the City of Gainesville. As the City might grow more urban and expand boundaries in the future there will be increasing need for more greenspace and consideration for ecological sustainability. This will have to be done in close coordination with Hall County and with increasing reliance on outside assistance and guidance.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historical and cultural resources are referred to as "tangible history," unique elements that tend to bring local, regional, state, and national history to life. Historic and cultural resources are used to validate historical events, earmark patterns of growth within a community, enhance a community's visual quality, serve as points-of-interest, and attest to the lives and contributions of previous generations. These resources serve as a foundation for Hall County folklore and traditions and accentuate a positive link between past and future.

The earliest Georgia settlers came to what is now Hall County in the 1780s following the end of the Revolutionary War via the *Lacoda Trail*, a principle travel corridor that originated in Augusta, passing through Toccoa and then through what is now Maysville and Gillsville. At that time the area was part of Franklin County. One of the first communities was *Stone Throw*, near present-day Gillsville. This area was also the site of *War Hill*, one of a series of forts constructed by the State of Georgia to protect settlers from hostile Indian attacks. Between 1802 and 1838 the State of Georgia was busily expanding its borders at the expense of the native Cherokee population. The creation of Hall County was a direct result of the need to distribute lands acquired from the Cherokee in an 1817 treaty.

Gainesville History

In 1821, the Town of Gainesville was established as the governmental seat of Hall County by Georgia legislative action. The town site was surveyed that same year with its point-of-beginning centered on a site called *Mule Camp Springs*, an ancient and prominent Native American habitation site. Gainesville was named after Edmond P. Gaines, an army general who established Fort Gaines, Georgia in 1816 to protect settlers from raiding bands of Creek Indians. Gainesville's location along the Old Federal Road, fertile soils, and abundant water ensured its long-term growth and popularity. Under these conditions, it was not long before this small settlement grew into a town with a prominent commercial district and tree-lined residential neighborhoods. When the railroad reached the community in 1871, a reporter commented that he had gone to "the new City of Gainesville". By 1873 Gainesville officially emerged from the "Frontier Period."

In 1936, a tornado destroyed much of the City of Gainesville. Except for a handful of original buildings, the only prominent feature left standing was "Old Joe," Gainesville and Hall County's much beloved bronze Confederate monument. The rebuilding of the City in the late 1930s was undertaken by both private individuals and the public sector, primarily the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Buildings were primarily designed in the Art Deco Style of architecture, a popular preference in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As a result of the tornado, there is a mixture of architectural styles found in Gainesville ranging from elaborate Mid 19th Century examples to the flamboyant Mid 20th Century Modern masterworks. More specifically, the styles include:

- 19th Century Commercial (frame/masonry)
- 20th Century Commercial (Early, Middle, Late)
- Folk Victorian
- Colonial Revival
- Art Deco
- Tudor Revival
- 19th Century Mill & Housing
- 20th Century Mill & Housing
- Queen Anne
- Arts & Crafts/Prairie
- Neo Classical
- Mid Century Modern (Ranch)

There are several residential neighborhoods in Gainesville and Hall County with historic and cultural significance. The mill towns that housed workers are still viable and active residential communities to this day. Presently, only the Chicopee Mill and Village Historic District are on the National Register of Historic places, but additional residential neighborhoods for consideration include the Gainesville Mill and Village, and the New Holland Mill and Village. These mill villages exhibit a unique, folk-inspired architectural style and landscape arrangement that should be well documented and preserved. The small towns of Lula and Clermont both have historic residential districts listed on the National Register.

Four districts in Gainesville have already been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Green Street District; Brenau College District; Green Street-Brenau College-Green Street Circle; and Gainesville Downtown Commercial Historic Districts. The four districts include much of central Gainesville from Jesse Jewell Parkway north including the Square, Green Street, and the Brenau Campus. Several other districts have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register, but have not been officially added to the list. These include the mill districts mentioned above and the Banks Street – Gordon Street Historic District; additional opportunities may lie in the area along the trolley line. In 1994, there were a number of additional districts revealed during a broad-brush survey of the city. Several are expansions of existing National Register districts, while others are districts that had not been previously identified. The City of Gainesville has maintained active interest in the designation of these areas on the National Historic Register.

National Register Listing vs. Local Designation

In the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, a number of potential sites and districts were identified within Gainesville, but only two new sites and one district have been listed in the National Register for Historic Places since the last plan was completed. The Hall County Courthouse and the Rucker-Beulah House/School were both added in 1995; however, neither of these landmarks was included in the potential sites in 1994. In 2003, the Downtown commercial district, which was one of those identified in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, was listed in the National Register. National Historic Register sites in Gainesville and Hall County

1 Bowman-Pirkle House	NE of Buford off U.S. 23 on Friendship Rd.	Buford	8/14/1973
2 Brenau College District*	Academy, Prior, Washington and Boulevard Sts.	Gainesville	8/24/1978
3 Candler Street School*	Candler St.	Gainesville	9/30/1982
4 Chicopee Mill* and Village Historic District	Roughly bounded by Fourth & Fifth Sts., North, K, 8th, H, G & F Aves. on US 23	Gainesville	7/25/1985
5 Clermont Residential Historic District	Main, Harris, Martin, and Railroad Sts.	Clermont	9/5/1985
6 Dixie Hunt Hotel*	209 Spring St., SW	Gainesville	5/16/1985
7 Federal Building and Courthouse*	126 Washington St.	Gainesville	2/4/1974
8 Flowery Branch Commercial Historic District	Main St. & Railroad Ave.	Flowery Branch	8/30/1985

9 Gainesville Commercial Historic District	Roughly bounded by Broad St., Maple St., Academy St. and Green St.	Gainesville	3/14/2003
10 Gillsville Historic District	GA 52	Gillsville	8/30/1985
11 Green Street District*	Both sides of Green St. from Green Street Pl. to Glenwood Rd.	Gainesville	8/15/1975
12 Green Street-Brenau Historic District	Green, Candler, Park, Brenau Boulevard & Prior Sts., Green St. Circle, City Park and much of Brenau College campus	Gainesville	9/5/1985
13 Hall County Courthouse*	Jct. of Spring and Green Sts.	Gainesville	6/8/1995
14 Hall County Jail*	Bradford St.	Gainesville	9/13/1985
15 Head's Mill	Whitehall Rd., E of junction w/ US 23	Lula	1/12/1990
16 Jackson Building*	112 Washington St. NE	Gainesville	8/1/1985
17 Logan Building*	119 E. Washington St.	Gainesville	1/4/1990
18 Lula Residential Historic District	Cobb, Carter, Chattahoochee and Toombs Sts.	Lula	9/11/1985
19 Rucker, Beulah, House--School	2110 Athens Hwy.	Gainesville	5/4/1995
20 Tanner's Mill	S of Gainesville on SR 3	Gainesville	9/10/1979

Source: National Register Information System. 2003
Georgia County Courthouses Technical Report
County Jails of the Georgia Mountains Area Technical Report
(*) Indicates within the city limits of Gainesville

The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's official list of historic places deemed worthy of protection. National Register sites are important to local, state, regional, and American history and serve to provide a meaningful sense of place for all citizens and their future generations. The National Register does not simply recognize a site's historical, architectural, cultural, or archeological significance, it provides an educational context steeped in local artistry, tradition and integrity.

Being listed in the National Register for Historic Places does not protect a historic resource from irreversible changes that may alter the contributing status of a property or site. It does place a "pedigree" upon a designated property that encourages protection through the availability of income tax credits, singular recognition within the community, specialized preservation design and consulting services, and immunity considerations when adjacent to federal and state roadway projects. Designation by a local ordinance provides additional protection and instills within Gainesville and Hall County communities the means to make sure that change takes place in a manner that respects the important historical significance of a district or an individual building or structure. In 2001, the City of Gainesville recognized this responsibility by adopting local legislation. Hall County currently does not have a local ordinance for the protection of historic resources, but has been encouraged to do so to protect its identity and spatial integrity as over-development and SPRAWL creep northward from the lower Atlanta-metro counties.

The local preservation process in Georgia is governed by the Georgia Historic Preservation Act of 1980, which is the enabling legislation that allows local communities to adopt a historic

preservation ordinance and establish a preservation commission. The purpose of local designation is to preserve irreplaceable and unique character elements, while allowing new construction to include architectural designs that are compatible with the neighboring historic buildings and landscapes. Further, local designation provides for design review of exterior changes through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. The local Regional Commission provides technical support and design assistance to government leaders and historic property owners who are interested in developing a historic preservation plan or wishing to make compatible changes to an older building or structure. At present, there are a total of 111 locally designated properties located within the City of Gainesville. These properties include 60 properties located within the Green Street local historic district, 49 properties located within the Ridgewood Neighborhood local historic district, the Big Bear Café local historic landmark and the Harper-Smith House historic landmark.

As a preliminary step in a multi-phase survey process, the City of Gainesville contracted with a private consulting firm to perform a Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey or “windshield survey” of the City's buildings and other structures which appear to be historic or have the potential to become historic. A windshield survey literally involves driving around the community and noting the general distribution of buildings, structures, and neighborhoods representing different architectural styles, periods, and modes of construction. The findings of a windshield survey primarily focus on architecture and date of construction. The purpose of a windshield survey is to obtain an initial idea of the City's historic resource base and to identify neighborhoods with concentrations of historic resources and prominent individual landmarks.

As part of the Reconnaissance Survey effort, a multi-phase strategy for performing intensive-level structural surveys for all of Gainesville's historic resources was created. The Historic Resources Structural Survey is a planning tool designed to better prepare staff to guide the Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission in its decision-making on requests for local designation and applications for Certificates of Appropriateness within our existing districts.
Surveying of historic resources is an on-going process, but generally the surveying program is designed so that intensive-level surveying is performed every five to ten years as resources gain historical significance. During the summer of 2006, the City contracted with a private consulting firm to complete Phase I of the City-wide Historic Resources Structural Survey. And, as a Certified Local Government (CLG), Gainesville is eligible for grant funds to help defer the costs of completing surveys.

A Historic Resources Structural Survey (or intensive-level survey) differs from a windshield survey in the level of effort involved with researching a community's historic resources. A structural or intensive-level survey, which is conducted on a resource-by-resource basis, involves detailed research, thorough inspection and documentation of all historic and potentially historic properties within the City.

Rural Resources

Parts of Hall County, especially north Hall County, maintain a somewhat rural character; this can also be found in several locations within the Gainesville City Limit. However, even the most isolated areas of the county are experiencing significant development pressures and have an established residential population; most common are single-family housing developments not associated with farms being erected on cleared woodlands or fallow fields and pastures. Each housing unit is generally situated on a lot of one acre or more.

Rural land use practices, such as farming and ranching are desirable and contribute strongly

to the county's economy. In response, future rural development plans should consider residential and commercial pods as a design prerequisite that concentrates growth while placing emphasis upon *viewshed protection*, *environmental awareness*, and *community sustainability*. However, as development pressures increase, it will become more challenging to balance these pressures with the desire to maintain agricultural viability and rural character. The effective establishment of development boundaries and transitional zones would bolster the long-term protection and practicality of traditional family farms making Gainesville and Hall County a much more diverse environment in which to raise families, work, and play.

Historic Farmsteads

Farms and ranches in the southern United States are rich in historic structures. Experts in historic preservation estimate the majority of the farms and ranches have at least one historic structure of considerable merit. Historic Hall County farm and ranch structures are threatened for a variety of reasons. The most predominant cause is that the methods of farming and ranching change over time. As a result, old structures may not be suitable for modern agricultural practices or the lifestyles of rural households. For example, doors may be too small for current equipment. Utility services, such as electric wiring, plumbing and sewage lines, may be inadequate for today's needs both in the barn and in the house. Or the structure, such as a horse barn, may have been designed for a purpose that is not needed today.

New structures have long been considered status symbols and are valued for convenience of use and maintenance. Tax laws and lender policies sometimes seem to favor new construction over renovation of existing structures to meet the needs of the farm or ranch operation. There is a perception that rehabilitation or renovation of older structures is more complicated and labor intensive, and will result in structures more costly to maintain.

Contemporary trends can also threaten historic rural buildings. Weathered barn siding, certain roofing materials and old beams are in high demand for new construction today. This can make it tempting to tear down an old building, rather than restore it. The demand for old and historic homes frequently puts the emphasis on the residence only. Farmsteads near urban areas may be bought for the value of their houses, and the agricultural outbuildings torn down.

Farm and ranch operators may not be aware of the historic significance of their structures. There is a tendency to believe "historic" is associated with major events or distinctive architecture. As a result, the historic significance of common structures is sometimes overlooked by property owners.

Finally, changes in the farm economy and the demographics of rural populations offer challenges to the protection of historic farm and ranch buildings. Deferred maintenance, farm consolidations, foreclosures, increased mechanization in farming and declining rural populations work against the preservation of existing historic structures.

Centennial Farms

The Georgia Centennial Farm Program designates farms and ranches that have been owned and operated by the same family for 100 years or more.

As stated above, Hall County family farms and ranches, historic barns, historic homes, and other agricultural sites are disappearing at an alarming rate. These landmark operations serve as a reminder of how our section of North Georgia was settled and families survived. The

contribution of Hall County's long-standing farm and ranch families are significant because generations of these families have withstood the pressures of growth, changes in farming methods, drought and economic conditions to preserve these important pieces of our local commercial and cultural history.

Georgia's Centennial Farm Program not only illustrates the significance of agricultural sites to the development of Georgia, it also shows how vital these properties are to the well being of our state today. Georgia Centennial Farms provide open space and food, as well as support our state's economy and remind us of our past.

Each year, Georgia's newest centennial farm and ranch families are honored during an awards ceremony held at the Georgia State Fair in Perry, Georgia. Honorees receive a sign to display on their property, as well as a certificate signed by the Governor and other state officials.

In Hall County, three centennial farm designations have been awarded since 2006: The *Irwin Family Farm* (2006), *White Sulpher Farm* (2007), and the *Stringer Farm* (2007). Currently the *Blackstock Farm*, located east of Gainesville along Highway 129, is qualified for centennial status. Local officials are encouraged to learn more about this program and assist families in achieving this unique designation.

Transportation Resources and Heritage Trails

Hall County's growth and success is steeped in man's ability to navigate over and around the obstacles that lie before him. Swift and deep rivers, treacherous ravines, and steep mountainous grades posed no long-term threat to exploration and settlement. Early transportation routes depended upon successfully traversing navigable waterways or winding along prehistoric animal paths. These routes gave way to the clearing of wagon and stagecoach roads and eventually railways for the fire belching iron horse. In the wake of our modern highway and interstate system, these ancient corridors now lie obscured within the landscape.

In recent years historians and preservation planners have recognized these older transportation routes as "untapped linear resources" that if restored could serve as non-motorized travel alternatives for Georgia residents. This recognition has led to the development of heritage trails, a key component in many successful recreational and tourism strategies. Hall County has a diverse array of heritage trails: Native American pathways, waterways, historic roadways, and abandoned railroad grades. These linear historic resources are becoming increasingly important to the Secretary of the Interior and National Park Service primarily because the routes lie adjacent to a wide array of historic resources and offer scenic views of the surrounding countryside and breath-taking mountain vistas. The following section provides a brief introduction to a variety of these transportation related historic and cultural resources:

Blueways

"Blueway" is a contemporary term that recognizes significant river routes winding through the Georgia Mountain Region. The Oconee, Chattahoochee, and Chestatee Rivers simplified navigation within Hall and surrounding counties during Georgia's Frontier Period. Native Americans such as the Cherokee, Creek, and Oconee utilized these blueways to connect an intricate series of overland trails that extended far outside the contemporary boundary of the State of Georgia. European settlers utilized these same routes in search of fertile farmland, mineral deposits, religious freedom, and commercial opportunities. Today these historic routes

are frequented by weekend adventurers who are typically members of local kayak and canoe clubs.

In Georgia, the establishment of scenic blueways is increasing in popularity. This growing network of river trails are intended to bolster local recreational and tourism strategies as well as provide for new retail opportunities in nearby downtown commercial districts. Blueways can also be used to provide an additional non-motorized route between cities, crossroad communities, and residential housing developments. Blueways are typically developed by state, county or local municipalities to encourage family recreation, ecological education and preservation of wildlife resources. Untapped opportunities lie in linking greenways and other non-motorized pedestrian corridors.

River Fords and Ferry Crossings

During Hall County's Frontier Period, long before the construction of Buford Dam and the erection of numerous steel and concrete bridges, travelers depended upon traditional technologies and an understanding of the surrounding topography when crossing waterways. Historically, while ferry crossings were the primary mode of traversing deep and turbid rivers, shallow fords or shoals are also identified as key crossing points with significant prehistoric as well as historic significance. Many of these former crossings are now only an unappreciated location bypassed by conventional forms of travel or merely a simple name appearing on a map. Other sites are located near tangible landmarks, such as Shallowford Road, the Clarke Residence on Clarke's Bridge Road, and the Thompson Residence on Thompson Bridge Road which were where the ferry operators once lived. Like crossroad communities, these river crossings are remnants of the past as well as important archaeological areas. These sites can offer a unique identity to the growing areas near them and can serve as tourism/recreational focal points for future greenways and heritage areas.

Early Hall County records (1832-1838) hold numerous accounts of the river fords and ferries located along its eastern boundary. Woodley's Ford is located on the Chestatee River. An important landmark for travelers winding their way along the Shallowford Road, this is Hall County's northern-most river crossing. Stoddard's (*sometimes listed as Goddard's*) Ferry was located on Brown's Bridge Road and is the northern-most Chattahoochee River crossing. Winn's Ferry was also known as Vann's Ferry due to its proximity to the Clement Vann's Tavern and Trading Post. Light's Ferry and Thornton's Ferry were South Hall crossing points that provided direct access to the Old Federal Road. Bond's Ferry, located on the Old Cumming Road, was Hall County's southern-most river crossing.

Overland Routes

Early settlers reached Hall County via two primary overland corridors. The *Augusta Road* (*Lacoda Trail*) became an important segment of the larger *Federal Road*. From Augusta, Georgia on the banks of the Savannah River, this historic route connected communities such as Applington, Wrightsboro, Washington, Lexington, Athens, Jefferson, Carmel (missionary station), Spring Place Moravian Station, Ringgold, Ross, Tennessee, and the Tennessee River. The *Tugalo Road* was an important east-west artery that extended from South Carolina through Hart, Franklin, and Banks County. Traversed by pedestrian, wagon, and stagecoach, these historic routes can be identified and surveyed using contemporary aerial photographic and GIS technologies in order to form the basis of a regional bicycle/pedestrian trail system.

Crossroads

Crossroads are historic intersections created by the convergence of prehistoric and historic travel corridors found throughout the Georgia Mountain Region. These centralized locations served as early trading sites which often led to a more permanent settlement eventually being founded. As crossroad activity grew, buildings were often erected such as a mercantile, church, livery stable, or a dispersed grouping of residential structures. Many of the smaller cities in Hall County and certain rural annexed areas residing within the Gainesville City Limit are the result of these historic development patterns. In recent years these crossroads have often given their name to nearby suburban neighborhoods that have unconcernedly replaced the open farmland. As Hall County continues to evolve and works to balance suburbanization pressures with the maintenance of rural character, the creation of conservation easements or rural preservation districts may provide the answer to perplexing questions and concerns. Proactive steps should be considered as part of Gainesville's Comprehensive Plan to prevent or limit the absorption of crossroad community character and the loss of local integrity. Of particular concern is the obliteration by state and federal highway projects. If left unchecked, the potential loss could be equated to the catastrophic loss suffered by the DeKalb County communities of Doraville and Chamblee. A list of significant South Hall/Gainesville crossroad communities is found below:

Smithum – *From the town square to Broad Street, turn right onto Highway 13 and proceed to the crossing of the Norfolk-Southern Railroad (3.5 miles).* A community developed by Smith & Tumlin, realtors, around 1900. Here was a post office also Smithum, 1900-1903. The railroad established a flag stop just south of the bridge but called the station Tumlinville.

Chicopee Village – *From Smithum, proceed .1 mile south along Highway 13*. Built by Johnson & Johnson in 1927 for workers in the adjacent mill, this collection of buildings and structures is considered to be the best planned mill town in the South. In earlier times, Gum Springs, now located beneath the Clinic Building (left on 1st Ave. into the village, 1st house on left) in the center of the village was a local landmark. The area was one of three considered by the Inferior Court as a site for the Courthouse and town site in 1820.

Redwine Church – *Continue 3 miles to the site of Blackshear Place, turn left on Poplar Springs Road and Route 332*. On this spot in the 1840s, a group of Methodist pioneers held services under a brush arbor. In 1845, a congregation was organized and a building erected. One of the oldest Methodist churches in the county still active in the same spot, during the War Between the States the property was utilized as a mustering ground for local troops.

Candler – *Proceed 5.7 miles on Route 332*. Candler was established in 1881 as a flag stop along the Gainesville, Jefferson & Southern Railroad (Gainesville-Midland). The town was named for Colonel Candler, President of the railroad. A post office was established here in 1883. The Hopewell Baptist Church (est. 1808) is located nearby.

Klondike – *Turn right onto Route 60 and proceed 1 mile*. A once thriving little village, nothing of this community remains today. Established by the railroad and initially named Motan, a post office was located here in 1902. The name "Motan" was derived from that of Mose Tanner, a prominent citizen in the area. The later name of Klondike is said to have been derived from a brand of canned goods packed here by a local business operated by Jim Adams.

Tanner's Mill – *Turn right onto Route 211, Tanners Mill Road. Proceed to Tanner's Mill*

Circle Road on the right. Turn and proceed a short distance to the mill site (Approx. 6 miles from Klondike). The mill was built in 1886 by Mose Tanner. Called a "two-run" mill, it ground both wheat and corn and was situated near a cotton gin which was operated by the same mill race. A pioneer wool carding and spinning mill, Walnut Factory, was located a bit further upstream, operating from 1835 to 1870. Tanner also owned the J.D. Simmons Mill located on Holly Springs Branch.

Chestnut Mountain – *From Tanner's Mill Road turn right onto Route 53. Proceed 3.1 miles to Chestnut Mountain*. First known as Chestnut Hill, this was one of the first settlements in Hall County. Clement Vann, father to famous James Vann, operated a trading post here before 1800. This operation was most likely the first "store" in Hall Count. Later the Federal Road passed through the community along what is now Route 53. The trading post site is not currently known but is thought to have been on a small hill in the center of the present town; archaeological investigation is needed to determine the correct location. The site of the third post office in Hall County (*January 1832*), the town's name was changed to Chestnut Mountain in the 1850s.

Mauldin's Mill – *Go southeast along Route 211 crossing the Mulberry Creek Bridge and the County Line. Proceed to the first paved road on the right, Thompson Mill Road (4.4 miles). Continue 2.8 miles to Mauldin Mill Road (currently abandoned). Proceed 1 mile down this road to the mill site.* Here was located the busiest mill complex in Hall County. In the 1870s, L. C. Mauldin built a dam and a large two-run grist mill. Soon a general store arose alongside. In 1879 a post office was established and housed in a separate building. In the 1880s another mill race was dug on the opposite bank of the stream to power a saw mill and cotton gin. One of the most unusual features of the site is an underwater bridge. Frustrated by the annual freshets that caused Mulberry Creek to rise and bring destructive currents that would invariably damage or destroy the aerial bridge, the Mauldin Family built a bridge in the mill pond just below the normal water level. This eliminated the yearly damage but necessitated careful driving by customers. The mill is said to have operated 24 hours a day to keep up with demand. The enterprise ceased operations in the early 1900s.

Duncan Cross Roads – *Continue on Thompson Mill road approximately .7 mile to this site.* Here five roads meet and visitors often confused about the appropriate direction in which to proceed. Local resident, Mr. Lucius Duncan, eventually became tired of directing travelers and erected a sign board of his own design, which attracted much attention from local newspapers and television stations. In the early days of the county, Judge Samuel Frazier of the Circuit Court owned a home and plantation to east of the crossroads. The Judge also operated a saloon at the corners and maintained a race track a short distance back on Thompson Mill Road.

Roberts Cross Roads (*4.3 miles from Duncan's Cross Roads*) Captain James Roberts settled here in 1850 and established a plantation and general store. In June of 1846, the Hog Mountain Post Office was moved south and into Gwinnett County but retained the name, a fact that still confuses historians. Here, Captain Roberts organized a company of local volunteers during the War Between the States. This property was used as a mustering ground for additional troops throughout the War.

Spout Springs Cross Roads – *Turn right onto Hog Mountain Road and proceed 3.5 miles.* The spring was landmark during the early days of Hall County, appearing as a reference point on a variety of maps. It was located in the northeastern quadrant of the present roads. In the days before automobiles the site became a popular destination for travelers wishing to

water their animals. In time a water trough was installed along Hog Mountain Road and was filled with water piped over from the spring. The resulting "spout" gave the name to present Spout Springs Road. With the rise of the automobile era the convenient water from the spring was used to cool overheated radiators during the summer months.

Young's – *Continue north from Spout Springs Cross Roads 1.4 miles on Hog Mountain Road to this site*. Here, near the intersection with the Old Atlanta Road, Robert Young, Revolutionary War Veteran, settled. This was a part of the Cherokee Nation at the time. By 1818, he had built a 12-room log house and, although never operating a commercial tavern, he entertained many famous travelers. Among these was Andrew Jackson who passed through on the Federal Road in 1818. With Jackson was a small detachment of militia who camped nearby. Jackson was on his way to Alabama to participate in the Seminole War. Young was active in county affairs, accumulated 1.600 acres of land and owned a ferry boat on the Chattahoochee River. His descendants are still prominent in Hall County. The cemetery in the forks of the road contains the remains of Robert Young and many members of his family. Interestingly, in adjoining sections lie the remains of many Afro- and Native Americans who worked for him.

Railroad Grades

The gentle terrain associated with both active and abandoned railway corridors offer unique opportunities for the adaptive-reuse as recreational trails. These corridors represent an Industrial Age catalyst that led to the rise and success of Gainesville, Georgia. Today, residents and visitors can enjoy watching Norfolk-Southern and CSX freight trains plying the local rail networks with an occasional silver streak of the Amtrak passenger train whistling its way toward New Orleans or New York City. Enthusiasts can also enjoy several key forms or historic railroad architecture including Downtown Gainesville's rolling stock display which includes a steam engine, caboose, and baggage car; the Southern Railroad Depot, the Gainesville-Midland Depot, and the Big Bear Café, an original railroad era diner.

Except for the occasional wandering historian, many local residents and visitors never realize that Gainesville and Hall County was once home to a variety of locally managed rail systems. Names such as the Gainesville & Northwestern Railway, the Gainesville-Midland, and the Gainesville & Dahlonega Railway have become faint echoes in the annals of local railroad lore; but to the detail-oriented observer the legacy of these railroads remains intact within the modern landscape. Features such as neatly graded rail beds, cross-ties, iron rails, switches, drainage culverts, and bridge crossings lie hidden beneath mounds of kudzu, inside wooded thickets, beneath asphalt paving, and in some cases on the bottom of Lake Lanier.

Contemporary local and regional planning strategies are beginning to recognize the importance of these old railroads and the positive impacts they could once again have upon the communities of which they are a part. Aside from land acquisition in some areas, the redevelopment of abandoned railroad grades is considered to be a cost-effective recreational-tourism-based development strategy. This fact is bolstered by the support of the Secretary of the Interior (National Park Service), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA). Historic rail beds are considered "linear resources" and qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER).

Gainesville is encouraged to expand upon a Rails-to-Trails Program to bolster new opportunities for tourism and other forms of economic development. This strategy could

revolutionize the current redevelopment plan. Research will show that these gently sloping underutilized thoroughfares are easily adapted to meet the growing demand of outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy walking, hiking, biking, bird watching, and in some cases horseback riding. Naturally ADA compliant, even in the most mountainous terrain, makes rail bed redevelopment an attractive and cost effective planning option.

Scenic/Historic Viewsheds and Gateways

A viewshed is an area of land, water or other environmental element that is visible to the human eye from a fixed vantage point, often public areas such as roadways, parks, or historic buildings and districts. A *scenic viewshed* may contain a picturesque mountain ridgeline while a *historic viewshed* may contain a variety of historical sites or be associated from a particular observation point within a historical area. Whether scenic or historic, all viewsheds tend to share unique cultural and ecological values that are deemed worthy of preservation against development or other form of change. The term "viewshed" is used widely within a variety of disciplines including urban planning, archaeology, landscape and architectural design.

"Every exit is an entrance to somewhere else." This is the philosophy behind the creation and maintenance of community gateways. Gateways are specified entry points that are designed to visually represent community character, quality, and integrity. Whether situated along a county road, highway, bicycle/pedestrian trail system, thoughtfully designed gateways can interact with historic and natural viewsheds and serve as additional greenspace.

Hall County and its municipalities are associated with a significant array of viewsheds and potential gateways that can instrumental in "*setting the stage*" for contemporary tourism and economic development strategies. A well-maintained environment is far more appealing to potential investors, residents, corporate agencies. Gainesville's significant sites include lake crossings or approaches, primary automobile corridors, historic residential and commercial districts, mountain ranges, and other views. Gainesville's primary automobile corridors are:

- I-985/SR 356 from Gwinnett County
- SR 365 from I-985 to Habersham County
- US 129 through the county
- SR 60 through the county
- Browns Bridge Road from Lake Lanier Bridge to Downtown Gainesville
- SR 53 from the Lake Lanier Bridge at the county line to Downtown Gainesville
- McEver Road from the Gwinnett County line to Dawsonville Highway (SR53)
- SR 13 (Atlanta Highway) south of Gainesville to the county line
- SR 53 from SR 365 south east to the Road Atlanta Raceway
- Mundy Mill Road between I-985 and McEver Road

Significant gateways that should be enhanced and maintained include:

- Entry into the county from Gwinnett County along I-985
- Entry into the county from Habersham County along SR 365
- Entry into the City of Gainesville from I-985 at E.E. Butler Parkway
- Entry into the City of Gainesville from the west on Browns Bridge Road; east on Jesse Jewell Parkway Athens Highway and Candler Road
- Entry into City of Gainesville from the north from Thompson Bridge Road and Cleveland Highway and Dawsonville Highway

- Entry into the City of Gainesville from the south on Atlanta Highway
- All interchange areas along I-985

Historic Religious Campgrounds and Churches

North Georgia has a wealth of historic meeting grounds and churches. As with other regions around the state, these historic sites developed as a result of the Second Great Awakening, a series of revivals that planted the values of Protestantism deep in the American character, especially the South. This religious movement galvanized the entire nation after the American Revolution (1783) and by 1820 helped to form the distinct national characteristic of a revivalist society. The Second great awakening, often called the Great Revival, became a religious phenomenon in the South, fostering the development of three major denominations, the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, and creating what some have called the "Bible Belt."

The camp meeting, an outdoor, continuous religious service, became a fixture of Georgia's religious life. In fact, the meetings were so popular by the 1890s that the phrase "at a Georgia camp meeting" became a trite expression the world over. At least thirty of these sites, reflecting the camp meeting movement and exhibiting it vernacular architecture remain active in the state. In the Hall County-Gainesville area, the Lebanon, Holly Springs, and Antioch Campgrounds, remain unique religious sites that are important to a multitude of North Georgia residents.

Places of worship play an important role in all of our communities both as historic architectural landmarks and as visible reminders of our past. These buildings are not just places for prayer, but serve as social and cultural centers for our communities. The appearance of these buildings tells us a great deal about our heritage. Together, places of worshipform an important part of our collective history, architectural, religious and social. Gainesville has a wealth of historic churches that should be documented and preserved upon the landscape.

Cemeteries

Historic cemeteries are irreplaceable landscapes. Many of the historic cemeteries in our state have been neglected for decades. Some are more endangered than others. For every known rural burial ground, there are at least five that have been forgotten from our collective consciousness. The plight of both rural and urban cemeteries can be attributed to such factors as abandonment, apathy, encroachment, environmental factors, vandalism and theft.

Perhaps the most influential factor is the change in the rituals associated with burying our dead. Not so long ago, it was the family, friends and members of the community that would perform the activities associated with death. From building the coffin to digging the grave, death was dealt with on a personal basis. The deceased were acknowledged long after they had passed from this earth through events such as Decoration Day and cleanup day, a time when family reunited to remember the past and honor their dead. As the funeral industry developed, the role of the family changed from being all encompassing to becoming mere visitors at the final rites. Once the body is in the ground, many family members and friends will say their final good-byes, only to return when it is time to bury another loved one. As we moved away from a personal role in the care of our deceased loved ones, hired personnel have been in charge of cleaning cemeteries. Instead of the individual caring for the family plot with the use of hand tools and manual labor; weed trimmers, insecticides and lawnmowers have taken their place. These modern machines and chemicals have caused stone damage and the removal of footstones and fencing, all in the name of saving time.

Technological advancements have left rural cemeteries in dire straits. Improved transportation and changes in economic pursuits have accelerated the decline and loss of many burial grounds from our small communities. Today, with the transient nature of Americans and the lack of economic opportunities for the young in rural areas, many have moved far away from their home. With no one left to look after the resting places of the dead, nature has reclaimed her ground or farmers and developers have decided that the land is better suited for the living.
Pollution has led to the deterioration of many monuments and markers in our urban cemeteries causing stones to blacken and decay. In an effort to erase the effects of time and pollution, some well-meaning people used improper cleaning techniques, such as the use of bleach to whiten the marble markers, which in turn will hasten the decline of the stone. The living have also seen the economic advantage of stealing and selling for profit decorative features found in early burial grounds. Some of the living, especially young people have found cemeteries interesting targets for vandalism.

Before we lose any more of these valuable historic documents from our memory, we must do what we can to preserve our historic burial grounds. From creating a plan of action to implementation, it will take the effort of local citizens to save our cemeteries. Beyond individual involvement, local, regional and state cemetery preservation societies are needed to seek a broader base of support for their efforts.

Gainesville and Hall County have not conducted a thorough cemetery survey in recent years which has placed many of the smaller burial grounds in jeopardy. This problem is compounded with the lack of a protective ordinance that is designed to preserve local burial sites from the largest tracts to the smallest family burial plot. Concentrations of community burial sites are direct reflection on historic development patterns that occurred throughout the county. Thirty-two cemeteries are located in the south Gainesville area. Countywide, private/family burial sites and cemeteries is currently inconclusive.

Cemetery Roster: Oakwood/S. Gainesville Area

Oakwood Cemetery	Redwine Cemetery	Poplar Springs Cemetery
Zion Hill Cemetery	Young Cemetery	Mountain View Cemetery
Flat Creek Cemetery	Pleasant Grove Cemetery	Bethel Cemetery
Woodlawn Cemetery	Hall Co. Memorial Park	Flowery Branch Cemetery
Mount Salem Cemetery	Bethlehem UMC Cemetery	Broadlawn Mem. ardens
Smith Cemetery	New Bethany Cemetery	Union Church Cemetery
Pleasant Hill Cemetery	Kennedy Cemetery	Chestnut Mnt. Cemetery
Lott Cemetery	Macedonia Cemetery	Marlin Cemetery
Candler Cemetery	Oak Grove Cemetery	Calvary Mem. Gardens
Alta Vista Cemetery	Gainesville Mill Cemetery	Eureka Cemetery
New Holland Cemetery	Springway Cemetery	

Archaeological Sites

There are areas in the city and county that may contain sites of archeological interest. While it has not been confirmed in Hall County, many ferry-crossing locations have been found to have archeological value. Archaeological sites can be associated with homesteads, downtown commercial areas, ridgelines above converging water sources, adjacent to spring sites, and even beneath the surface of Lake Lanier. A rule of thumb to remember is that humans, like animals, follow long-established habitation and travel patterns. Basically, the topographic features that make site or route attractive to us today appealed to our ancestors in much the

same fashion. Thus, archaeological sites tend to be all around us.

The product associated with a past cultural environment is considered a finite resource which requires effective care so that it may be enjoyed today and passed on to future generations. Continuing development of new housing, roads, infrastructure, and outlying commercial centers can threaten archaeologically sensitive areas and culturally unique landmarks. As such, comprehensive planning is required to ensure that these resources are protected from inappropriate change or damage.

Gainesville community protective measures can include sympathetically designing new developments to carefully integrate archaeological sites in order to maintain their setting. In many cases archaeological impact assessments in conjunction with field evaluations are carried out in advance of large-scale development to identify potential impacts upon recorded, and potentially undocumented archaeological remains. In cases where these cultural remains will be damaged or destroyed, planning strategies will typically require that scientific excavation and recording take place under the auspices of a trained professional or academic institution.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Modern communities are more intertwined than at any time in history, with neighboring jurisdictions sharing environmental features, coordinated transportation systems and other socio-economic ties. In order to provide the efficient and effective delivery of governance, such relationships require coordinated planning between counties, cities and across all public sector organizations.

The Intergovernmental Coordination chapter provides local governments an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes with other local governments and governmental entities that can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of the community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases, involve multiple governmental entities.

> ** Note: A number of the topics discussed in this chapter are also discussed in Public Facilities and Services chapter or the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter. For those topics, the focus in this chapter is the effectiveness of coordination between the entities involved and not the overall effectiveness of the provision of services.*

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES

The intergovernmental coordination element requires an inventory and assessment of the relationships between the local government and the various entities assisting in the provision of public sector services and facilities. This can include other units of local government providing services but not having regulatory authority over the use of land, such as constitutional officers. The inventory of each item must address the nature of the entity's relationship to the local government comprehensive plan, the structure of existing coordination mechanisms or agreements, and the parties responsible for coordination.

Adjacent Local Governments

The City of Gainesville is the county seat for Hall County and participates in several ventures both with the County and with the other municipalities within the county. The City has cooperated with the County in previous comprehensive planning efforts as well as joint studies and development projects, including participation in the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization. All formal arrangements for collaboration with the County and other cities are identified in the discussion concerning the Service Delivery Agreement.

School Boards

The City of Gainesville features its own independent school system. The City of Gainesville School Board oversees the management and operation of seven different schools and related facilities. The School Board communicates regularly with the City regarding growth and development issues and maintains formal partnerships with the City in regards to tax information and collection, both for property taxes and SPLOST purposes. While there are opportunities to improve communication, there are no significant issues or concerns that have been identified during the preliminary portion of the planning process.

Independent Districts and Authorities

The City of Gainesville, by itself or as part of Hall County, is involved with several authorities or special districts for the purposes of coordinating resource management, growth and development or other civic and economic purposes.

Hall County is included as part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MWD), which was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 to "establish policy, create plans and promote intergovernmental coordination of all water issues in the District from a regional perspective." (www.northgeorgiawater.com) This district includes fifteen counties and over ninety cities across metropolitan Atlanta, and is designed to coordinate use and protection of the Chattahoochee River and all other metro water resources. The primary role of the MWD is to develop and implement regional and watershed-specific plans for stormwater management, wastewater treatment and water supply and conservation, working with local governments and authorities in ensuring the resources are properly preserved for all uses. The City of Gainesville has been actively participating in MWD functions and missions, cooperating in efforts through sharing of information, maintaining environmental planning and policy and pursuing higher standards of resource management.

The City of Gainesville is included within the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning efforts. This is discussed in further detail within the Transportation element.

Gainesville and Hall County are among the Georgia communities that fall within the service area for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a federal district identified for the purposes of supporting economic development. As an ARC eligible government Gainesville can call upon the organization for grant and loan opportunities that support capital improvements specifically designed to spur job creation and retention opportunities. These are often competitive applications and have specific requirements based on the type of action requested, but Gainesville has the option to pursue this assistance with capital improvements that yield positive impacts on the local economy.

The City of Gainesville also maintains a standing agreement to assist the Lake Lanier Islands Development Authority with the Longwood Cove and Creek Watershed Aquatic Habitat Restoration Plan. This plan from 2002 identifies several specific watershed remediation projects for reestablishing the ecological quality of the project areas, as well as providing a framework for long-term monitoring and support in maintaining the overall quality of the area. This is part of the City's larger goals to sustain the highest standard of environmental quality along the lake shores as well as providing quality amenities and public access to the lake where possible.

Regional, State and Federal Entities

Of the State's 12 regional planning districts Gainesville is part of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC). The GMRC is responsible for monitoring local planning, implementing a regional plans and projects, assisting local governments with community development concerns and with assisting select State and Federal efforts within the region. The City is not directly accorded a member to the GMRC Council but shares a mayoral representative as appointed by all the cities within Hall County. Coordination with the GMRC includes participation in the development of the Georgia Mountains Regional Plan, with which this local Plan must show consistency.

Various Departments of State government also have regional district offices assigned to serve the region. Premier among these are the *Department of Transportation* (District 2), the *Department of Community Affairs* (District 2) and the *Department of Economic Development* (Georgia Mountains Region). All of these State Departments are based out of Gainesville offices is assigned to monitor communities for issues and demands related to their fields and then to work with the local government in developing resolutions as needed. Such initiatives have included studies for major road improvements and training for economic development officials.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

In addition to evaluating the coordination with other entities, the local government must also inventory other applicable related state programs and activities that are interrelated with the provisions of the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of such an inventory is to identify existing agreements, policies, initiatives, etc. that may/will have an effect on the options a local government may want to exercise as part of its comprehensive plan.

The City of Gainesville and Hall County have completed measures to satisfy their standing as National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II communities. As established by the federal Clean Water Act, this program defines mandated steps and policies for local communities in managing stormwater runoff and permitted discharge systems. By maintaining compliance with this program Gainesville will retain their status of an approved community, eligible for all assistance and potential permit approvals with regard to future system expansions and possible discharges.

Service Delivery Strategy

The 1997 Georgia General Assembly enacted the Local Government Services Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). The intent of the Act is to provide a flexible framework for local governments and authorities to agree on a plan for delivering services, to minimize any duplication and competition in providing local services, and to provide a method to resolve disputes among service providers regarding service delivery, funding equity and land use. In summary, in each County the Service Delivery Strategy Act provides local governments and authorities with an opportunity to reach an agreement to deliver services in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Local governments must also maintain and adhere to their service delivery strategy and submit it to DCA for verification in order to remain eligible for state administered financial grants or state permits. No state administered financial assistance or state permits will be issued to any local government or authority that is not included in a DCA-verified service delivery strategy. In addition, no state administered financial assistance or state permits will be issued for any local project which is inconsistent with the agreed upon strategy.

Summary of Hall County Agreement

The Current Hall County Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) references 51 different public services or facilities. Most of the services are provided by jurisdiction or on behalf of the County for all residents, though there are several intergovernmental contracts whereby one government may provide the service within another jurisdiction by agreement. In addition, some of the services provided by oversight of the County involve funding or administrative support from one or more Cities.

Service provided countywide by single provider (Listed at top)

Hall County		***Gainesville***
Court Attorney	Jail/ Detention Ctr.	Airport
Clerk of Court	Jury	Convention Center
Coroner	Library	Golf
Courts	Magistrate Court	Public Transit
DFACS	Mental Health	
E911	Probate Court	***Gainesville-Hall***
Emergency Mgmt.	Public Health	Animal Control
EMS	Superior Court	Community Service Ctr; Senior Ctr.
Equalization	Tax Assessment	
Extension Service	Voter Registration	
Indigent Defense		

Service provided by each government within jurisdictional boundaries

Business/Beer& Wine License	Recycling
Elections	Roads
Engineering	Solid Waste Mgmt.
Fleet Vehicle Maintenance	Stormwater Mgmt.
Human Resources	Street Lighting
Law Enforcement	Tax Collection
Municipal Courts	Traffic Control; Eng.
Planning; Zoning; Inspection	Water Service & System
Parks and Recreation*	
Public Land and Building Maintenance**	

**= Hall County facilities and services planned for all county; coordinated with Cities*
***=Gainesville and Hall County have agreements for joint facilities*

Services provided in defined areas based on contractual arrangements

Fire Protection
Probation
Sewer Service Collection/ Treatment
Inmate Labor – Correctional Institute
Cemetery

Consistency Between Comprehensive Plan and SDA

As the comprehensive plan is updated the City of Gainesville, Hall County and all parties involved will review the SDA for possible changes and updates. The City Planning Department will be responsible for coordinating compatibility reviews and will include a summary of this process within the Community Agenda.

Summary of Land Use Dispute Resolution Process

The municipalities of BUFORD, CLERMONT, FLOWERY BRANCH, GAINESVILLE, GILLSVILLE, LULA, OAKWOOD, AND REST HAVEN, and HALL COUNTY Hereby agree to implement the following process for resolving land use disputes over annexation effective July 1, 1998.

1. *Each municipality in Hall County shall notify the Hall County Department of Planning of all proposed annexations, and shall provide information on the location of the property, acreage, and proposed land use classification(s) of the property to be annexed. Such information shall be provided to the Department of Planning within ten (10) working days of receipt of the annexation petition.*

2. *Within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the annexation information, the Hall County Department of Planning shall forward to the municipality a report of the compatibility of the proposed land use classification with the County's Comprehensive Plan for the property to be annexed. If the Department of Planning fails to respond to the municipality within fifteen (15) working days, the municipality is free to proceed with the annexation without further consideration from Hall County.*

3. *If the land use classification for the property to be annexed is inconsistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Planning shall so indicate in its report, and no further action on the part of Hall County or the municipality shall be required prior to consideration of the annexation and zoning.*

4. *If the land use classification for the proposed annexation is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Planning shall notify the municipality of the inconsistencies together with any recommendations for reconciling the land use conflict. Such report shall indicate that the County has a bona fide[1] land use classification objection, and shall be forwarded to the Clerk of the Hall County Board of Commissioners.*

5. *Upon receipt of the county's bona fide land use objection, the municipality will, within ten (10) working days respond to the County, in writing, that it agrees to either: (a) implement the county's stipulations and conditions thereby resolving the conflict; (b) agree with the county and stop action on the proposed annexation; or (c) disagree that the county's objection(s) are bona fide and notify the county that the municipality will seek a declaratory judgment in court.*

6. *This Dispute Resolution Agreement shall remain in force and effect until amended by agreement of each party unless otherwise terminated by operation of law.*

[1] *As defined in O.C.G.A. 36-36-11(b)*

Articulation of the Community Vision, Goals and Implementation Measures

Standing objectives for the City of Gainesville have been listed throughout the Community Assessment where still considered applicable policy. Otherwise, the upcoming process for developing the Community Agenda will be the first time the City has defined a specific Vision as outlined by the Georgia State Code. As discussed within the Community Participation element, a public involvement process closely coordinated with analysis of trends projection and review of projected issues will be used to establish an idealized vision for the community and then to update and refine City goals and objectives for shaping policy.

Throughout the process the City's Planning Department will review the draft document for accurately reflecting the Vision and consistency in developing the Goals and Implementation Measures resulting from the process. A comprehensive plan monitoring process will also be included as an implementation measure to track the City's efforts to pursue the intended objectives.

ASSESSMENT

To date the volume and structure of Gainesville's intergovernmental agreements appear sufficient. The City maintains a strong working relationship with Hall County and both parties, in conjunction with the other Hall County municipalities, are consistent in their desire to see the county grow and do so in a strong, healthy manner. Overall the existing mechanisms in place for reviewing and pursuing intergovernmental cooperation are serving the City well, but will consistently be reviewed as part of the ongoing plan monitoring process.

However, as a result of the increasing growth of the region, and of the evolving nature of varying development types, the City of Gainesville must remain vigilant in assuring the delivery of services remains of high quality and in line with community demands. As the city becomes more populated and more urban in character there will be greater demands for urban services such as more transit options, increased utilities for higher density development, and new demands for amenities and services. As the City responds to these evolving demands the structure of cooperative agreements will need further review and possible amendments. Further, as Gainesville and Oakwood continue to grow in area these communities my need to engage in deeper levels of coordinated planning and land use and infrastructure management.

Of critical importance going forward will be how the City works with all parties with regards to water and sewer service provision. This is driven by recent events altering the regional use and management of Lake Lanier, which will place the City's existing and proposed resources at even greater premium. As the City looks to expand its abilities in this service area it will have to balance local and regional demands, and doing so may require even tighter coordination with Hall County, the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District and other entities.

PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS

To further assist in identifying development needs and target areas it is crucial to understand not only the land use patterns but also the prevailing character and context of a community. It is possible to identify these sub-areas within the community defined by architectural scale and style, functions and roles, traffic flow, and other factors that differentiate one area from the next. These can include the areas requiring special attention identified above and/or existing community sub-areas for which plans have already been prepared.

Character area planning incorporates the concept of community function and feel to identify neighborhoods or communities of similar interaction, process, and character. Defining character areas is useful for identifying unique characteristics that provide a sense of community and to discern localized functions within the larger city or county context. Once character areas are established, community leaders can develop and implement strategies to promote the unique qualities of each character area.

The following character areas and there definitions are considered preliminary, and will be further assessed and refined in the Community Agenda.

Central Gainesville
Park Hill Mixed-Use
Campus District
Traditional Neighborhood
Country Club District
Thompson Bridge Mixed-Use
Bradford/ Ridgewood NPU
Fair Street NPU
Suburban Residential Area
Dawsonville Highway Economic Dist.
Dawsonville Highway Mixed-Use
Industrial/ I-985 Corridor
Airport Industrial Area
Limestone Parkway Corridor
Athens Highway Corridor
Browns Bridge/ McEver District
Southside Commercial District
Atlanta Highway Corridor
Conservation/ Active Parks/ Trails/ Greenspace

Central Gainesville

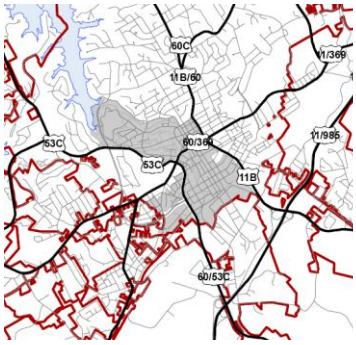
Central Gainesville comprises three urbanized areas clustered around the city square.

Downtown Gainesville generally comprises 20 square blocks bounded by Jesse Jewell Parkway, E. E. Butler Parkway, Academy and West Academy Streets. The City of Gainesville has been participating in the hugely successful National Main Street Program since 1995, which prescribes a managed approach to economic revitalization in the context of historic preservation. Downtown includes mixed-Use areas containing predominately retail uses in conjunction with the Main Street Gainesville program. Residential units located above the retail uses will be encouraged. Offices and civic buildings are also present, notably the courthouse, the Ga. Mountains Ctr., and the library. This area is defined by classic urban architectural forms, smaller blocks with sidewalks, curb side parking and 0-lot line development.

West of downtown is the Washington St./ Oak St. area, a classic urban neighborhood that has evolved to feature more commercial and office uses as those roads have become connectors between downtown and Dawsonville Highway. The massing, scale and architectural styles of the structures compliment the character of downtown.

Southward from downtown, across Jesse Jewell Parkway, is midtown Gainesville, another organic extension of urban form from the town center. Here there are more modern buildings and few houses, but the block pattern and massing of activity again compliments the city's urban form. A redevelopment plan strengthening this character is already in place, complete with overlay zoning and implementation programs.

The aspirations for these areas is to enhance the city's urban scale and fabric, preserving the historic resources and fostering more economic activity.



Park Hill Mixed-Use

This district includes the Civic Center, the City Park complex and the collection of commercial structures along Riverside Drive. It is a stable area that serves residents from throughout the city and county, and is considered vital to the character of the city. Especially to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Combined with the First Baptist Church across the street, the Civic Center marks the end of the historic Green Street corridor coming out of downtown Gainesville. The intersection which sees Thompson Bridge Road and Riverside Drive diverge is a prominent feature within the community's transportation plans but must be carefully managed to preserve the integrity of the traditional neighborhoods on either side.

Most shops along Riverside are smaller, older established operations, including popular local institutions like Green's Grocery. Most feature 60's or 70's era architecture with tight parking defined by topography and unique lot shapes. The character of the corridor provides a strong sense of place for neighborhood-scale dining and retail, and does not intrude on the residential and park activities nearby.

Preliminary objectives for the corridor are to preserve the economic vitality and general scale and form of the development. Variants of residential, commercial and office use are permissible, provided the massing of structures remains and large parking is limited. For these reasons development will also be closely tied with the viability of the roadway, which has limited opportunities for improvement and some local sentiment to retain its two-lane capacity.

Campus District

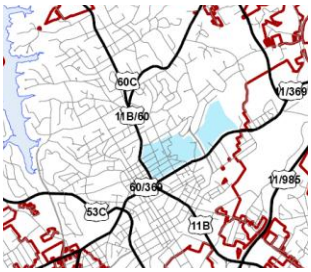
The Campus District is primarily defined by the grounds and structures of Brenau University and the adjoining Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC). It represents a collection of uses buffered between downtown Gainesville, the traditional Enota neighborhood and the bustling Jesse Jewell Parkway. It is considered a prime economic and social node for the community and the region, with long-term aspirations to see both entities grow without adversely impacting the established residential areas.

A block of commercial, office and institutional uses is included between Brenau and downtown Gainesville. This includes a gas station and some restaurants that serve the city and occupants of both campuses. This area is stable but also amenable to future redevelopment that compliments the area and does not adversely impact traffic along EE Butler Parkway.

Brenau University is a compact campus of mostly academic, residential and arts related buildings. The arts facilities serve the community as a whole, and the Northeast Georgia History Center is included in this allotment. The blend features traditional houses from a variety of older periods, several grand, noted structures and other buildings ranging from 1-4 stories. There is a popular quad on the corner of the campus framed by Grace Episcopal Church and the University's historic Pearce Auditorim.

NGMC is the main campus for a highly rated system that serves much of the Georgia Mountains region. It features a growing medical campus with almost 600 in-patient capacity and a variety of specialty facilities within and beyond the city. Most buildings are larger in scale (3+ stories) with larger parking lots and decks to serve their customers.

Included in this district are the blocks immediately north of the hospital that include ancillary medical buildings, and a new middle school and aquatics center. There is some land within that is being developed or remains



available for future office, commercial or institutional use. Architectural features include conventional office building design, with parking and site location that facilitates traffic flow and the rolling topography.

Preliminary objectives for the district include the retention and permissible expansion of both major institutions, with conditions that maintain the integrity of the adjoining residential areas associated with the historic Enota neighborhood.

Traditional Neighborhood

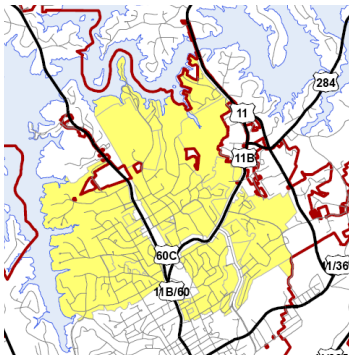
The Traditional Neighborhood district comprises the historic residential areas north of Gainesville on either side of Thompson Bridge Road and Cleveland Highway. This includes many homes worthy of the National Register and build upon the character established by Historic Green Street.

This district epitomizes the traditional neighborhood characteristics of modest lot sizes with single-unit homes in close proximity to the roadway. Blocks are modest in size with few cul-de-sacs. Garages are detached or in the rear, or absent all together, and there is an abundance of sidewalks and shade trees over the streetscape. Most importantly, there is a wide variety of housing forms, cladding and sizes but a familiar typology for main facades with porches and noted entryways to address the street. The style is evoking previous eras where most residents lived and worked within the community, and their homes were individual contributions to the appeal of the neighborhood.

Major variations include select streets with larger estate homes (such as Riverside) and others deeper in with smaller homes. Most lots are well kept and these neighborhoods often feature higher rates of home ownership and valuation. Most houses are older than 30 or even 50 years, with many newer units designed to blend in.

Select non residential elements are mixed in, including churches, parks, offices and some commercial structures. The district surrounds and compliments the neighborhood commercial areas along Thompson Bridge Road and Cleveland Highway.

These neighborhoods are considered stable and vibrant, and the emphasis going forward is to maintain their character. This is the heart of the City's history and residential base, and Gainesville already invests capital improvements towards sustaining these neighborhoods in their current form.



Country Club

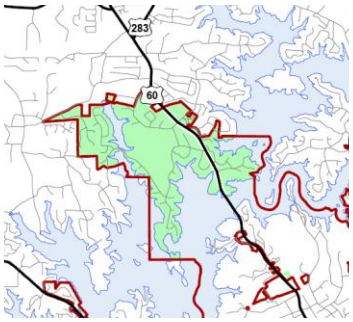
The Chattahoochee Country Club is one of the premier residential areas in or around Gainesville, and surrounding residential development has sought to compliment its fine rural form.

Here lots are typically larger than the urban residential areas (.69 acres vs .2 acres), with many grand lots with estate homes and lakefront property. The residential area itself is not exclusive but the price point of most houses within the actual club neighborhood restricts residency to more affluent households.

Housing styles range from classical to modern, with many homes worthy of the National Register and several properties featured for home and garden tours. Units and subdivisions built around the County Club include more conventional suburban designs but maintain average to above-average price points via the size of the unit, lot or both.

The imagery is representative of finer, first tier suburban living, where the overall density is still conducive to urban amenities and social atmosphere, but the lay of roads and blocks and the preservation of more open space (in addition to the golf course) provide a more natural landscape. Sidewalks are not present, though many residents walk and jog along the edge of the less trafficked roads.

This is another strong and stable district that the City is striving to sustain as-is. The Country Club and finer homes are considered attractive amenities for economic development and retaining a strong segment of upper-income households.



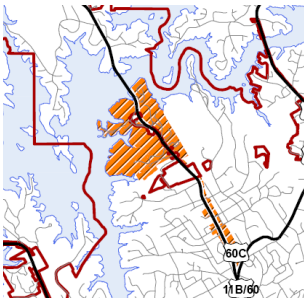
Thompson Bridge Mixed-Use

The Thompson Bridge Mixed Use district denotes the transitional area between the neighborhood-scale activity closer in to town and the gateway commercial development just outside of the city. It represents an area targeted for economic activity and future (re)development for the greater community.

Here Thompson Bridge Road traffic moves faster with fewer curb cuts and either the release or anticipation of congestion closer to Gainesville. Due to the dynamic terrain and the absence of established neighborhoods surrounding the area, the forms and activity within this district includes a wide variety. Presently the district features a prominent church, a skating rink, multi-family housing, higher-end housing and a variety of commercial and office uses. Some are modest in scale and match the established architecture of the adjoining neighborhoods, other elements are more modern and independent.

The center of the district is the intersection of Thompson Bridge and Linwood Drive, which is flanked by a McDonalds and the large campus for Lakewood Baptist Church. This point is discernibly suburban in character and a driver of economic activity for several shops and eateries in the area. Most are auto oriented, since few housing units are within walking distance save one apartment complex.

The area is considered stable and contains some elements that residents will hope to retain, but there is room for additional development and several properties have changed over while owners seek appropriate uses. Due to the mix of existing uses, the nature of activities in this area is less critical than the general scale and impact on surrounding properties.



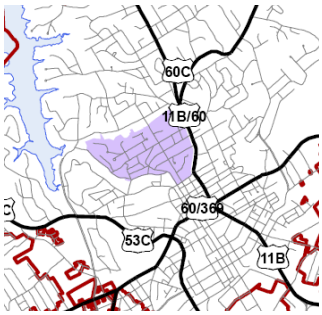
Bradford/ Ridgewood NPU

This Neighborhood Planning Unit is nestled between downtown Gainesville and the rest of the traditional neighborhood west of Thompson Bridge Road. It features portions of the Historic Green Street district and related housing, as well as some multi-family units and homes renovated for offices or commercial businesses. The NPU is overwhelmingly residential, however, and is a considered vital part of Gainesville's urban fabric.

Like the traditional neighborhood areas, the Bradford Ridgewood NPU is comprised of a dynamic variety of home styles but a consistent theme – classic urban residential. The primary difference lies in the lot sizes, as the City's two NPUs feature more of the smaller lots and homes (.2 acres per) than the neighborhoods around Enota Road and Riverside Drive. Otherwise the character is the same, with many design styles, plenty of front porches and landscaped lawns and sidewalks. Garages are at a premium in the NPU, often resulting in more cars in driveways or along the curb.

The Bradford/ Ridgewood NPU rests across the Rock Creek Greenway from Central Gainesville. This tremendous asset was pursued in part to help revitalize the neighborhood and spur investment in the homes that had fallen to disrepair.

The creation of the greenway and it's pocket parks, combined with the formation of the NPU to rally citizen support for revitalization, have helped stabilize the neighborhood, and the goal remains to retain the residential nature of the area. However there must be further investment to stave off further decline in some properties.



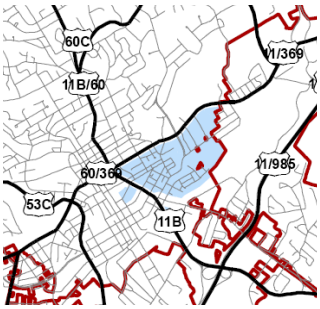
Fair Street NPU

Like the Bradford/ Ridgewood NPU, the Fair Street NPU represents an urban residential area adjacent to Central Gainesville but distinct from the larger, historic neighborhoods around Enota Road and Riverside Drive. It features mostly single family residential units with some multi-family and other uses mixed in, predominantly along the arterial roads flanking the north and western boundaries of the district.

Fair Street features the smallest average lot size of the city's residential districts (.2 acres per), and due to its physical separation from the bulk of other residential areas (it's surrounded by predominantly industrial and institutional activity) this neighborhood is among the weakest, financially. The creation of the NPU was in part to help stabilize the area and find ways the citizens could champion revitalization.

The NPU does include a local Boys and Girls Club, a local elementary school and the Fair Street Community Center. Many civic and institutional destinations, including medical facilities and the new aquatic center are within walking distance, as well as many larger employment centers. However, the neighborhood lacks some of the nicer homes that help buoy the value of residential areas, and it features a higher percentage of multi-family housing, as well, contributing to a sense of impermanence about the area that can discourage residential property investment.

The preliminary objective of the city is to retain the neighborhood as a vibrant residential area, but can also accommodate economic development that is encroaching into the area.



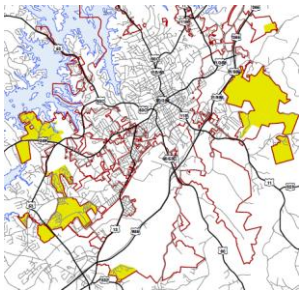
Suburban Residential Area

This character area represents the various residential areas removed from central Gainesville, which also feature common elements in larger lot sizes (1.2 acres per), insular subdivisions and repetitive housing designs. The areas include new developments yet to be completed as well as established neighborhoods, from either end of the value spectrum. Most are stable and all play a critical role in keeping the city's jobs-housing ratio in balance.

Some of the areas with this designation include subdivisions from the past 20 years that are in the city for access to utilities rather than formative relationships with the city-proper. This allowed them to build at higher densities amidst suburban settings, often by using 1-3 housing patterns and lining them along cul-de-sacs for efficiency of construction as opposed to principles of community design. Most feature "community amenities" such as pools, tennis courts, playgrounds, etc. Often they do lack sidewalks or pedestrian connectivity outside the community.

The success of each has varied based upon the price range of the average unit and the viability of the surrounding areas: Developments relying on larger shares of "starter housing" have struggled due to limited property reinvestment, whereas the more high-end communities (such as along Maple Forge Lane) are buffered by residential and suburban uses all around, with at least some adjoining property of similar economic caliber.

The goals for this area will vary. Stable, strong subdivisions will be targeted for preservation, while those that are struggling economically will need some attention to avoid a collapse of property values or creating isolated enclaves of transitional housing in the future. Those closer to central Gainesville may have opportunities for pedestrian connectivity or other coordinated infill.



Dawsonville Highway Economic District

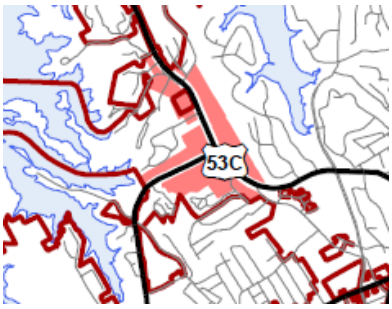
This district is essentially the City's regional commercial center, featuring a variety of conventional "big box" stores and strip malls with many popular restaurants and shops. The area has grown dramatically within the past decade and supplanted the Lakeshore Mall as the family commercial center of town.

The district is focused on the intersection of McEver Road and Dawsonville Highway, which sits on a ridgeline with two prominent shopping centers just below on either side. Acres of parking lots line the arterial roads for national chains like Publix, Best Buy and Home Depot. Outparcels for chain restaurants and other shops can also be found, as well as one post office and other uses such as a bank, car wash and offices. A large cinema complex also sits between one shopping center and an adjoining apartment complex.

The district is decidedly auto oriented, contributing to congestion during evening rush hours. Pedestrian connectivity to outside the district is extremely limited to footpaths from neighboring properties, some sidewalks along McEver and the local transit system.

The forms are mostly conventional large-scale commercial, with limited architectural detailing. Individual outparcels employ their brand architecture (Chili's, Outback…), but otherwise the unifying theme is "regional commerce."

There has been redevelopment within the past 5 years and continued growth of the district outward, further along Dawsonville Highway. The increasing pressure for maximizing commercial space may put pressure on adjoining residences and/or impact storm water management. It may also require further traffic management efforts pending the eventual volume of development permitted.



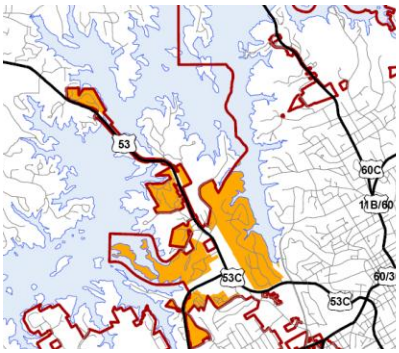
Dawsonville Highway Mixed Use District

Surrounding the economic activity centers along Dawsonville Highway is a variety of residential, parks and other uses on this peninsula. This district is one that will continue to evolve in response to the forces around it, particularly as the residential areas become more and more isolated.

The eastern half of this district is largely an established neighborhood that rests across one inlet from the high school and the Bradford/Ridgewood NPU and Traditional Neighborhood District. It features a range of single-family homes, most at least 20 years old. The neighborhood is stable but could benefit from additional reinvestment, as some of the smaller properties have fallen into disrepair. Combined with its physical isolation from other neighborhoods or strong attractions have stifled some of the possible increase in valuation.

South along McEver is the Middle School and some garden-style apartments, while more established single family homes, a park and more apartments sit on the western side of the peninsula. The apartments are larger complexes that feature modern renovations and competitive prices, buoyed by the strong demand for temporary housing in the area. The isolated housing along Beechwood Blvd. features a blend of housing styles but mostly older units with varying needs of repair and renovation. Several rental units and duplexes are within this neighborhood, and there are few amenities to entice residential reinvestment while adjoining properties are given over to commercial development.

The preliminary objectives for this district is to sustain the vitality of the Economic Development District without adversely impacting the environment and, to the best extent possible, sustain the residential components therein.



Industrial/ I-985 Corridor

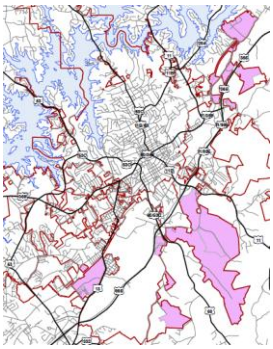
This district refers to a myriad of properties along the interstate corridor that largely serve manufacturing, warehousing and other industrial activities. The trademarks of the area includes larger facilities and industrial parks for goods production, distribution and storage.

Most of the structures are conventional frame-and-truss buildings with steel or other construction-efficient cladding, and the lots typically feature vast parking areas and various types of loading bays for tractor trailers. Some higher grade manufacturing or office space is also present in the area, but essentially all of the uses are located within the district both for the proximity to the interstate and arterial roads and likewise the distance removed from most residential areas. (The latter is to prevent conflict of land uses where residents might view some industrial activity as a nuisance via odor, noise, or traffic.)

This district is derived for the purposes of maintaining this form of economic activity within the city, sustaining local and regional jobs and raising Gainesville's profile as a metro center for employment. The reach of the overall corridor allows for a variety of industrial activity, as well, from smaller, light operations to larger scale businesses such as poultry processing and machine construction.

Some outlying businesses do reside within the district, including fueling stations and the Allen Creek Soccer Complex. These all either compliment the economic activity of the district or compatibly coexist with the industrial uses.

The objectives of the district are to retain the viability for such large scale industrial operations while managing, social, traffic and environmental impacts.



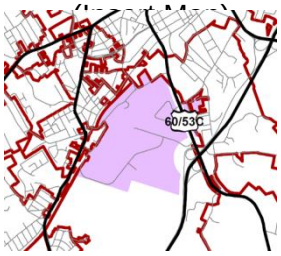
Airport Industrial District

This is a defined industrial area of Gainesville including and surrounding the Lee Gilmer Airport just south of Central Gainesville. While the operations and scale of activities mirrors that of the Industrial/I-985 Corridor, the district receives special notice for its proximity to Central Gainesville (wherein compatibility of land uses must be preserved), the attention that must be paid to the airport flight zone and building restrictions, and the dependency many businesses have on being adjacent to the airport.

The facilities at Lee Gilmer are managed by the City, and has recently undergone the 5-year update of its Airport Master Plan. The current Plan indicates a need to expand storage and terminal facilities within the next 5-15 years, which would impact surrounding properties. The increased capacity may also position the airport for future growth that has included discussions of commercial passenger services of some kind. The airport is considered a tremendous asset to the City and the region and should be supported as best as possible.

The surrounding industrial properties tend to be smaller and insular: Most facilities in the area do not need smoke stacks or volumes of commercial trucking, feature hazard materials stored on site or other potential nuisances. Most of the structures are lower profile, smaller than the typical facility in the Industrial/ I-985 Corridor, and have more architectural detailing to their cladding, signs and streetscape. Parking lots are prominent, but access to the whole district is restricted to 5 points, creating a sense of exclusivity to the area as well as congestion during rush hours.

The overall concept of an industrial area related to the airport is considered a strong point of Gainesville's economic development. As both the airport and local industries begin to prosper, the objectives will seek to support that growth while refining the upscale traits of the district.

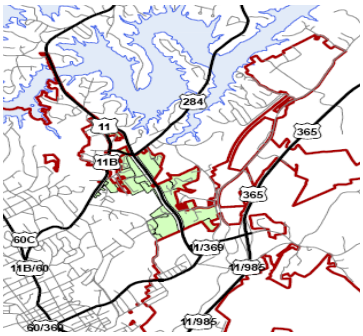


Limestone Parkway Corridor

Limestone Parkway is the roughly north/south arterial on the city's north side. It is a largely undeveloped roadway that will buffer the traditional neighborhoods around Enota Road and Lakeview Academy from the Industrial/I-985 Corridor further out. It has also started to take shape as an extension of the Campus District by absorbing some office parks and outlying medical facilities.

It is this latter which is the impetus behind the City's Limestone Corridor Overlay ordinance which seeks to build on this character of higher-end office and commercial activity, both in form and in design. Residential and institutional uses are also permitted, though the hope is to foster a node for medical and professional services, as well as upscale commercial.

Most of the existing structures feature such attention with masonry exteriors, pitched roofs, building ornamentation and smaller, more pedestrian friendly parking lots. This should help sustain the higher caliber of the existing traditional neighborhoods as well as foster compatible residential development within the area. There is also hope for retaining the roadway's thru-traffic capacity, and not reducing the area to a congested retail destination.

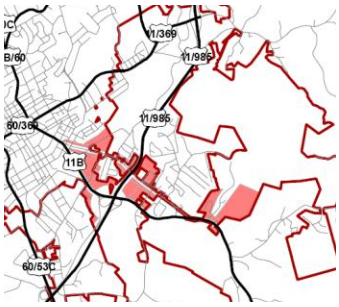


Athens Highway Corridor

The Athens Highway Corridor features a mixture of uses ranging from residential to commercial to medium industrial. Remnants of residential neighborhoods are transitioning as industrial and heavy commercial activity creep in from the west and south, while the industrial activity is evolving from older, urban forms into more auto-compatible facilities and lots.

Athens Street itself, which crosses over I-985, was once the main road for neighborhoods growing outward from Gainesville. As these neighborhoods struggled and more industrial activity moved in, the district became less about nurturing homes and residents but rather about its economic growth.

There is no unifying architectural theme for existing structures, but the district does serve as a transitional space between more rural Hall County and urbanizing Gainesville. The district houses many uses that directly support adjoining neighborhoods and the industrial districts, so it must retain connectivity while opportunities are explored for revitalizing older and underused properties.



Browns Bridge/ McEver District

The southwestern gateways of the city, Browns Bridge and McEver Roads serve different spectrums of the same role in suburban expansion of the community. The district also includes the Flat Creek Wastewater Reclamation Facility and related greenspace.

Browns Bridge is the continuation of Jesse Jewell Parkway, a prominent commercial artery that caters to the auto-care industries. Car sales and repair establishments line the corridor, creating the conventional node for that market. Some retail, service and dining options are along the route, including a sizable shopping center at the intersection with McEver. Due to the proximity of several predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods, many of the businesses along this road advertise in Spanish.

McEver Road is a major north/south artery and the gateway into the city for many visitors and commuters coming from Oakwood and Flowery Branch. The topography contributes to its capacity as an expressway, and it is considered the cleaner gateway of these two roadways. Much of this district is comprised of the two campuses for Free Chapel church, which features combined parking for more than 1,000 vehicles and provides a unique architectural element to define the area.

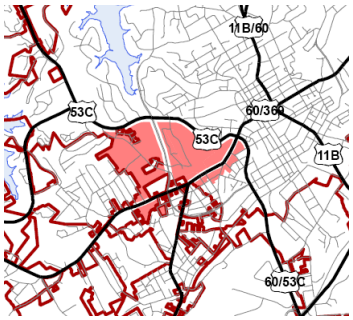
Southside Commercial District

This district represents Gainesville's second generation suburban commercial area, with many retail and dining establishments held over from the '70's and '80's along the primary arterials. Some of the city's earliest conventional shopping centers and Lakeshore Mall are here, as well as some modern big box stores along Shallowford Road.

The Southside Commercial District is an economic activity center, one based predominantly around family consumer based operations – Stores ranging from small individual businesses to Walmart, chain restaurants (both dine-in and fast food varieties), some specialty shops and a few offices or other uses. The form and scale of activity is very much auto-oriented, with vast areas for parking and only patch-work pedestrian connectivity. High volumes of curb-cuts ensures the parkway is congested during rush hour, and there is little in any form of uniting theme to the architecture or signage.

As a result of this, combined with the recent evolution of the Dawsonville Highway Economic District has caused this area to see some decline. The Mall itself is struggling and many of the independent businesses along Jesse Jewell are on the lower end of the economic spectrum. Some recent infill has come along in the form of two hotels and some restaurants, but the district as a whole is characterized as a corridor mostly for fast-food and car care operations.

Preliminary objectives for the district would be revitalization one shopping plaza at a time to strengthen the overall commercial vitality of the city. Many of the businesses have long-term appeal but the orientation of the businesses has changed. Additional measures to beautify the gateway may also aid in spurring reinvestment and improving pedestrian connectivity.

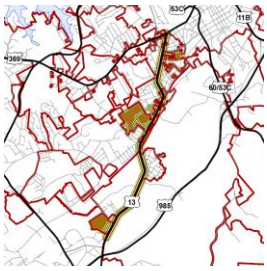


Atlanta Highway Corridor

This is Gainesville's node for Spanish-speaking oriented businesses and services. Buoyed by neighborhoods occupied mostly by households of Hispanic descent, this corridor has developed into a niche market for specialty retail and dining to support those residents. It is not exclusive and there are other uses (light industrial, a school, churches) in the district, but the defining trait and unifying element is the corridor's role as a main street for the Hispanic Community.

Most of the structures are 10-20 years old, and are smaller, independent facilities with modest parking in front or alongside. Many show evidence of age and need for repair. There is little commonality to the architecture save for conventional shop-front windows and heavy use of signage. Some sidewalks are present but inconsistent in quality and connectivity, and the abundance of utility lines promote a visual clutter compared to other gateways into Gainesville.

The district is considered stable-to-struggling economically, with the recent recession has greatly impacted Gainesville's Hispanic community. One prominent shopping plaza along the corridor shows several vacancies, and several other buildings along the route are for sale or lease. Restoring the viability of the corridor for local business is thus the highest priority.



Conservation/ Active Parks/ Trails/ Greenspace

This district represents the adjoining property of the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve, the Elachee Nature Center and the Chicopee Woods Golf Course. With the exception of the golf course this is a unified patch of greenspace on the southern fringe of the city, providing environmental benefits as well as cultural and educational amenities for residents throughout the region.

Chicopee Woods encompasses a sizable valley that straddles I-985 and abuts the Atlanta Highway Corridor. It acts as a partial buffer/boundary for Gainesville's urban form and the eastern frontier of Oakwood at US 332. The Nature Center and the Golf Course serve to drive tourism and support to the area, while the City also supports the facilities as premier benefits to the community. These lands are in formal protective, conservation covenants and will be preserved throughout the planning time frame.

Note: Additional lands throughout the city may contain environmentally sensitive areas and/or protected greenspace, but they will be included within their own character areas.